

World War II, what went on in the Philippines. We depended on the Filipinos. They fought bravely, valiantly by our side. So I find this opposition baffling. With threats emerging from every corner of our complex world, America needs allies. We need to set an example that we stick by our friends. We should be sending a message to the world that we need you to stand with us. We cannot fight the global war on terror alone.

What kind of example does this set? What better message can we send to our global allies than we will honor the past service of men and women born on foreign soil who rallied around our flag and fought for our freedom?

My friend from North Carolina, distinguished Senator BURR, argues we should not be providing pensions for Filipino soldiers who served our country but who were not injured during World War II.

World War II was a different war from the war we are fighting now. In Iraq, everybody is fair game to the terrorists. It was not that way in World War II. Only 20 percent—one in five—served on front lines taking enemy fire. The other 80 percent provided support services and engaged in intelligence gathering. They transported and maintained equipment. They took care of the ammunition. They repaired combat vehicles. They were in the Quartermaster Corps making sure the uniforms and other equipment the soldiers needed got to where they were supposed to go. They cooked the food. They acted, as we know, as nurses. It cannot be argued those 80 percent were any less a part of that war. It cannot be argued that sacrifices do not count. It cannot be argued that these men and women are less entitled to the benefits of veteran status. This legislation would give them \$300 a month. Don't they deserve that? Doesn't this country owe that to them?

I urge my Republican colleagues to break away from this foolishness and join us in providing a pension for the brave Filipino troops who stood with us, fought with us, and helped us win World War II. I hope the Republicans will support all components of this legislation. It is good legislation, but it should be known that I have reached out to Republicans on this issue on many occasions, with no takers.

As I said to Senator BURR on the floor yesterday, if he does not like this provision, why hold up the whole bill? We should have been on the bill Thursday night, Friday, Monday. It is Tuesday now. Offer an amendment. Say: I don't believe these people who were not front-line soldiers deserve anything. They are old. The average age is 84. They do not deserve anything. Let's strike that with an amendment.

Let's have a debate on it and vote on it, not hold up the whole bill. But that is what is being done. If a majority of the Senators vote for the amendment, the bill will be altered. That is how the legislative process is supposed to work.

We should not have to invoke cloture on a motion to proceed simply to begin to legislate.

So I hope cloture will be invoked and, if it is, we do not have to use the postcloture 30 hours to sit around and do nothing. We should be able to start legislating on this bill. I am not even asking Republicans to support the bill at this point, just support allowing us to move to the bill so we can start legislating.

This is an example; almost 70 times in a little over a year, the Republicans have stopped us from moving legislation. Is it any wonder that today it is reported "Bush's disapproval rating worst of any president in 70 years"? That is no surprise. Holding up legislation, even legislation with which they agree, hold us up, just to stall, to maintain the status quo. What is the status quo giving the American people? Nothing. And that is how they feel about President Bush. That is why we see this headline in today's paper.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, of course the bill is not being held up, and of course the majority does not need permission from us to take up the bill. Today we will, in fact, vote on the cloture motion to proceed to the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. It is my belief cloture should be invoked and will be invoked.

There is actually much to commend in this bill. It will improve the lives of our veterans by supplementing the level of assistance for disabled veterans for the purchase of automobiles and increasing assistance for those veterans who need to modify their homes to accommodate their disabilities.

I wish to recognize with admiration my colleague from North Carolina, the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and thank him for his hard work on this bill. Yesterday, he made clear that he will offer a substitute that seeks to correct the one glaring flaw contained within S. 1315, a provision that would divert \$221 million over the next 10 years to create a special pension for Filipino veterans of the Second World War living in the Philippines who have no service-connected disability. That money, of course, would be diverted at the expense of American veterans living in America. The Senator from North Carolina spoke eloquently about the fact that diverting these resources from our veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan represents misplaced priorities, and I agree with him.

My expectation is the Senate will have a healthy debate concerning this

provision. Senators on my side of the aisle will have ample opportunity to amend the committee bill so we can have a bill that will pass with bipartisan support and be signed into law. It is my hope we can work together on this bill and produce another strong, bipartisan achievement for our veterans. I expect that to happen certainly in the very near future. We will have an opportunity in our conference at noon to discuss going forward, but we anticipate moving forward with the Burr amendment early in the process. I think we are going to be able to get a strong, bipartisan accomplishment in the very near future in the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want the world to hear what the Republican leader just said: We are not holding up the bill. That simply is without any basis of fact. That is why we are going to vote at noon on being able to move to the bill. In years past, it was done automatically. Rarely did we have to file a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed. It is Orwellian, what my friend just said. Of course they are holding up the bill. And we have asked other times to move to this legislation, as far back as November 2007.

So, Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that following morning business, we move to the bill, we vitiate the need to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed, that all germane amendments would be in order—and certainly what Senator BURR said he wanted to do would be totally germane. It is a striking provision.

I ask unanimous consent that following morning business, the Senate move to the bill that is before the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I really think any observers will find all of this quite silly, really. We are going to discuss the measure at noon. Many in my conference are not on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and have not had an opportunity to hear from Senator BURR about this issue. Yesterday was a no-vote day. Members were not around. We are going to discuss the matter at noon.

I already indicated to my good friend the majority leader that we are going to be able to move forward, I think, with dispatch on this issue, and we are going to get a bipartisan accomplishment. No amount of trying to steamroll the minority into giving up its rights is going to work. Maybe that is one of the reasons this Congress has a lower approval than the President of the United States. My good friend the majority leader never misses an opportunity to talk about the President not being very popular. Every time in the future the majority leader wants to bring up the President's popularity, I will bring up the popularity of this new

majority which makes the President's popularity look really good.

What I think the American people would like for us to do is to quit this silly sparring back and forth, and finger-pointing, and legislate. We have a very good chance to begin this week with a strong bipartisan accomplishment, and I think we ought to get about it. As soon as lunch is out of the way and Senator BURR has had an opportunity to brief our Members on this measure, with which many of them are not yet familiar, we will sit down, as we always do, the majority leader and I, with smiles on our faces, and figure out how to go forward. And I think we will be able to get there in the relatively near future.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. So that it is very clear, the statement of the Republican leader was untrue. He can talk all he wants about finger-pointing. All we want to do is legislate. That is what we want to do. And it would seem to me, as this legislation has been pending for 9 months—reported out of the committee 9 months ago—that since we are dealing with the veterans, the people for whom we want to do the very best we can because they deserve it, that in 9 months the Republican caucus would have been able to focus on veterans and health care and not wait until today, April 22—or whatever today is, 9 months after the legislation was reported out of the committee—to determine what is in the legislation. Senators need to be briefed on how to take care of our soldiers medically? I think that is without any foundation.

I will also say this, Mr. President: I feel very good about my job as a Senator. I am very grateful to the people of Nevada for allowing me to serve in the Senate. But I am never going to come to the floor and denigrate this body, as my Republican friend obviously wants to do. The rating of the Senate, over the history of the country, the rating of the Congress is tied to the President. If the President is unpopular, the Congress is unpopular, the city council is unpopular. If you have a popular President, everybody feels good about the Government itself. So I will never come to the Senate or anywhere else and denigrate my job and those of my 99 colleagues. I think we have important responsibilities, and I think we should live up to those in a manner that is best in keeping with the Senate tradition.

I came here this morning to state a fact. I want to legislate on behalf of the Senate on legislation dealing with the medical care of our veterans, and it is being held up by the Republicans. That is clear. That is what I said, and I stand on that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. At the risk of prolonging this a little longer, I don't

think, at the end of the day, anybody in the country is going to believe we are obstructing this bill. This is a serious effort to legislate. Senator BURR has taken it very seriously. He has an important amendment to be offered, which will be offered later today. The Senate will have an opportunity to consider it.

Look, the way you get things done in the Senate is on a bipartisan basis, and the rules around here give the minority an opportunity to be involved. This is not the House of Representatives. I wish we had been able to get more done last year, but one of the reasons we didn't is because we had 34 Iraq votes. Some of my friends in the other conference told me last year that any week they weren't voting on Iraq was a bad week. We spent an awful lot of time on sense-of-the-Senate resolutions on Iraq last year.

Floor time is at a premium in the Senate, as the majority leader used to say repeatedly when he was the leader of the Democratic Party and in the minority. The Senate is not the House. Things don't move as speedily. Most observers of the Senate understand that. By Senate standards, this bill is going to move forward in relatively rapid order after the rights of the minority to offer amendments have been protected.

So I don't know what this little back and forth this morning is all about because I do think we are going to have an opportunity to get a bipartisan accomplishment in the very near future.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. What this is all about is the truth. That is what it is all about.

Senator DURBIN, assistant majority leader, on November 8, 2007, said this: This is Senator DURBIN speaking, Mr. President.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate may proceed to the consideration of calendar No. 336, S. 1315, at any time determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader; that when the bill is considered, the only amendments in order to the bill, other than the committee-reported amendment, be first-degree amendments that are relevant to the subject matter of the bill and that they be subject to relevant second-degree amendments; that upon disposition of all amendments, the committee-reported substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The Presiding Officer asked: Is there objection?

The Republican side: Objection.

The objections to this go back months. So what is this about today, the Republican leader says? It is about the truth. It is about the Republicans stalling everything that comes up—everything—and then to have the audacity to come to the floor and say: We are not stalling anything.

We should have been on this bill a long time ago.

And during the period of time the Republican leader complains we were hav-

ing numerous Iraq votes, we were trying to change the course in Iraq, Mr. President, because it needed changing, and it still does.

We have been here I don't know how many seconds this morning, but every second we have been here we have been spending \$5,000 in Iraq—\$5,000 a second or \$12 billion a month. During the period of time he complains about our offering amendments related to the war in Iraq, our troops were getting killed at the rate of more than one a day. Tens of thousands have been wounded. A third of them are missing eyes. Their minds aren't good. One-fifth of them have brain problems—injuries to their brains. We have more than 3,000 double amputees and thousands and thousands of single amputees. We have an obligation to the American people to talk about the war in Iraq, and we are going to continue to do that.

So we don't apologize to anyone for the votes we took on Iraq. The first many years of this war—a 6-year war now—the war went along with the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate doing nothing about the war except patting the President on the back. We have not done that. We have been critical of the operation of the war in Iraq, but we have done everything we can to support our troops. We were the first to call for more body armor for the troops. We were the first to call for up-arming the vehicles so they wouldn't be killed as easily in those vehicles. We have done everything we can to support the troops. We have done everything we can to change the course of the war in Iraq.

The President has not allowed us to change the course of the war in Iraq, and we are here today for the truth. The truth is, we are trying to legislate for the American people and change the status quo. The Republicans want to maintain the status quo.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, with all due respect to my good friend, the majority leader, the American people are giving Congress such low approval ratings principally because of the rhetoric and the tone and the feeling that we can't accomplish anything.

I don't know why, on this particular Tuesday morning, at about the time we are going to go to a bill on which we could achieve an important bipartisan accomplishment, we want to engage in this kind of rancorous debate. We will have plenty of highly contentious issues to come before us. That is the nature of the legislative process. And certainly we have spirited debates in the Senate. But on the measure that we are about to go to later today, I think there will be very little difference of opinion, and at the end of the process we are likely to have a bipartisan accomplishment that we can all feel good about.

So I would hope we could improve our moods and attitudes this week as

we go forward and see if we can't accomplish something important for the veterans of our country.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I, too, am confident that we will pass important legislation on a bipartisan basis this week to provide the benefits to veterans that they have earned and that they deserve, but we can't forget the unfinished business of this Congress last December when we wrapped up the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill and we left a balance of more than \$100 billion that the Department of Defense said it needed to fight the global war on terror.

In other words, it is important to support our veterans, but I would submit it is equally important to make sure we are supporting our troops currently in the fight and in harm's way, and this Congress has an unfortunate record of delaying that and playing political games with that money. It is time that should end.

In the Army alone, this shortfall amounts to \$66 billion. As a result, the Army will run out of pay for Active Duty and National Guard soldiers in June unless Congress acts promptly.

At the same time, funding for extra vehicle armor, hospital construction and renovation, and new service vehicles will dry up. Our troops will not have the resources they need to carry out their mission unless we act soon to pass this emergency supplemental appropriation.

Provincial reconstruction teams will also run out of funding. These teams are an integral part of our strategy in Iraq and go a long way to fostering growth, freedom, and good ties to the Iraqi communities and ensuring we win the battle for hearts and minds as well.

We have also appropriated less than half of what the military leaders in Iraq tell us they need for the Commanders' Emergency Response Program, or CERP, which is essential for continued bottom-up reconciliation efforts. We should not hold this funding

hostage to political gains, and it should not become a vessel for porkbarrel projects and bloated spending.

We should pass a clean emergency supplemental funding bill for our troops as soon as we possibly can, and I hope immediately following the passage of this legislation we are on today.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT JUSTIN YOUNG

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is my honor to speak today about a young man whose courage and strength have earned him the Silver Star, and more importantly the respect and admiration of all those who have heard about his story.

SSG Justin Young was born in Mesquite, TX, just outside of Dallas. The son of John Young and Kathy Sutton, Justin was a swimmer for the Boerne High School Greyhounds. After graduating, he told his dad he needed to find his priorities and his focus in life. That level of maturity and insight is rare for someone so young, and it already tells you something about the character of Justin Young.

Justin decided what was best for him was to join the U.S. Army. I doubt anyone in this body would deny that the U.S. Army has a long and storied history of taking young men and women with strong character and transforming them into proven soldiers, and also into courageous leaders as well. Justin was no exception.

Just over a year ago, on March 24, Justin and the rest of the 82nd Airborne were conducting operations in Diyala Province in Iraq. As the squad leader with C Troop, Justin led his nine-soldier squad into a compound in Qubbah, Iraq, a location where known enemy fighters were entrenched.

Once inside the compound, Justin and his troops quickly encountered armed insurgents. Justin disarmed and detained a guard before pressing on. In the confusion of the initial entry, Sergeant Young was ambushed by a hidden fighter about 10 feet away. The enemy fired his AK-47 assault rifle, hitting Justin's rifle three times and striking Justin once in the chest. The force of these shots sprayed shrapnel up into Justin's neck and knocked him off his feet.

Injured, and with a broken weapon, Justin killed his attacker and got to his feet. Now, it is difficult for us here in the comfort of our Nation's Capitol to imagine what such a fight for one's life must be like. We can only try to imagine the chaos and confusion, the adrenaline, the pain, and the fear. You wouldn't blame anyone for pulling back after something like that. But, frankly, that is one thing that makes these young men and women so exceptional, and that is what makes them the U.S. Army.

Justin got up, took a confiscated enemy AK-47 and three magazines, and

refusing medical attention, continued to lead his troops through 5 more days of fighting. That is, Mr. President, the kind of courage, strength, and selflessness that ought to leave all of us in awe.

Justin finished out his 15-month assignment in Iraq in August and came home, a hero to many—perhaps not the least of which being his father. Try as he might, his dad John simply could not put into words how proud he was and is of his son. After having dinner with Justin's unit at Fort Bragg, he said simply, "He's unbelievable and so are his friends." Both Justin and his father would be quick to remind us that even though Justin received this medal, it is all the men and women serving in our military who deserve our admiration and respect.

John told me that while "Justin was there for his buddies, they were there for him, too." Soldiers like Justin and his squadmates are a prime example of the great commitment all of our troops share, not only to each other but to our country as well. As such, they serve two of the most noble principles the world will ever know.

What is Justin doing now? Having found his focus and oriented his priorities, with an example of true courage and dedication, Justin reenlisted in the Army just before finishing his first tour. Despite his harrowing experience, Justin stood in the sands of Iraq and he raised his right hand and swore to continue his service to the defense of our great Nation. Recognizing his great courage and leadership, Justin is now training with the hopes of joining the special forces.

That is why I wanted to come to the floor today and honor Justin's exemplary service to our country. He is just one example of the bravery, courage, and strength of thousands of Texans, both past and present, who have served in the U.S. military.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague from Texas putting a personal face on this war. Our young men and women are making tremendous sacrifices. We here in the Congress should be willing to do our part to ensure they succeed in their mission. Hearing a story like Justin's simply confirms that we should redouble our efforts to fund what they need to carry out their mission.

The majority leader talked a little bit earlier about delays with the legislation that is currently pending before the Senate. It is going to take us 2 or 3 days, presumably, to complete this legislation that is currently pending—2 or 3 days. That is not a big delay in the Senate. But 14 months is a big delay, and that is the time since the President first asked for the supplemental