



**Senator Peter Welch
Opening Remarks as Delivered**

**Senate Judiciary Hearing
*Unfit to Serve: How the Biden Cover-Up Endangered America and Undermined
the Constitution*
June 18, 2025**

Senator Cornyn indicated the view of the hearing is that there was a 'constitutional crisis' as a result of the 'cover-up' of President Biden's 'decline.' I believe there is a constitutional crisis—it's the collapse of Congress asserting its Article I authority to make decisions about the well-being of the American people.

What has this Senate debated in the months that we've been here other than nominations? Have we discussed the possible war with Iran? Have we had a serious discussion on the floor about the massive and mounting debt? Have we had any discussion about the abdication of congressional spending authority by the impoundment actions of an administration? Have we had a discussion about climate change that is causing havoc throughout the world?

What we've done is gone to the floor and debate—we haven't debated. We've gone to the floor and voted on nominations. There's another issue of great concern to me, because I have enormous respect for my colleagues. Each and every one of us who is elected, it's the highest honor of our life. Each and every one of us came here because it is in our bones that we want to try to do something beneficial and make life better for the people we represent.

And we have different points of view. But instead of this Congress debating those different points of view—about oil exploration, or about clean energy, about a good health care system—what we do is turn that debate into personal accusations: of motivations; of cover-up; of conspiracy; of bad character; of demeaning folks who disagree with us.

So, we never get to the discussion about do we have a health care system that works for the people in Texas, the people in Louisiana, and the people in Vermont? We never get to the discussion about are we going to deny the reality of what we know is true—climate change, and how do we address that in a way that maintains a strong economy and actually builds a strong economy?

We get into the accusations that if you disagree with me, you're a 'left-wing radical.' We get into these discussions that if you disagree with me, you're a 'Marxist.' We get into these discussions that fan the perception of the people we all represent, who desire nothing more than to be able to take care of their families, live with some security, make a contribution in the communities where they live. That if a person disagrees with you, they are a 'bad' person.

We will get nowhere with that approach. Now, so many of the things that happened in the Biden Administration I totally supported, and many of you totally opposed. Those are policy disagreements. He came in with COVID—we got through COVID. We can debate about how he did it, but that was an accomplishment.

The *American Rescue Plan*, we had the biggest jobs creation in the history of the country. The *Chips and Science Act*—acknowledging that we have to have a strong economy and be able to have the best chips here manufactured in the United States, we did that. The federal disaster program improved significantly. And I can go on and on.

And I'll take up something where he didn't do well, and that's immigration. You won that argument. But does it mean that those who disagreed with you along the way were 'bad' people, should be labeled 'Marxist,' should be condemned? The American people ultimately get to decide, but to the extent that we have a responsibility that we share—Republicans and Democrats, whichever side of the issue you are on—it is to debate the issue and not debase the people who are in the debate.

That's what I see as the crisis that we're facing in this Congress. Our refusal to engage in the serious discussion about the issues that are having such an impact on the people we represent.

And I'm going to tell you what I think is a cover-up. I think this 'Big Beautiful Bill' done by reconciliation, whereby decision of the majority, not a single member of the minority—who represent half of the citizens of this country—can even be in the room when the terms and the policies are being debated.

We are not there. That is what I call a cover-up because our responsibility—*our responsibility*—to the people we all represent is to debate health care, is to debate our budget, is to debate about the debt that we're going to be leaving future generations. And there is no debate.

And what is going to be decided in the private back rooms amid discussions not even of all the Republicans, but of some Republican leaders. That's what is going to have lasting impact on the people every one of us represents—whether it be in Missouri, Texas, North Carolina, or Louisiana, or Vermont.

We can't even do our jobs because we're not allowed to be in the room. So sure, we can enjoy the pleasure of looking back at the Biden Administration and then getting into the weeds about when, and where, and how the President was acting at any given moment.

But you know, I ask myself before I get into a debate, and before I do anything: why am I doing it? And if I do it, does it have the potential to make things better for the people I represent? And if the answer is no, it doesn't have any opportunity to help the folks in Vermont, I just shut up. That's what I do, because it won't help.

What we're doing right now won't help. It will not help. And I ask myself: why in the world are we doing it? But we know the answer to that. Because the politics that has been embraced in this Congress is the politics of accusation, of demeaning adversaries, of deflecting from engaging in the hard discussion about hard issues and trying to come to some common agreement that's going to be to the mutual benefit of all of the people that we represent.

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