

Catholic? She was asked that in the Committee on the Judiciary.

Another offered this bizarre and ominous remark: "The dogma lives loudly within you, and that's a concern."

So, look, these warning signs on religious freedom are literally popping up everywhere the modern political left rears its head.

Religious freedom in America has never—never—meant and will never mean solely the freedom to worship privately. It has never meant and will never mean the ability to practice only a subset of faiths acceptable to some subset of politicians. What it means is the right to live your life according to the dictates of your faith and your conscience, free from government coercion.

If those statements strike anybody in this Chamber as remotely controversial, that is exactly why President Trump, Senate Republicans, and millions of Americans are focused on confirming Federal judges who will apply our Constitution as it was originally written.

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 proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Richard Ernest Myers II, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

FOSTERING UNDERGRADUATE TALENT BY UNLOCKING RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION ACT

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, first, I thank the Democratic leader for the opportunity to move forward on this unanimous consent.

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 212, H.R. 2486.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2486) to reauthorize mandatory funding programs for historically Black col-

leges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Alexander-Murray amendment at the desk be agreed to and that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 1255), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill, as amended, pass?

The bill (H.R. 2486), as amended, was passed.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senators from South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington State, and Alabama be allowed to speak for brief moments on the great job they have done and that I be given back my leadership time at 10:50.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, on behalf of all of us, I want to thank the Democratic leader for his courtesy and his support on this. He and Senator MCCONNELL have made it possible for us to do this.

I am going to limit my remarks to a couple of minutes, and then Senator MURRAY and then Senator SCOTT, Senator COONS, Senator JONES are here, and we will finish by 10:50.

Madam President, it is hard to think of a piece of legislation that would have a more lasting impact upon minority students in America than the bill that the Senate just passed.

I believe, in doing so, we have improved the provision in the House bill that was sent to us. That is what we did; we amended a House bill that we are now sending back to them. We have been working with leaders in the House to make sure that our bill is something

the House can accept and pass. We hope that will happen in the next couple of weeks, and here is the result of it happening: No. 1, a big step for historically Black colleges and minority institutions—permanent funding at the level of \$255 million a year for those institutions that serve up to 2 million minority students. That is No. 1.

The second big step is one that Senator MURRAY and I and our committee, Senator JONES, Senator BENNET, Senator KING, and many others have been working on for 5 years to simplify the form that students use to apply for Federal aid for college. Twenty million families fill out what is called the FAFSA, a Federal aid form, every year; then we have students who borrow more than \$100 billion a year. What we have done in this bill is reduce the complexity of filing that FAFSA form by saying to students: You don't have to give your Federal tax information to the government twice. We will take the up to 22 questions that are a part of the 108-question FAFSA, and we will eliminate them, and if the student gives his or her express consent, the Internal Revenue Service will answer those questions for the student.

I can't tell you how many times students, parents, college presidents, Federal aid counselors have told me that the application and the verification of this information has discouraged low-income students from coming to college.

Five and one-half million of the twenty million students who fill out these forms have the accuracy of those forms questioned. This will eliminate that for most of the students because they will have to give that information to the government only once.

I want to thank Senator MURRAY especially for her work on this. We work together on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in the Senate, but Senator COONS, Senator SCOTT, Senator RICHARD BURR of North Carolina—which has the largest number of historically Black colleges—and Senator JONES of Alabama have also been crucial with their support.

I yield the floor to Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, HBCUs, Tribal colleges, and other minority-serving institutions—or MSIs—are an essential part of our entire higher education system, and those institutions serve nearly 6 million undergraduate students, a large majority of whom are students of color or Native students.

Funding for those critical institutions should never be up for debate, and now, because of this, it will not be. I am so glad we have reached a bipartisan deal that will permanently fund HBCUs and MSIs.

I know many of our colleagues worked very hard on this, but I especially want to thank Senator JONES for his leadership in pushing to make sure this got done, as well as my partner