

member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk with respect to that nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Jeff Bingaman, Christopher A. Coons, Carl Levin, Ron Wyden, Ben Nelson, Joseph I. Lieberman, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard Blumenthal, John F. Kerry, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, John D. Rockefeller IV, Tim Johnson.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum under rule XXII for both cloture motions.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). Without objection, the Senate resumes legislative session.

PASSAGE OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to express my appreciation for the good work done on this most important measure that just passed the Senate on the Export-Import Bank. It was reported out of the Banking Committee. Senator JOHNSON did a great job with his committee.

In addition to that, the work of Senator CANTWELL was exemplary. She is a terrific legislator. When she gets her teeth in something, she won't let go and she would not let us take our eye off the prize; that is, passing this important legislation. I have such admiration for her legislative skills, and at this time I spread across the RECORD my admiration and congratulations on this legislation, which means so much to her and the entire country.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 2344

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the national flood insurance program is to expire the end of May, this month. The insurance program provides coverage for almost 6 million people who work in flood zones. It is self-sustaining. For more than 40 years it has guarded American homeowners against flood-

related disasters. If the program expires, new housing construction will stall, new housing construction will come to a halt, and taxpayers will be on the hook for future disasters.

We have not been able to bring flood insurance to the floor because we have had a lot of problems with Senate procedure that some believe is abusive. It has left us with so little time. As you see, I have filed cloture on two nominations to the Federal Reserve. I will file later on a judge who has been waiting for almost a year.

No one believes there is enough time to pass, conference, and enact a long-term flood insurance bill before the end of this month, so under the situation we will have to do another short-term extension simply to keep the bill from expiring. Thus I will seek to pass an extension of this important program now.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 366, S. 2344, which is an extension of the National Flood Insurance Program, that that bill be read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and there be no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I object. I will hold my comments until after the majority leader finishes his talk, so I can explain my position.

Mr. REID. The Senator can go ahead if he wishes.

Mr. COBURN. The majority leader wants me to go ahead?

Mr. REID. Seriously, I am anxious to hear it.

Mr. COBURN. We have had 14 short-term extensions to the National Flood Insurance Program. That is over the past 4½, 5 years. There is a bill set to be brought to the floor. Yet we are going to have a short-term extension again.

This program is not financially sound and it is not self-sustaining. It runs a \$900 million deficit every year. What is the National Flood Insurance Program? Do we need it? Yes. Am I objecting that we do need it? No. But the vast majority of the moneys that are expended by hard-working Americans go to subsidize the insurance for homeowners of second and vacation homes. Multiple times in the Senate and in the House, both sides have concurred that this should be taken away, this subsidy for those in terms of second homes and vacation properties.

What I would expect, if we are going to do an extension, is that then we ought to do an extension with something that both bodies have already passed, which includes making those people who have properties eight times the average value of the rest of the homes in the flood insurance program carry their fair share of their insurance. So I am not inclined, no matter what happens to the flood insurance program, to allow us to continue to extend.

I would make one other point. We will not have time in December to fix this, with everything else that is coming up. So the time to fix this is now. I will not object to the 5-year reauthorization coming to the floor. I don't think anybody on our side will as well. We should address this and be done with it. But another short-term extension is not what this country needs. We cannot afford losing another \$900 million, plus the American taxpayer is on the hook for \$1.34 trillion with this program right now. The average subsidy to the average home—not the vacation home—is over \$1,000 a year.

I have no objection to supporting those who actually need our help, who are in flood-prone areas. But for those who have the tremendous benefit and the opportunity to have second and third homes, I think it is objectionable we continue to subsidize their purchase of flood insurance.

With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my friend leaves the floor, I hope we can do a short-term bill. As my colleague knows, the impediment to the regular function of the Senate this year has been the offering of irrelevant amendments. I am wondering if I could say through the Chair to my friend, the junior Senator from Oklahoma, what kind of agreement does he think we can get on the number of amendments on something like this?

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I would respond to the majority leader through the Chair and say I will help him in any way I could with my side of the aisle to make sure we have cogent amendments to this bill and also agree to a limited number of them, since it is important that we reauthorize this program.

Mr. REID. I say again through the Chair to my friend, how many amendments does he think he would need?

Mr. COBURN. One or two.

Mr. REID. I thank my friend from Oklahoma. It is something I wish to be able to do. We have so much to do—we have the farm bill, we have cyber security, we have the FDA bill, I am filing cloture on nominations—people who have been waiting to change their lives. So I am sorry we cannot legislate more.

I have sympathy with my friend from Oklahoma. I don't agree with everything he said, but this is a program that needs to be changed and I recognize that. I will continue working with my friend. Maybe there is some way we can work together and figure out a way to move this forward. It is hard.

What I would suggest is I would be happy to work on my side, because Senator JOHNSON has talked to me twice today on this legislation, to figure out what amendments my folks want to offer, because they want to offer amendments. If my friend from Oklahoma would also make a decision on his side of, as he indicated, cogent

amendments, relevant amendments, we could put this in a little package and move to it without having to file cloture and do these amendments. I wish to do that.

I will work on my side to find out what amendments there are. If my friend will do that, on Monday or Tuesday we will talk about this and see if we can get a very concise agreement to do it. This is important legislation. My friend is not denying that. But I think we do have to make some changes in it. I am happy to move forward on it. I think the House is going to take something up real soon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. If the Senator from New Jersey will give me a courtesy of 5 minutes to speak as in morning business and I will be through.

I appreciate what the majority leader has said. I will work my side of the aisle, to see if the possibility of moving this is there and I will give it my 100-percent effort between now and next Monday when I see the majority leader to see if we cannot do it.

I will make a couple of points. Our Nation is in big trouble and we are not acting as if it is in big trouble. It seems that the way we are operating is from crisis to crisis. That is not good for the country, it is not good for the agencies, it is certainly not good for the individuals, and it makes it where we actually cannot do effective legislating.

The idea behind the flood insurance program is almost 50 years old. There is nothing wrong with its intent. But we cannot afford \$900 million a year in subsidies to the very wealthy in this country for their second or vacation homes. If we are talking about fairness, as the President talks, then it is time to reform this program—whether it is with an extension or not—this component of it where there is a fair premium, where we are not subsidizing those who can in fact take care of themselves in this country.

Whether it is this bill or the farm bill where we are subsidizing 4 percent of the farmers with 60 percent of the crop insurance premium, it is the same issue.

I look forward to working with the majority leader and I will do my part to try to gather up the amendments that might be there and work with our leadership to try to bring this bill to the floor.

I thank the Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the Violence Against Women Act that the Senate passed, but we seem to have a challenge with our colleagues in the House of Representatives. In my view, violence against any woman is still vio-

lence. Apparently, my Republican colleagues in the House do not share that view. Republicans in the House have introduced a bill that would not protect all women. Their bill would roll back protections for certain vulnerable populations. It would strip provisions in the Senate bill that protect women from discrimination and abuse, specifically Native American women, the LGBT community, and for undocumented immigrants it actually rolls back protections they have under current law.

We have seen that violence against women is an epidemic and it plagues all of us, not just some of us. We have fought against it, we have tried to end it, we have established programs and policies at the national and State levels to mitigate it. We have stood with the victims of domestic violence. Now we must stand and reaffirm our outrage.

It is in my mind a no-brainer. I am, frankly, hard-pressed to understand why anyone would stand in the way of denouncing violence against any woman, no matter who they are, no matter what their sexual orientation or citizenship. I am hard-pressed to understand why anyone would choose to exclude violence against certain women, turn back the clock to a time when such violence was not recognized, was not a national disgrace, and make a distinction when and against whom such violence meets our threshold of outrage. There can be no such threshold and no such distinction. Violence against any woman is an outrage, plain and simple.

Is the message to be that we are willing for some reason that in my mind defies logic to accept violence against certain women? Because that seems to be the message the other body is sending us. I cannot believe anyone would take such a position, but that is exactly what we would do if we listened to our Republican House colleagues, and that is completely unacceptable to this Senator and should be unacceptable to every Member of Congress and every American. If our friends on the other side deny they are waging a political and cultural war against women, then why are they willing to accept an actual war against certain women by excluding them from protection under the Violence Against Women Act?

The reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act doesn't just affect those who are or might become victims of sexual violence or domestic violence; it affects all of us. Nearly one in five women reports being the victim of rape or attempted rape. One in six reports being stalked. One in four reports having been beaten by their partner. Of those who report being raped, 80 percent report being raped before the age of 25. The short-term physical and emotional trauma of such an event cannot be overstated. Domestic and sexual violence is an issue that affects us all, and we must all be part of a solution.

Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has been the centerpiece in

our comprehensive approach to protect and empower women, and it must remain so. Since the passage of VAWA in 1994, there has been enormous positive change.

From 1993 to 2010, the rate of intimate partner violence declined 67 percent. More victims are reporting violence to police, and those reports are resulting in more arrests and prosecutions. VAWA is working, but there are still women who need protection.

For example, in 1 day in New Jersey, a survey found that domestic violence programs assisted 1,292 victims. On that same day, New Jersey domestic violence hotlines answered 444 phone calls. So our work on this issue is not yet done.

Looking to the merits of the reauthorization, let me highlight, for the record, several critical changes in the legislation—changes that did not simply extend successful programs but built upon them. Every reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act has incorporated new understanding and updated knowledge, and this reauthorization was and should be no different.

First and foremost, the Senate reauthorization includes additional training for law enforcement, victim services, and courts that increase the focus on high-risk offenders and victims, including connecting high-risk victims with crisis intervention services. I am sure no one can argue against that.

Second, the Senate bill strengthens our response to sexual assault while increasing the connection to nonprofit groups. Sexual assault coalitions in every State have been indispensable allies. I met with a large roundtable before our debate and discussions in the Senate, and this bill supports their efforts. It included a 20-percent setaside for assistance to States for sexual assault programs and also included reforms to reduce the unprecedented backlog of rape kits.

I have been proud to support funding to reduce this backlog. Just recently I supported Senator LEAHY's effort to fund the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program at the current level of \$125 million with at least \$90 million directly spent on reducing the DNA backlogs. I am happy to say the Violence Against Women Act will make important strides to reduce the backlog.

Most importantly, given the debate on this legislation, this reauthorization recognizes that domestic and sexual violence affects all groups regardless of their sexual orientation. We included commonsense protections against discrimination on race, religion, national origin, sex, and disability because it is, quite simply, the right thing to do because all violence against women is an outrage to all of us.

For the first time the Senate bill established the fundamental notion that victims cannot be denied services based on gender identity or sexual orientation. We included provisions to protect