

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AND CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, March 4, 2016, marks the 155th anniversary of the Government Publishing Office (GPO), the legislative-branch agency that Congress depends upon every day to produce the documents we need to discharge our constitutional responsibilities. Opening its doors for business as the Government Printing Office the same day that Abraham Lincoln was first inaugurated as President, the GPO since that time has worked around the clock in support of Congress, Federal agencies, and the right of the American people for access to information by and about our Government.

Where once GPO produced this Government information solely through the printing process, in the past generation GPO has transformed itself into a digital publisher, reducing dramatically the cost of producing Government information while exponentially expanding its reach to the public. More than 8,000 staff labored at GPO when it provided print only, while today there are about 1,700. Yet because of technology changes embraced by GPO the productivity of the 1,700 vastly exceeds their predecessors'. That productivity has yielded huge savings for the taxpayers and vastly modernized the way we work on behalf of the citizens we represent.

The technological changes the GPO has undergone have not gone unnoticed. In 2014, legislation was introduced in the Senate to recognize that the GPO is, by virtue of its digital progress, not just for printing anymore, and Congress and the President agreed that the time had come to change the GPO's name. Today, the GPO is the Government Publishing Office, a lean, technologically proficient, and thoroughly modern agency under the leadership of Director Davita Vance-Cooks, a talented manager who understands how to lead and sustain the benefits of change.

For the third year in a row Director Vance-Cooks has sent Congress a flat budget request. With her at the helm the GPO's employees have rated it one of the best places to work—a big change from how they felt ten years ago—and in their work they now turn out one success after another. Last year they installed high-efficiency equipment that has yielded a significant price reduction in the cost of producing our hearings. Last month, they unveiled a new, easy-to-use website that is drawing universal praise, including from you, Mr. Speaker.

Moreover, together with the Library of Congress, GPO employees last week launched public access to bulk-data files of bill-status information, a move that is further expanding openness and transparency to the legislative process. For the future they are poised to sup-

port the State Department's introduction of the next generation e-Passport and in 2017 they will move to a new composition system to speed and further reduce the cost of producing documents for Congress and Federal agencies.

Mr. Speaker, in remarks five years ago observing the GPO's sesquicentennial, I noted that Benjamin Franklin—America's patron saint of printing and Philadelphia's greatest citizen—would be surprised and pleased by what the GPO is and does. I can confidently say that he would feel the same today. On behalf of all of us in this House, congratulations and best wishes to GPO Director Davita Vance-Cooks and the men and women of the Government Publishing Office. Many thanks for all their good work.

SUPREME COURT VACANCY

SPEECH OF

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 29, 2016

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, when taking office, every Member of Congress swears to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. This includes Article II, Section 2, Clause 2, also known as the "Appointments Clause."

The Appointments Clause clearly states the President has the power to nominate Justices of the Supreme Court. Nowhere does this clause state the President abdicates this constitutional responsibility during a presidential election year. And, nowhere does it state the U.S. Senate can make threats against the President for exercising his constitutional authority. Our separate branches of government exist to provide checks and balances against tyranny, not to hijack Constitutional processes for political gain.

Many Republicans have argued that Supreme Court Justices are not typically appointed during presidential election years, and especially during a president's last term. To those claims I invoke Mahlon Pitney, Louis Brandeis, John H. Clarke, Benjamin Cardozo, Frank Murphy, and Anthony Kennedy—all examples of Supreme Court Justices who were confirmed during a presidential election year.

Supreme Court Justices Anthony Kennedy and Benjamin Cardozo in particular, were confirmed during President Reagan and President Hoover's last years, respectively. Justice Louis Brandeis was nominated and confirmed in 1916 to replace Justice Joseph Lamar, who died in early January of that same year.

Not only has the Senate voted on and confirmed Supreme Court nominees during presidential election years, the process has never taken more than 125 days. In fact, on average, nominees have been confirmed, rejected, or withdrawn within 25 days. Ample time remains for President Obama to work with Congress to approve a nominee.

However, Republican leadership has once again let politics get in the way of doing what the American people elected them to do.

The Constitution is clear. Just as we honor our First Amendment right to freedom of religion or our Second Amendment right to bear arms, so should we defend the constitutionality of the Supreme Court appointment process. We cannot pick and choose which sections we enforce.

As Members of Congress, we made a promise to our constituents that we would "faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which" we have been elected to. It is the Senate's duty to consider a Supreme Court nominee.

I implore my Republican colleagues: Put politics aside and do your job; do not block President Obama's nominee. Rulings handed down by the Supreme Court directly affect our economy, security, and civil rights. This seat is too important to leave vacant.

SUPREME COURT VACANCY

SPEECH OF

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 29, 2016

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, barely an hour after Justice Scalia's death was confirmed, Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL issued a statement rejecting any judge President Obama chose to nominate to the Supreme Court.

At that point, the President hadn't even announced his intention to fill the vacancy on our highest court.

It's a sad state of affairs that the highest ranking Republican in the Senate would politicize the Court in such a grotesque way when many of us were still learning of Justice Scalia's passing.

But this is par for the course for the Republicans. On issue after issue, debate after debate, they continue to solidify their reputation as the party of "no," to the detriment of this great nation.

Senate Republicans continue to maintain that they will deny a confirmation hearing to any individual nominated by President Obama to serve on the Supreme Court.

This is part of the Republican political agenda to disrupt the work of government when it does not align with their far-right ideology.

It is a thinly-veiled attempt to obstruct the nomination process in hopes of packing the Supreme Court with conservative justices who will roll back the progress our nation has made, from marriage equality to reproductive rights.

We have already seen what is at stake here. In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down the heart of the Voting Rights Act—a major setback for civil rights and voting rights, and a major blow to fundamental democracy in this country.

The president has a constitutional responsibility to nominate a successor to Justice Scalia.

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