

millions of lives this disease takes as it orphans children and destabilizes communities throughout the world, and recommit to fighting TB with the sense of urgency and level of resources this global public health battle requires.

OBJECTION TO JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Judiciary Committee was scheduled to welcome two of President Obama's nominees to fill vacancies on the Federal bench in California: Professor Goodwin Liu, nominated to fill a vacancy on the Ninth Circuit, and Magistrate Judge Kimberly Mueller, nominated to a judgeship in the Eastern District of California. However, we will not be able to hear from those nominees today because Senate Republicans have anonymously objected to the hearing. They have continued their ill-advised protest of meaningful health reform legislation by exploiting parliamentary tactics and Senate Rules, to the detriment of the American people and, in today's instance, at the expense of American justice.

I have previously accommodated requests from Judiciary Committee Republicans to delay the committee's hearing to consider Professor Liu's nomination. I had intended to hold this hearing 2 weeks ago but, at the request of Republicans, delayed it until today. We had agreed, instead, to proceed to a hearing for Judge Robert Chatigny, a nominee to the Second Circuit court of appeals, on March 10. Republicans then reversed themselves and asked for additional delay in connection with that March 10 hearing. I, again, accommodated them. Earlier this week I sought to move this afternoon's hearing to the morning, into the 2-hour window of time after the Senate convened, that would not be subject to this arcane objection. Republicans asked that we keep it scheduled for this afternoon because it worked better for the schedules of the Republican members of the committee, and they had planned to participate this afternoon. Now, having objected to holding the hearing this morning, they object to it not being held this afternoon. They pulled the plug on our hearing and put up roadblocks to the committee's process for working to fill judicial vacancies.

It is particularly troubling that Republicans will not allow the committee to hear from Professor Goodwin Liu, a widely respected constitutional law scholar who they targeted for criticism and opposition the moment he was nominated. The day Professor Liu was nominated, committee Republicans declared themselves "disappointed" by the President's nomination of Professor Liu and claimed that Professor Liu was "far outside the mainstream of American jurisprudence." Their opposition was instantaneous and the drumbeat has continued. Rather than give Professor Liu a chance to answer their questions and respond to their attacks,

Republicans have now prevented Professor Liu from appearing, from answering their questions, and from addressing their concerns. They are being unfair. They are seeking to render him mute by their obstruction while they continue their attacks.

Goodwin Liu, the son of Taiwanese immigrants, has a great American story and sterling credentials. He did not learn English until kindergarten, yet rose to graduate from Stanford University and Yale Law School and become a Rhodes scholar. After law school, Professor Liu clerked for DC Circuit Judge David Tatel and Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. He has a brilliant legal mind and is admired by legal thinkers and academic scholars from across the political spectrum. As conceded by a Fox News commentator, Professor Liu's qualifications for the appellate bench are "unassailable."

Professor Liu would also bring much-needed diversity to the Federal bench. There are currently no active Asian-American Federal appeals court judges in the country. Judge Denny Chin of New York has been nominated to the Second Circuit, but Senate Republicans have stalled his nomination for over 3 months, despite his unanimous approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Senate Republicans have not given Professor Liu fair consideration. Like their practice of pocket-filibustering more than 60 of President Clinton's judicial nominees in the 1990s, the decision by Republicans to block the hearing today gives Professor Liu no chance to respond to the attacks that they began weeks ago.

Republicans' filibusters and stalling tactics have been evident since President Obama took office. Senate Republicans threatened to filibuster President Obama's judicial nominations before the President had made a single one. They insisted on filibustering the nomination of Judge David Hamilton of Indiana, a well-respected mainstream district court judge who had the support of Indiana Senator DICK LUGAR, the senior Republican in the Senate. They forced the Senate to invoke cloture, a time consuming process, by refusing for months to agree to debate and vote on the nomination of Justice Barbara Keenan of Virginia to the Fourth Circuit. She was then confirmed by a vote of 99 to zero.

The Republicans tactics of obstruction have led to 22 judicial nominations stalled on the Senate's Executive Calendar and only 18 circuit and district court nominations confirmed. That lack of progress stands in stark contrast to this date in 2002, when a Democratic Senate majority had proceeded to confirm 42 of President Bush's judicial nominations. Republicans obstruct virtually every judicial nominee. Even though 15 of the 18 Federal circuit and district court judges confirmed have been without opposition, they have delayed and stalled for weeks and months

as Republicans drag out the process and stall Senate consideration by withholding their consent.

During President Bush's first 2 years the Senate confirmed 100 of his judicial nominees. Republican obstruction has us on pace to confirm fewer than 30 Federal circuit and district court nominees before this Congress adjourns. Their approach has led to skyrocketing judicial vacancies, again, like the pocket filibusters they employed during the Clinton Presidency that led to a vacancy crisis in the 1990s. They do a disservice to the American people seeking justice in our overburdened Federal courts. We have to do far more to address the growing crisis of unfilled judicial vacancies, which now top 100. We owe it to the American people to do better.

Sadly, actions like today's objections from Senate Republicans to the consideration of two nominations to fill vacancies on overburdened courts will be viewed as little more than what they are: petty, partisan politics with no regard for the priorities of the American people. I urge them to reconsider and allow this hearing to proceed.

JUSTICE FOR JAMIE LEIGH JONES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday, I was pleased to learn that a brave young woman, Ms. Jamie Leigh Jones, will finally have her day in court. Ms. Jones testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee last year about how the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Federal Arbitration Act has hampered American employees from having their civil rights protected. Ms. Jones was a compelling witness; her case deserves the attention of every Senator.

When she was just 20 years old and was working overseas for the military contractor, KBR, Ms. Jones was sexually assaulted by her coworkers. She filed suit in Federal court alleging sexual harassment, hostile work environment claims under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and several state law tort claims including assault and battery. Both KBR and its former parent company, Halliburton, argued that her claims were subject to forced arbitration under a clause that Ms. Jones was required to sign as a condition of her employment. The district court agreed with the company in part. It dismissed her Federal civil rights claims because it found that they were subject to forced arbitration under her contract. But the court held that Ms. Jones could proceed to trial on some of her tort claims, albeit only after her civil rights claims had been decided in arbitration. Halliburton and KBR appealed to the Fifth Circuit court of appeals, arguing that under her employment contract and the Federal Arbitration Act, all of Ms. Jones's claims were subject to forced arbitration, including her assault and battery claims arising out of her alleged rape. The Fifth Circuit affirmed the district court's decision, and once again the companies appealed.

In the interim, Congress enacted an amendment to the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2010, Public Law 111-118. That amendment was sponsored by Senator FRANKEN and supported by Senators from both parties. It prohibited the U.S. Government from entering into contracts with and paying Federal tax dollars to corporations who force their employees to arbitrate their civil rights or tort claims related to sexual assault and harassment or take any action to enforce such forced arbitration clauses. I am pleased that the companies cited this law, which I was happy to support, as a reason for dropping their appeal.

As we examined in our October hearing, however, millions of hard working Americans like Ms. Jones are being denied their civil and constitutional rights and being forced into arbitration merely by accepting a job offer that contains an arbitration clause as a condition of employment. There is no rule of law in arbitration. There are no juries or independent judges in the arbitration industry. There is no transparency or accountability. And unfortunately, there is often no justice.

After more than 5 years of hard won challenges, Ms. Jones will finally be able to seek justice in a courtroom. But this small victory should not have been such a struggle. I will continue to work to ensure that Americans have a meaningful choice about whether or not to enter a predispute arbitration agreement—no American should be forced to forfeit their access to the courts in order to get a job or a product or a service. Arbitration clauses like the one in Ms. Jones's contract strip Americans of the civil rights protections many of us in Congress have fought for so long to enshrine in our law.

Legislation such as Senator FEINGOLD's Arbitration Fairness Act, S. 931, which would make mandatory predispute arbitration clauses in employment, consumer, franchise, or civil rights disputes unenforceable, would correct these practices and restore fairness to the marketplace for jobs and other goods and services. Jamie Leigh Jones's struggle also highlights the importance of the Civilian Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act of 2010, S. 2979, which I recently introduced. My legislation would fix outdated criminal laws by establishing that all U.S. government employees and contractors who commit crimes while working abroad can be charged and tried in the United States under American law. We must continue to protect victims like Ms. Jones and others who have their civil rights violated. I look forward to the day when justice is the norm, rather than the exception, in all cases like this.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY HEIGHT

• Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, today I celebrate the 98th birthday of a true civil rights pioneer and social activist: Dorothy Height.

She began her career in the 1930s, as a teacher in Brooklyn, NY. Shortly after it was founded, she became active in the United Christian Youth Movement.

It was this cause that would first carry her to national leadership, though she was quite a young woman at the time.

In 1938, Dorothy was selected by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to help plan a World Youth Conference, and later served as a delegate to the World Conference on Life and Work of the Churches.

The same year, she was hired by the YWCA, and quickly began to rise through the ranks of the national organization.

And it was also around this time that she caught the attention of Mary McLeod Bethune, founder and president of the National Council of Negro Women, or NCNW, who recruited young Dorothy to join the fight for women's rights.

She remained deeply involved in the YWCA, and also attained high leadership positions in the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the United Civil Rights Leadership, and a number of other organizations.

She helped to guide these pivotal groups through the stormy waters of the civil rights movement, looking always to the future, and maintaining a steadfast dedication to cause and principle.

But it was Dorothy's distinguished leadership of the NCNW that would come to define her career.

In 1957, Dorothy Height was elected fourth national president of NCNW—a position she would hold continuously until 1998.

For more than four decades, she was at the helm of the preeminent leadership council for African-American women.

Thanks to her unrivaled expertise, transcendent vision, and lifelong dedication to this cause and this great organization, when she retired in 1998, she lived in a country that was far more free, more fair, and more equal than the one she knew as a child.

For her extraordinary work, in 2004 this Congress bestowed upon her its highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. President Bush presented her with this award on her 92nd birthday.

And so today, as Dorothy turns 98, I ask my colleagues to join with me in honoring the immeasurable contributions she has made to this country. I ask them to reflect upon the leadership she has rendered, the causes she has championed, and the countless lives she has touched.

Without Dorothy Height, America might be a very different place. I thank her immensely for the difference she has made, and for the lifetime of hard work she has devoted to her fellow citizens.

I wish her a wonderful birthday and many happy returns.●

CEDAR FALLS HISTORIC RECOGNITION

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, one of the greatest challenges we face not just in Iowa but all across America is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns. This is about economics, but it is also about our culture and identity. After all, you won't find the heart and soul of Iowa at Wal-Mart or Home Depot out in the strip malls. No, the heart and soul of Iowa is in our family farms and on Main Streets in small communities all across my State. That is why we need to be as generous as possible—and as creative as possible—in keeping our downtowns not just alive but thriving.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am involved in funding many hundreds of programs every year. But the Main Street Iowa program, which provides challenge grants to revitalize downtown buildings across my State, is in a class by itself. It is smart. It is effective. And it touches communities and people in very concrete ways.

For example, the citizens of Cedar Falls, IA, and their Main Street program are making efforts to improve their downtown and spur investment in the area. The Blackhawk Hotel received a Main Street Challenge Grant in 2003 to renovate its historic downtown location. The Blackhawk Hotel, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is the oldest continuously operating hotel site in Iowa. More recently, another Challenge Grant was awarded for the Bruhn Building to help complete a forward-thinking project that will transform the designated area into a gathering space, entrance, outdoor dining room, and vertical garden on Main Street.

Thanks to these and other projects undertaken by the Cedar Falls community and business leaders, the city was recognized last month by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of its "2010 Dozen Distinctive Designations." According to the National Trust, this distinction recognizes "cities and towns that offer an authentic visitor experience by combining dynamic downtowns, cultural diversity, attractive architecture, cultural landscapes and a strong commitment to historic preservation, sustainability and revitalization." I would like to commend the excellent work of all those involved in these economic development efforts in Cedar Falls.

State and Federal programs can provide limited funding and technical assistance to progressive cities like Cedar Falls. But, as we have seen here,