

all backgrounds thanking them for providing for them the soundtrack of their lives. And God, humor, the comedians of old, I remember sneaking into balconies—in my house—and watching over the balcony my dad, quietly not thinking his children were listening, put on records by Richard Pryor, whose humor helped to heal his troubled heart, make him laugh at the absurdities of a nation that still had not fully fulfilled itself.

And so I bring this thought and this heart to say thank you to artists, thank you to this institution for what we did in a bipartisan way to make sure we were funding the venues of this country, the stages where so many artists were able to continue to work during the pandemic. We fund the arts. It is funding that often has to be pushed or fought for, but I say it is the funding that in many ways helps to sustain and source the soul of a nation because without art, we would have lost our way a long time ago.

Now, this week I had this moment where you have just got to pinch yourself, and I know that the Presiding Officer has had this moment, too, where you get this call from White House staff, and they say: Hey, we have got some extra seats in the President of the United States' box at the Kennedy Center to come see a performance by a group called Freestyle Love Supreme.

And I said no immediately. I am so busy. I have got so much work. I had a night that was ending relatively early. But my staff said to me, you know, a guy, Chris Jackson—he was George Washington in “Hamilton”—is going to be there as well, and I had gotten to know him because he was so generous. I saw him in “In The Heights.” He invited me backstage, gave me such love. I saw him in “Hamilton.” Even when I had someone I was trying to date with me, he made me seem special in her eyes. I will never forget that. He was a good wingman.

So I went to go see them perform, and I was just blown away by the performance. I hope that while they are here, people get a chance to go. But what blew me away was how they reaffirmed that message to me. At a time that I am troubled with what is happening in our life, with decisions in the Supreme Court, with challenges, with the economy, they touched on a lot of those issues with humor and artistic genius, and I found my spirit being lifted. I found camaraderie with strangers.

You see a whole crowd of people being pulled together around ideals of empathy and love and affirmation of our most core, cherished values as a nation, like freedom and protest.

I am honored that this group is visiting the U.S. Senate right now—for many, their first time being in this sacred space, this hallowed Hall—to get a chance to witness what we do every day.

And I just want to say thank you to them, and I want to give tribute to all of the artists in America who do so

much for the soul of this Nation and inspire us every day not to stop believing in tomorrows that can be better than what we have in the present.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

NOMINATION OF MARY T. BOYLE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise in support today of Mary Boyle, the nominee to serve as Commissioner at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Mary will bring to this role more than a decade of experience on the Consumer Product Safety Commission, where she previously served as general counsel and currently serves as the Executive Director. She is deeply knowledgeable about consumer product safety and the functioning of the CPSC. I have every confidence that she will be ready to lead on day one.

But it is not just her professional background that makes her perfect for this role. As a mom who raised three kids, she knows firsthand how important it is for parents to be able to trust the products they use every day. She understands the stakes and the devastating consequences of unsafe products.

Just yesterday, the Commerce Committee took an important step forward toward protecting kids and infants by passing the STURDY Act, which will prevent harmful and ultimately heart-breaking furniture tip-overs. Senators CASEY and BLUMENTHAL and I have been working on this for quite a while. It resulted in the largest furniture recall ever in the history of America with IKEA. But we need standards in place across the board. I know that we can count on Mary to be another critical partner in preventing unsafe products from hurting our kids.

Mary is clear-eyed about the responsibility of the CPSC. In her words, it provides a safety net for the public, and in order to carry out that crucial task, it needs a full roster of Commissioners. Currently, four of the five slots are filled. To truly address pressing product safety issues, we have to fill that fifth seat. We can't afford to play politics here. This is about everything from the hazards posed by crib bumper pads to the use of toxic chemicals in everyday consumer products.

I got involved in this way, way back before I was a Senator, when we had a young child swallow a charm that he got with a pair of tennis shoes. It was a giveaway. He didn't die because he choked on that charm; he died over a period of days because the lead in that charm, which was from a foreign country, got into his system, and he died in just a few days. That is how I got involved in the lead standards on foreign toys, that is how I started working with the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and that is when I saw the difference it can make.

We passed a bipartisan bill named after Jim Baker's granddaughter—the Virginia Graeme Baker pool safety

bill—after a young kid named Abigail Taylor in Minnesota was in a kiddie swimming pool and her intestines were ripped out just sitting in the pool because there were so many faulty drains in this country.

I went and visited her in the hospital, and she said: I don't want this to happen to any other kid.

She lived for a year, and during that time, we worked together.

Then Ted Stevens and I passed a much stronger pool safety bill. And I know that the last time I heard testimony from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, over a period of a decade, after we lost a number of kids every year, not one kid had died because of a simple change to how the pool drains worked. That is what the Consumer Product Safety Commission can do at its best—make sure it doesn't happen to any other kid again.

The American people are counting on us to get this right, and with Mary, we have the opportunity to do just that.

As Mary said in her testimony, consumers need to be able to go about their daily lives without worrying that products they interact with every day—washing machines, cell phones, batteries, toys, and treadmills, to name just a few—do not injure, maim, or kill them. Throughout her impressive career, Mary Boyle has shown that she is wholeheartedly dedicated to that mission.

I am voting in support of her, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1787.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, the State Antitrust Enforcement Venue Act is a much needed reform that would put State attorneys general bringing antitrust suits under the Federal antitrust law on equal footing alongside Federal antitrust enforcement personnel by allowing them to avoid consolidation with private antitrust suits.

This would shield these important antitrust actions from the inefficiencies of coordinating their litigation with their slower moving counterparts brought by private litigants, and it would also respect our federalist system of government and recognize the unique and essential role that States play specifically in enforcing our antitrust laws.

No doubt, this is exactly why this bill is supported by 45 State attorneys general, including Utah, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Texas, California, Vermont, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Delaware, Nebraska, Connecticut, Missouri, Hawaii, New Jersey, Arkansas, Louisiana, and North Carolina, representing the home States of almost every member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

My own reasons for introducing the legislation are simple. States are sovereign entities, and they are entitled to

pursue law enforcement actions in defense of their citizens in the venue and in the manner they think best, period.

Allowing State antitrust enforcement actions to be consolidated with private lawsuits not only impinges upon State sovereignty, it also needlessly delays consumer redress for antitrust harm.

For example, the case brought by 16 States in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico alleging that Google's conduct in digital advertising has violated Federal antitrust laws was transferred from Texas, where that lawsuit was originally filed, to the Southern District of New York to be consolidated with other cases. The transfer was ordered in August of last year. Some 9 months later, discovery is still stayed, and no progress has been made. Had the case just remained in Texas, discovery would be well underway, and the trial was scheduled for next summer. Instead, the case is languishing, and potential remedies to consumer harm are being postponed. Google's delay tactics have been successful.

We must eliminate this loophole—a loophole that allows monopolists to delay antitrust enforcement actions brought by State attorneys general. I therefore urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

So, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 261, S. 1787. I further ask that the Lee amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, reserving the right to object, my friend and colleague Senator LEE is well aware that I am supportive of this bill. We worked together. I am a lead Democrat on this bill to get it through the committee.

I simply believe that this bill must go hand in hand with another bill that would look at this issue in a much bigger way; that, yes, this is about allowing State attorneys general to do their jobs and enforce the law, and that is why he and I have joined forces on this bill. But it is also about putting some rules of the road in place on a Federal basis.

We are very close to having a vote on Senator GRASSLEY's and my bill, with a broad range of authors and support, which would be the only and first Federal competition response to tech monopolies since the advent of the internet.

I have been watching this movie for way too long. We have hearings, we throw popcorn at CEOs, we get sound bites on TV, but we don't do anything on a Federal basis. We had the Facebook whistleblower come forward, tell of the horror, the American people

are with us, and we dither and do nothing. This is actually the first time that we have a coalition across the aisle of people who are ready to move forward on a Federal response.

So my view of this is that, as we work to get our enforcers more funds—that is a part of it; Senator GRASSLEY and I have a merger fee bill that is moving as part of the competition bill, which is currently in conference committee—and as we work on Senator LEE's very worthy legislation to focus on allowing the State attorneys general to keep their cases in their own jurisdictions, we simply cannot pretend that we don't have some role in this.

If Members don't know about it, maybe they have talked to one of the 2,700 lobbyists whom the tech companies have hired or maybe they have been subject to the \$70 million effort on the Federal level. And this is not Senator LEE that I am talking about; he is a true maverick and is willing to take on special interests. But what I believe is going on in this building is that there are a lot of people trying to wait this one out and hope we don't have a vote on this bill.

I appreciate Senator SCHUMER working with me and leadership on the Democratic and Republican sides of the Judiciary Committee to make sure that we get this vote.

So Senator LEE will have a vote on this bill. I would certainly not concede at this moment giving tech something they want in this bill when we can't even have a vote on the Federal legislation, but we will have a vote on Senator LEE's bill. I just believe they have to go hand in hand.

I think he is well aware of Senators doing all kinds of things procedurally to be able to get votes, but I think it is really important that we don't have a State-only approach when it comes to what is going on with tech.

To again remind my colleagues and those watching this, what our bill—this big, bipartisan, important bill—does, it doesn't tear apart the company. It doesn't even take on the fact that they are all monopolies—and they are monopolies. Google has a 90-percent market share. Apple and Google basically, when it comes to app stores, are duopolies in dominating the market.

While Europe is set to vote on their own digital market bill on Monday and move this ahead—I was just speaking with them—while Australia has taken on the issue of the news organizations, while Great Britain is moving ahead, we sit back. It is time to at least take on one issue.

As the Justice Department looks at what is a monopoly, is it a monopoly when you have 90 percent market share? The very least we can do is put some rules of the road in place.

What Senator GRASSLEY's and my bill does—and we have taken several comments from Members and made changes to that bill—what the bill simply does is it says: Hey, monopolies or

gatekeeper companies, if you own your own companies—which they are increasingly doing—you can't use your monopoly status to self-preference your own products in front of other products.

No. 2, you can't copy nonpublic data that you have because of the virtue of the fact that you are the gatekeeper and then rip it off and make your own products. That is exactly what Amazon did, as the Wall Street Journal reported, with a four-employee luggage organizer firm when they gave them the data. The next thing you know, it shows up on Amazon Basics.

The third thing you can't do is make companies, small businesses, buy a bunch of stuff just to put yourself at the top of the platform.

The American people are with us on this, poll after poll, including a poll that Google accidentally—accidentally—put out there before they were able to pull it back that showed 68 percent of people want to use the antitrust laws—68 percent of people in their own polling—to be able to rein in this problem.

This is a uniquely American approach, but it must be done hand in hand with State enforcement.

So, all I am asking my friend and colleague to do here—and we wouldn't be here if we could have reached an agreement on this—is, I will assure him that we will have a vote on his bill; but we must also have a vote and finally move ahead on what is only a slice of what we could be doing.

We are not doing some of the things I would want to do, which is look back at some of these mergers, which is actually take that email that Mark Zuckerberg wrote that said I'd rather "buy than compete" and look at what they bought in their zest to be able to avoid competition. Right now, that is going on with the Justice Department and the FTC. But we are simply trying to set some rules of the road, and it is more than overdue after an 8-month investigation in the House of Representatives—an 8-month investigation.

What Federal bills have we passed that would put any checks and balances on these companies? They just keep getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And I am so pleased that some of the State attorneys general are taking this on.

I am eager to get Senator LEE's bill and my bill up for a vote, but it will come close to when the vote on the actual Federal rules takes place. For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I appreciate the insight and the enthusiasm for antitrust law and even for this legislation that has been expressed by my friend and distinguished colleague, the Senator from Minnesota. She and I have been partners on a number of things, including the fact that we have alternated back and forth as the chair

and ranking member of the Antitrust Subcommittee in the Senate for over a decade now.

As she mentioned, she is the lead cosponsor with me on this bill. We have worked together on it.

Look: I agree completely that we need to hold Big Tech accountable under antitrust laws. If you want to hold Big Tech accountable, pass this bill. Pass this bill today. There is not a reason to delay.

No, I understand and appreciate her desire to pass the Klobuchar-Grassley bill. I get that. It is a different proposal. It is not inconsistent with this one. There is no reason why this one couldn't pass and still allow the other one to move forward, nor is there any reason why this measure becoming law would, in any way, undermine that legislation or that legislative proposal.

As to reaching a deal or not reaching a deal, we have been in conversations with the office of Senator KLOBUCHAR for months—literally, months—about it. We talked about different strategies for making sure that we could get it passed—what might have to change. We both discussed the fact that we preferred to keep the bill intact with the retroactivity provisions in there, but, if necessary, we could remove the retroactivity provisions if, by so doing, we could get it past the hotline. All of that has been done in consultation with the office of the Senator from Minnesota for months—literally months. So none of this is a surprise. This was done in tandem with Senator KLOBUCHAR's office.

Finally, I feel the need to push back against the notion that whenever something bigger could happen, nothing smaller in that area may be allowed to pass prior to that. This is a discreet, very specific fix to antitrust law that is desperately needed—urgently needed in order to hold Big Tech accountable under our antitrust laws. There is no good reason to delay this, and it is unfortunate today that we can't do that. I least expected it from the lead cosponsor of the legislation.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Again, I look forward to working with Senator LEE to pass this bill, and I also look forward to passing a bill on the Federal basis and not just deciding that this should be in the province of 50 different States, and I thoroughly plan to work with him to pass this bill, and I hope it will be soon.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 631

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, I rise today out of a desire to protect the

rights and the health of the young men and women who serve the Senate as pages.

I think we could all agree that the Senate wouldn't function well without pages. The very first Senate page was a 9-year-old boy named Grafton Hanson. He was appointed by Daniel Webster in 1829. In those days, the pages' jobs were to refill the inkwells and clean out spittoons. Fortunately, things have improved a bit for the pages. The work isn't quite as messy anymore, but it is still a high-pressure job for a high school student.

When I was here on the floor voting last week, I noticed that the pages were all wearing masks, but none of my colleagues were. I threatened to come to the floor to seek unanimous consent to end the mask mandate, and the next day, the mandate ended. Coincidence? Perhaps.

The new policy states, though, that the mask-wearing will become optional for pages who test negative. But once again, we see the masks on the floor.

I urge my colleagues to look around. The pages are still wearing masks. The COVID policy for the Senate pages requires the reinstitution of a mask mandate if they have supposedly been exposed.

Apparently, there are rules for the pages of the Senate, but not for the President of the Senate, KAMALA HARRIS. When Vice President HARRIS was deemed potentially exposed to COVID, she not only presided over the Senate's confirmation vote of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, but was also seen at the White House with the President, the First Lady, and the Justice without a mask. Rules for thee but not for me.

Jen Psaki justified the Vice President's violation of the COVID guidelines by stating that it was an emotional day. I guess if you are feeling like it is an emotional day then you can do what you please, unless you are a page. The impressive thing about that absurd defense was that Psaki was able to say it with a straight—and maskless—face.

But an unseasoned mask mandate is not all that is required of the pages. According to the guidelines: "All pages are required to be fully vaccinated; if their initial vaccination series was completed at least five months ago, pages are required to obtain [a] booster [shot]" to participate in the Page Program.

From day one, our country's response to this pandemic has made the comfortable more comfortable, while the working class or kids or people with no power have to keep on working but have to obey rules that the adults don't have to themselves.

Now in the halls of Congress we have created a privileged class that can choose whether to get vaccinated and an underclass that has to abide by dictate. It makes absolutely no sense to mandate COVID vaccinations for teenagers who are healthy. It makes even

less sense to mandate a booster. There is no scientific evidence that boosters are valuable, and there is scientific evidence that boosters increase the risk of a heart inflammation for young adolescent males.

A study published last month in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Cardiology* examined over 23 million people ages 12 and up across Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. It concluded that the risk of myocarditis, an inflation of the heart, "was more pronounced" after a second mRNA vaccine dose, "and the risk was highest among males aged 16 to 24 years."

This is exactly why several European countries, including Germany, France, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, all restrict the use of mRNA vaccines for COVID—particularly for adolescents, particularly for adolescent males. The policy of our pages does not address this issue at all and blindly commands boosters.

In fact, if you read the policy, you could imagine an endless stream of boosters. Every 5 months that you haven't had another vaccine you would be required to get a booster.

Last fall, the director and deputy director at the FDA's Office of Vaccines Research and Review both resigned. Realize who these people are. They are on the vaccine committee. They are pro-vaccine. Both of them are actually pro-vaccine mandate. Yet, they resigned from the Government, as reported, "citing White House pressure to approve third doses for all adults and writing damning op-ed's critical of the FDA's subsequent decision to do so."

It became a political decision. The committee voted against extending boosters to kids, and then it was overruled by politicians at the White House. These two researchers, long esteemed, who have been on this committee for years, resigned in protest.

One of the op-eds that ran in the *Washington Post* was coauthored by Dr. Paul Offitt, a professor of pediatrics and director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Once again—not an opponent of vaccines; a proponent of vaccines, a guy who has been on the vaccine committee for decades.

As a Member of the FDA's advisory committee, Dr. Offitt, though, did not support widespread boosting when the committee met to consider boosters for all adults in September and October. He and the two former FDA officials wrote: "A healthy young person with two mRNA doses is extremely unlikely to be hospitalized with COVID, so the case for risking any side effects," the case for forcing them to take a third vaccine when their risk of COVID after two vaccines is nearly, if not virtually, zero, he says—or they said that the case for risking any side effects—such as myocarditis—diminishes substantially.