

nomination dead in its tracks. No reason need be given, no public statement need be made, no one would even know whom to blame. With a secret whisper or a backroom deal, the nomination simply dies without even a hearing. This is just plain wrong.

I have watched the painful process over the last 9 years. During 6 of those years, the blue slip itself contained the words, "no further proceedings on this nominee will be scheduled until both blue slips have been returned by the nominee's home State Senators." As a result, I saw nominees waiting 1, 2, 3, even 4 years, often without as much as a hearing or even an explanation as to why the action was taken. These nominees put their lives on hold. Yet they never have a chance to discuss the concerns that may have been raised about them. These concerns remain secret and the nomination goes nowhere.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I believe our duty is either to confirm or reject a nominee based on an informed judgment that he or she is either fit or not fit to serve; to listen to concerns and responses, to examine the evidence presented at a hearing, and to have a rationale for determining whether or not an individual nominee should serve as a district court judge or circuit court judge or even a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. That duty, in my view, leaves no room for a secret block on nominees by any Member which prevents their hearing and confirmation.

I believe in the last three Congresses, based on information I have been able to come upon, that the blue slip has been used at least 21 times. Consider this: An individual graduates college with honors, finishes law school at the top of the class; he or she may even clerk for a prestigious judge or join a large law firm, or maybe practice public interest law or even serve as staff of the Judiciary Committee. In fact, a nominee can spend years of his or her life honing skills and developing a reputation among peers, a reputation that finally leads to a nomination by the President of the United States to a Federal court.

This must be the proudest day of his or her life. Then the nominee just waits. First for a few weeks. He or she is told things should be moving shortly but the Senate sometimes takes a while to get moving. Then the months start to go by, and maybe friends or associates make some inquiries as to what could be wrong. They don't hear anything, so the nominee is told just to wait a little longer; things will work themselves out.

I have had nominees call me and say: I have children in school. We need to move. Shall we do it? I don't know what to do. Do I continue my law practice?

A year passes with still no hearing or explanation; finally, the second year, and maybe the third, or even the fourth, if one is "lucky" enough to be renominated in the next session. The

time goes by without so much as a word as to why the nomination has not moved forward.

Simply put, the nominee has been blackballed by a blue slip, and there is nothing that can be done about it—no one to hold accountable.

I believe that if a Member wants to use a blue slip to stop a nominee from moving forward, that blue slip should be public. And I also believe that the Member should be prepared to appear before the Judiciary Committee and explain why the Senate should not consider the nominee and hold a hearing.

Making the blue slip public is no guarantee that a nominee will receive a hearing. It is no guarantee that an up or down vote will ever be held. But at least the nominee will have the chance to see who has the problem, and what that problem is. In many cases, a nominee may choose to withdraw. In others, perhaps a misunderstanding can be cleared up. Either way, the process will be in the open, and we will know the reasons.

I believe that many members of this Senate did not even realize they held the power of the blue slip until just recently.

In my view, the rationale behind the blue slip process is faulty. The process was designed to allow home state Senators—who may in some instances know the nominee better than the rest of the Senate—to have a larger say in whether the nominee moves forward. More often than not, however, this power is and will be used to stop nominees for political or other reasons having nothing to do with qualifications.

As a matter of fact, the Member who uses the blue slip, who doesn't send it in, or sends it in negatively, may never have even met the nominee.

If legitimate reasons to defeat a nominee do exist, those reasons can be shared with the Judiciary Committee in confidence, and decisions can be made based on that information—by the entire Committee.

The blue slip process as it now stands is open to abuse.

I would join with those—I am hopeful there are now those—on the Judiciary Committee who would move to abolish the blue slip.

Before I conclude, I want to read from a recent opinion piece by G. Calvin Mackenzie, a professor at Colby College and an expert on the appointment process. In the April 1, 2001 edition of the Washington Post, Mackenzie wrote:

The nomination system is a national disgrace. It encourages bullies and emboldens demagogues, silences the voices of responsibility, and nourishes the lowest forms of partisan combat. It uses innocent citizens as pawns in politicians' petty games and stains the reputations of good people. It routinely violates fundamental democratic principles, undermines the quality and consistency of public management, and breaches simple decency.

I find myself in agreement with every word in that quote. It is quite an indictment of our nominations process.

On both sides of the aisle, we hear: Well, they did it, so we are going to do it. Well, they blocked our nominee, so now we will block their nominee.

I don't believe that has any merit whatsoever. I believe at some point we have to stop this cycle. At some point, nominees have to come to the Senate Judiciary Committee, go promptly or as promptly as they can go to a hearing, have the questions asked, and we do our duty which we took our oath to do, which is to make the judgment whether that nominee qualifies to be a Federal court judge or district court judge.

I make these remarks to say that this is one Member of the Judiciary Committee who will happily vote to do away with the blue slip.

Thank you very much. I yield the floor.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Pursuant to rule 6, paragraph 2, I ask unanimous consent the Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI, be granted official leave of the Senate until July 9.

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

FORMAL OPENING OF THE NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, earlier this afternoon, a few short blocks from this Chamber and in the shadow of the Capitol, hundreds of people gathered to celebrate the formal opening of the National Japanese American Memorial honoring the loyalty and courage of Japanese Americans during the Second World War.

As a World War II veteran and a native of Hawaii, I am well-acquainted with the exceptional contributions of Japanese Americans to the war effort, both at home and abroad. The battlefield exploits of the 442nd, 100th, and the MIS immediately come to mind. Less known but equally deserving of

recognition are the sacrifices of the civilian nisei on the homefront, who continued to support the war effort while enduring the prejudice of fellow citizens as well as the wholesale violation of their civil rights by the U.S. Government.

This new memorial honors the valor and sacrifice of the hundreds of brave men who fought and died for their country, and it also speaks to the faith and perseverance of 120,000 Japanese Americans and nationals, who solely on the basis of race, regardless of citizenship or loyalty, without proof or justification, were denied their civil rights in what history will record as one of our Nation's most shameful acts. This memorial commemorates these events in our Nation's history. It will remind us of the consequences of allowing hysteria and racial prejudice to override constitutional rights, and, I hope, that we teach this lesson to our children to avoid a repetition of our mistakes.

I congratulate the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation for the tremendous effort that went into organizing and building the Memorial to Patriotism. Thousands of Americans from around the country donated funds to build the memorial. Over 2,000 Hawaii residents contributed approximately \$1 million to this worthy project. The completed memorial is both inspiration and educational. First and foremost, the memorial honors the memory of those who gave their lives in defense of our freedom and liberty and remembers all those who were dislocated or interned from 1942 to 1945. In addition, the memorial draws on a few striking elements to cause one to meditate on the wartime experiences of Japanese Americans. The crane sculpture by Nina Akamu, a Hawaii-born artist, speaks to the prejudice and injustice confronted by Japanese Americans, and in a larger context speaks to the resiliency of the human spirit over adversity. The bell created by Paul Matisse encourages reflection, its toll marking the struggle and sacrifice of Japanese Americans in our Nation's history and reminding us of our shared responsibility to defend the civil rights and liberties of all Americans.

I would also like to congratulate our friend and colleague, the senior Senator from Hawaii [Mr. INOUYE] and my friend, Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta, a former Member of Congress, for their leadership in gaining Congressional authorization for the memorial and their support for the work of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation.

Today's formal opening of this Memorial to Patriotism by the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation in the Nation's capital is a timely and necessary endeavor, for it reminds us and future generations of Americans that courage, honor, and loyalty transcend race, culture, and ethnicity.

JUSTICE FOR U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, as we move into recess for our annual Independence Day celebration, I wish to offer my deepest gratitude for all veterans of this country who took the call for arms in silent and noble duty and sacrificed more than we can ever repay. From the Revolutionary War to the Persian Gulf War, American men and women have always answered the call to secure and preserve independence and freedom both here and abroad. We are forever in their debt.

I also want to take this occasion to recognize and honor a special group of brave, indeed extraordinary, soldiers who served this country so gallantly in WWII. I want to pay special tribute to those who served in the Pacific, were taken prisoner, and then enslaved, and forced into labor without pay, under horrific conditions by Japanese companies.

While I in no way wish to suggest that other American troops did not suffer equally horrific hardships or served with any less courage, the situation faced by this particular group of veterans was unique. As recognized in a unanimous joint resolution last year, all members of Congress stated their strong support for these brave Americans. As with many of our colleagues here today, I am committed to supporting these veterans in every way possible in their fight for justice.

This weekend the Prime Minister of Japan will be meeting with the President of the United States. I cannot praise this President enough for his thoughtfulness in hosting this event for the leader of Japan.

On this Independence Day, as we honor and appreciate America's freedom, we cannot help but think of those who served our country. Freedom, indeed, is not free. The price is immeasurable. I hope the Prime Minister will understand, as I know he does, the value we place upon our veterans—the very people who fought and paid the price.

Our country appreciates the decades of friendship the United States and Japan have shared. Often, we probably do not recognize as we should the value of our bilateral relationship with Japan. On many occasions, we get bogged down in trade disputes. But ultimately we have found ways to resolve past trade differences, and I am confident we can address all current and future trade issues.

It is with this sincere hope and appreciation that I raise the memory of injustices perpetrated by private companies in Japan against American servicemen, and I hope that we can find a resolution to this problem. There is no more appropriate time to open the door to this long overdue dialogue between the United States and Japan. This is a moral issue that will not go away. We can work with Japan to close this sad chapter in history. In so doing, we will fortify and continue our bilateral relationship with Japan.

In closing, I urge all Americans, during this next week as we celebrate our freedom and our great history, to thank our soldiers who gave their lives and their freedom to fight for our nation. I thank them and express my support that they will be helped and protected. I will fight for them as they fought for me, my children, and all other Americans.

RETIREMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL JAMES F. AMERAULT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise to take this opportunity to recognize the exemplary service and career of an outstanding naval officer, Vice Admiral James F. Amerault, upon his retirement from the United States Navy at the conclusion of more than 36 years of honorable and distinguished service. It is my privilege to commend him for outstanding service to the Navy and our great nation.

Vice Admiral Amerault embarked on his naval career thirty-six years ago, on the 29th of June 1965. In the years since that day, he has devoted great energy and talent to the Navy and protecting our national security interests. It would be hard to calculate the innumerable hours this man has stood watch to keep our nation safe. He has been steadfast in his commitment to the ideals and values that our country embodies and holds dear.

Following his commissioning at the United States Naval Academy, he embarked on the first of many ships that would benefit from his leadership and expertise. Vice Admiral Amerault served at-sea as Gunnery Officer and First Lieutenant on board USS *Massey* (DD 778). He then served as Officer in Charge, Patrol Craft Fast 52 in Vietnam, a challenging and dangerous assignment that kept him in harm's way. His courage and commitment to our nation was more than evident during these tumultuous years as he conducted more than 90 combat patrols in hostile waters off the coast of South Vietnam. One example of his valor and heroism is quoted from Commander Coastal Division Fourteen on 21 December 1967, "On the night of 4 August 1967 the patrol craft in the area adjacent to the one you were patrolling came under enemy fire. Disregarding your own safety, you directed your patrol craft to within 300 yards of the beach and bombarded the enemy position with intense .50 caliber and 81mm mortar fire. During this exchange your patrol craft was narrowly missed by a barrage of recoilless rifle fire." Again, his valor and heroism was established early in his career. He was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with Combat V and the Navy Combat Action Ribbon for his service.

Vice Admiral Amerault's follow-on sea tours demonstrated the tactical brilliance that would become his trademark. His next tour was on board USS *Taylor* (DD 468) as Engineer Officer.