

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SHELLY DECKERT  
DICK TO BE UNITED STATES DIS-  
TRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE  
DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

NOMINATION OF NELSON STEPHEN  
ROMAN TO BE UNITED STATES  
DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW  
YORK

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Shelly Deckert Dick, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana, and Nelson Stephen Roman, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, over the last month, Senate Republicans have failed to refute the facts of what they have done to President Obama's judicial nominations. The Senate's work on judicial nominations should not be about partisan point-scoring; it should be about ensuring the American people have access to justice. I rejected that partisan tit-for-tat approach while moving to confirm 100 of President Bush's judicial nominees in just 17 months in 2001 and 2002.

The question for the Senate is, Are we doing enough to ensure that hard working Americans have access to justice so that they can have their rights protected? At a time when 10 percent of the Federal bench remains vacant, I do not think that we are. The standard we set during the Bush administration for quickly moving to confirm non-controversial nominees is not being met.

Senate Republicans who take such pride in the number of nominees being confirmed this year ignore how many were needlessly delayed from confirmation last year and what they have done during the last 4 years. That is why after the 14 confirmations this year, we remain more than 20 confirmations behind the pace we set for President Bush's circuit and district nominees, and vacancies remain nearly twice as high as they were at this point during President Bush's second term. For all their self-congratulatory statements, they cannot refute the following: We are not even keeping up with attrition. Vacancies have increased, not decreased, since the start of this year. President Obama's judicial nominees have faced unprecedented delays and obstruction by Senate Republicans. We have yet to finish the work that could and should have been completed last

year. There are still a dozen judicial nominees with bipartisan support being denied confirmation.

A recent report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service compares the whole of President Obama's first term to the whole of President Bush's first term, and the contrast could not be more clear. The median Senate floor wait time for President Obama's district nominees was five times longer than for President Bush's. President Obama's circuit nominees faced even longer delays, and their median wait time was 7.3 times longer than for President Bush's circuit nominees. The comparison is even worse if we look just at nominees who were reported and confirmed unanimously. President Bush's unanimously confirmed circuit nominees had a median wait time of just 14 days. Compare that to the 130.5 days for President Obama's unanimous nominees. That is more than nine times longer. Even the non-partisan CRS calls this a "notable change." There is no good reason for such unprecedented delays, but those are the facts.

The confirmations in the last few months does not change the reality of what has happened over the last 4 years. If a baseball player goes 0-for-9, and then gets a hit, we do not say he is an all-star because he is batting 1.000 in his last at bat. We recognize that he is just 1-for-10 and not a very good hitter.

So while I welcome the confirmations this year, I note both that 10 of the 14 could and should have been confirmed last year and that there are another dozen nominees pending before the Senate, including four who also could have been confirmed last year. We can and must do more for Americans who look to our courts for justice. They deserve better than long delays and empty courtrooms. With 10 percent of our Federal bench vacant and a backlog of nominees on the Senate Executive Calendar, it is clear that the Senate is not working up to its full capacity on nominations.

It is true that some vacancies do not have nominees. I wish Republican home State Senators would work with President Obama to fill these vacancies. Nor do those vacancies excuse their unwillingness to complete action on the consensus judicial nominees who are ready to be confirmed but whose confirmations are being delayed. Mark Barnett, Claire Kelly, Shelly Dick, William Orrick, Nelson Román, Sheri Chappell, Michael McShane, Nitza Quinones Alejandro, Luis Restrepo, Jeffrey Schmehl, Kenneth Gonzales, and Gregory Phillips are awaiting confirmation and Sri Srinivasan, Ray Chen, and Jennifer Dorsey can be reported to the Senate today, without further delay. So long as there is a backlog of nominees before the Senate, the fault for failing to confirm these nominees lies solely with Senate Republicans.

The Judicial Conference recently released their judgeship recommenda-

tions. Based upon the caseloads of our Federal courts, the conference recommended the creation of 91 new judgeships. That is in addition to the 86 judgeships that are currently vacant. This means that the effective vacancy rate on the Federal bench is over 18 percent. A vacancy rate this high is harmful to the individuals and businesses that depend on our courts for speedy justice. The damage is even more acute in the busiest district courts, such as those in border States that have heavy immigration-related caseloads. In a Washington Post article about the CRS report, Jonathan Bernstein wrote: "Ordinary people who just want to get their legal matters taken care of promptly have suffered because of all the vacancies on federal courts." I ask unanimous consent to have the article entitled "New report confirms GOP obstructionism is unprecedented" printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

Unnecessarily prolonged vacancies are not the only way that partisanship in Washington is hurting our courts. Sequestration continues to affect our justice system. The chief judge of the Fourth Circuit, William B. Traxler, Jr., has written: "The impact of sequestration on the Judiciary is particularly harsh because the courts have no control over their workload. They must respond to all cases that are filed . . . ." He went on to say:

[A] significant problem arises when budget cuts impact our responsibilities under the Constitution. This happens when we cannot afford to fulfill the Sixth Amendment right to representation for indigents charged with crimes. The predictable result is that criminal prosecutions will slow and our legal system will not operate as efficiently. This will cost us all in many different ways.

I share Chief Judge Traxler's concern, and I ask unanimous consent to have his statement printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Our Federal judiciary provides justice to 310 million Americans and gives full effect to the laws that we pass here in the Senate. We have a constitutional responsibility to those 310 million Americans to make sure that they can count on our Federal courts to provide justice. Federal courts should not be held hostage to partisan obstruction, and we need to keep our courts fully funded so that they can continue to meet the promise of timely justice that is embedded in our Constitution.

Shelly Dick is nominated to fill a vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana. Since 1994, she has been in private practice at the Law Offices of Shelly D. Dick, LLC, in Baton Rouge and was previously an associate with the law firm of Gary Field Landry and Dornier. Additionally, since 2008, she has served as an ad hoc hearing officer for the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Shelly Dick has the bipartisan support of her home State Senators, Ms. LANDRIEU and Mr. VITTER, and was reported unanimously by the Judiciary Committee over 2

months ago. She is one of the pending nominees who could have been expedited and confirmed last year. When confirmed, Shelly Dick will be the first woman to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana.

Nelson Román is nominated to fill a judicial emergency vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. He currently serves as an associate justice for the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department. He previously served as a justice of the New York State Supreme Court, Civil Term, Bronx County, as a judge for the New York City Civil Court, Bronx County, and as a judge of the housing part of the New York City Civil Court, Bronx County. Prior to becoming a judge, he was an assistant district attorney in Kings County, NY, as well as a special narcotics assistant district attorney in New York City. From 1995 to 1998, Justice Román served as a law clerk to the Honorable Jose A. Padilla, Jr. of the New York County Civil Court. He has the support of his home State Senators, Mr. SCHUMER and Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and was reported unanimously by the Judiciary Committee over 2 months ago.

Senate Republicans have a long way to go to match the record of cooperation on consensus nominees that Senate Democrats established during the Bush administration, but I hope that the confirmations so far this year indicate that they are finally reconsidering their wholesale obstruction of President Obama's nominees. After today's votes, 10 more judicial nominees remain pending, and all were reported with bipartisan support. All Senate Democrats are ready to vote on each of them to allow them to get to work for the American people. We can make real progress if Senate Republicans are willing to join us.

I ask unanimous consent that the article and statement to which I referred be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, May 3, 2013]

NEW REPORT CONFIRMS GOP OBSTRUCTIONISM IS UNPRECEDENTED

(By Jonathan Bernstein)

The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service has released an important new report that details Barack Obama's record on nominating judges during his first term. It's no surprise: Republican obstruction against his selections was unprecedented. For example:

"President Obama is the only one of the five most recent Presidents for whom, during his first term, both the average and median waiting time from nomination to confirmation for circuit and district court nominees was greater than half a calendar year (i.e., more than 182 days)."

A quick look at the report's summary confirms that Obama's nominees have been treated more roughly than those of Presidents Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and the other Bush.

That's only half the story. George H.W. Bush had to deal with an opposition party

Senate for his entire first term, and Bill Clinton and George W. Bush had that during about half of their first terms. It's at least plausibly legitimate for opposite party Senators, when they have the majority, to argue that they should have a larger role in filling judicial vacancies, and to act accordingly. At the very least, if they simply oppose some of those nominees, they will defeat them in "up or down" votes.

But Obama, like Ronald Reagan, had a same-party Senate majority during his first term. He should have had among the best results over any recent president, all things being equal.

What changed when Obama took office, however, was the extension of the filibuster to cover every single nominee. Republicans didn't always vote against cloture (or even demand cloture votes), but they did demand 60 votes for every nominee. That's brand new. It's true that Democrats filibustered selected judicial nominations during the George W. Bush presidency, but only at the circuit court level, and not every single one.

That meant that despite solid Democratic majorities and solid support from those Democrats, Obama's judicial approval statistics are basically the worse of any of the recent presidents. He doesn't show up last on every measure—for example, George H.W. Bush had a lower percentage of district court nominees confirmed—but he's fourth or fifth out of five of these presidents on almost every way that CRS slices the numbers, and it adds up to by far the most obstruction faced by any recent president.

And remember: the losers here aren't just the president and liberals who want to see his judges on the bench. Ordinary people who just want to get their legal matters taken care of promptly have suffered because of all the vacancies on federal courts.

It's really a disgrace. Especially those picks that were delayed for months, only to wind up getting confirmed by unanimous votes. Especially the foot-dragging on district court nominees. Just a disgrace.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF JUDGE WILLIAM B. TRAXLER, JR., CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 19, 2013

1. The Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference is responsible for developing a spending plan for the federal Judiciary's annual Congressional appropriation. This process involves significant input from Conference committees, and under the best of circumstances, is a difficult and complex task.

The current fiscal year presents unparalleled challenges. Budget sequestration has reduced the Judiciary's overall funding by nearly \$350 million from the level provided in Fiscal Year 2012. The impact of sequestration on the Judiciary is particularly harsh because the courts have no control over their workload. They must respond to all cases that are filed, whether they are by individuals, businesses, or the government.

In February 2013, the Executive Committee implemented a series of emergency measures that were intended to mitigate the impact of sequestration to the best extent possible. Nevertheless, significant shortfalls remain.

Funds have been reduced for probation and pretrial staffing, which means less deterrence, detection, and supervision of released felons from prison. Related funding for drug testing, drug treatment and mental health treatment were cut by 20 percent. Money for security systems and equipment has been cut 25 percent and court security officer hours have been reduced. Cuts in court staffing and hours threaten to impact public access and slow case processing. National information

technology upgrades to improve infrastructure and financial management have been delayed. Sequestration is impacting federal court operations and programs throughout the country, including a \$51 million shortfall in the FY 2013 funds in the Defender Services account.

The Judiciary is committed to doing its part to reduce the fiscal deficit our country faces. However, a significant problem arises when budget cuts impact our responsibilities under the Constitution. This happens when we cannot afford to fulfill the Sixth Amendment right to representation for indigents charged with crimes. The predictable result is that criminal prosecutions will slow and our legal system will not operate as efficiently. This will cost us all in many different ways.

With regard to the Defender account shortfall, at its April 16, 2013, meeting the Executive Committee examined all aspects of this account, scrubbed expenses where possible, and approved a final spending plan. After lengthy discussion, the Committee determined to allocate the available funds in a manner that, without further impacting payments to private attorneys, will at least limit the number of days that any defender organization staff must be furloughed. The result is that some federal defender offices will still be forced to furlough their employees up to 15 days. The Committee also approved deferral of payments to private panel attorneys for the last 15 business days of the fiscal year.

The defender program has no flexibility to absorb cuts of this magnitude without impacting payments to private counsel appointed under the Criminal Justice Act and Federal Defender Organizations, which pay for government lawyers to provide counsel to eligible defendants. Federal defender offices already have fired and furloughed staff, as well as drastically cut essential services. Criminal prosecutions have been delayed because defender organizations do not have the staff necessary to continue their representation of the defendant or the funds to pay for experts or other cases costs.

The Executive Committee's allocation of funds is not a solution to the \$51 million shortfall. It represents a conscientious effort to mitigate the adverse impact on both personnel and services. It also means that millions of dollars in expenses in this account will be shifted to FY 2014, even though they were not part of the Judicial Branch budget submission to Congress. This level of funding is unsustainable without relief from Congress.

The Judiciary will soon ask the Office of Management and Budget to transmit an FY 2013 emergency supplemental funding request to Congress to help ameliorate the impact of the sequestration cuts to defender services, probation and pretrial services, court staffing, and court security.

In his 2012 Year-End Report on the Federal Judiciary, the Chief Justice said:

"A significant and prolonged shortfall in judicial funding would inevitably result in the delay or denial of justice for the people the courts serve."

I share this grave concern.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today to present to this Chamber the nomination of Shelly Deckert Dick as a nominee for article III judge on the U.S. Middle District Court of Louisiana. I was pleased to recommend Ms. Dick to President Obama, and I am happy that he sent her name to the Senate and that the committee has

unanimously recommended her for confirmation.

She is equipped with decades of Federal court litigation experience. She brings with her a thorough understanding of the Federal court system, having practiced for years before the court. From all indications from her peers and colleagues, she is fair and evenhanded. I think her temperament is appropriate for the bench.

She is a current resident of Baton Rouge but was born in El Paso, TX. She earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Texas at Austin and graduated on the dean's list with honors.

She brings with her years of experience, not just in the private sector. She has worked as a lawyer before the Federal bench. She has also been extremely active in community affairs.

She graduated from Louisiana State University law school, where she was a member of the Law Review. Demonstrating her commitment to public service early in her legal career, she served as a law clerk to a woman who went on—and was actually mentored by the first woman of our Supreme Court—Kitty Kimble, who went on, of course, to become chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Following law school, at an early age, she became an associate attorney at the firm of Gary, Field, Landry & Bradford before going on to become a full partner in one of our strongest and best law firms in Baton Rouge, LA.

She has extensive experience, as I said, in Federal court representing both plaintiffs and defendants as well as government and nongovernment clients. She has a well-rounded legal career and is very active in the community, in her church, and has done missionary work for many years throughout the world. She is also very active in the American Bar Association, the Louisiana State Bar Association, the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel, and the Baton Rouge bar. She was admitted to practice in the district courts of the Western, Middle, and Eastern Districts, the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. She has written numerous articles for legal publications and presented at legal seminars on a wide range of topics.

I have known Ms. Dick for a few years. She is a friend now. She was not a close friend when my search committee went out and looked for the most qualified individuals to step up and serve on our bench. She and her credentials were brought to my attention by many members of the community, and I am very happy to nominate Ms. Dick.

Ms. Dick will be the first woman to serve in the Middle District of Louisiana. I think it is high time, after a couple of hundred years, that we have women now qualified and stepping up to assume these leadership positions. I have been very proud to help bring diversity and excellence to our bench

both at the prosecutor level and as judges in the courts in Louisiana.

As I said, Shelly has also volunteered for international missions overseas, particularly in Cambodia, South Africa, and Kenya. She has worked with her church and other nonprofit organizations.

I think she is perfectly suited to be a judge with all the prerequisite experience and legal degrees and academic degrees required. Most importantly, she is enthusiastic and excited about serving.

I am sorry it has taken us so long to get her to this point where the Senate will hopefully confirm her—if not acclamation—by a strong and overwhelming vote. I know of no opposition to her nomination.

These days it seems that these nominations seem to be going a lot slower than they should. I thank her and her family for their patience as they have waited and waited for this day to come. Hopefully she will be able to put on that robe and get to that bench in the Middle District and do a fine job for us both in Louisiana and around the country.

I yield the floor.

The junior Senator from Louisiana may want to add a word.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from you Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise for two reasons. First of all, I look forward to supporting the confirmation of Shelly Dick to become a judge in the Middle District of Louisiana, and I look forward to that vote in 5 minutes. As I have said before, I believe she will serve well.

Secondly, I also wanted to come to the floor to add my support to the Landrieu flood insurance amendment. I am a cosponsor, and we are working very hard on clearing a path for an important, substantive version of that amendment.

Senator LANDRIEU and I have talked, and we have talked to others, including Senator BOXER and many other supporters. We are working very hard not to get into the weeds but to take care of some technical issues, some budget points of order, and some other issues so we can clear the path for a strong, substantive version of this amendment.

This is a big deal. It is a big deal for the country. It is a big deal for any coastal area and certainly a big deal for South Louisiana. We need to ensure that as the new Flood Insurance Program is administered, it is done in a fair and reasonable way and that we don't price anybody who has been following the rules out of their home because their flood insurance rates increased so astronomically. That is the fear, but that has not played out. The new rates are not out, but that is the legitimate fear. Senator LANDRIEU and I are working with our entire delegation to make sure we avoid that.

Right after this vote, I am going to travel to northern Virginia to meet with a Louisiana group at the FEMA

offices to talk about this very issue. I am convinced FEMA has some authority under law already to mitigate these issues in many ways but including by making sure they get their LAMP process right and take into account all flood barriers and protections in a given area as new areas are mapped. I am going directly from this judge vote to that important meeting, and we will all be following up in important ways to make sure we get it right, make sure FEMA gets it right, hopefully including a good, workable amendment that can be passed on this bill. We are all working toward that goal.

I thank my colleague from Louisiana for that joint effort.

I yield back to the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I wish to follow up on the comments made by my colleague from Louisiana, Senator VITTER. I am pleased he will accompany many of our elected officials to the FEMA office this afternoon. I had a chance to meet with the FEMA officials yesterday. At my request, they came to the Capitol to meet with me.

We are both very hopeful that there are some things within the new mandates and new authorizations that FEMA can do to mitigate against the projected 25-percent increases annually for some of our policyholders—not the majority but for some of them. I am anticipating that some of these issues are not going to be addressed administratively and that it is going to take a change of law.

Again, the reason I am pushing this issue and pushing this bill is because this new law that we are talking about, expressing frustration about, and questioning never came to this floor for a vote. I am still not clear at this point whether this bill was ever voted on by the full House.

This bill, the flood insurance reform bill of last year, was tucked into a larger bill, the national transportation bill, at the last minute. The national transportation bill was widely supported. It funds billions of dollars' worth of projects for everyone's district. It is a very popular bill.

This relatively small but significant flood insurance bill was tucked into a conference report, which is really not that usual, particularly if the bill itself had not passed one body. There are lots of times when things are put into a conference committee that have not passed the Senate, but it passed the House, or it passed the House but not the Senate, and there is an indication of broad support. We have to move legislation, and sometimes we have to use an expedited means.

I am still waiting to get clear from the staff whether this bill ever got a vote in the House of Representatives. I know it didn't get a vote here, and it would probably, in its current form, not pass because the delegations from

Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, California, and any numbers, would have insisted on some amendments and some procedures to help our people who are going to be affected by these very significant increases in flood insurance, to give them more time to meet their obligations.

I know we are on a judgeship so I am going to yield the floor, but I am hoping we can continue to work on this issue.

I thank Senator VITTER for his support, as well as Senator BOXER, as we are continuing to work on the language of this amendment.

I yield back all time on the nominations.

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

Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Shelly Deckert Dick, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Nelson Stephen Roman, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York?

Mr. COATS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 118 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Alexander	Donnelly	Landrieu
Ayotte	Durbin	Leahy
Baldwin	Enzi	Lee
Baucus	Feinstein	Levin
Begich	Fischer	Manchin
Bennet	Flake	McCain
Blumenthal	Franken	McCaskey
Blunt	Gillibrand	McConnell
Boozman	Graham	Menendez
Boxer	Grassley	Merkley
Brown	Hagan	Mikulski
Burr	Harkin	Moran
Cantwell	Hatch	Murphy
Cardin	Heinrich	Murray
Carper	Heitkamp	Nelson
Casey	Heller	Paul
Chambliss	Hirono	Portman
Coats	Hoeven	Pryor
Coburn	Inhofe	Reed
Cochran	Isakson	Reid
Collins	Johanns	Risch
Coons	Johnson (SD)	Roberts
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Rockefeller
Cornyn	Kaine	Rubio
Cowan	King	Sanders
Crapo	Kirk	Schatz
Cruz	Klobuchar	Schumer

Scott	Thune	Warren
Sessions	Toomey	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Udall (CO)	Wicker
Shelby	Udall (NM)	Wyden
Stabenow	Vitter	
Tester	Warner	

NOT VOTING—3

Barrasso Lautenberg Murkowski

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

#### WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2013—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I rise to urge my colleagues to support a bipartisan amendment I worked on with Senator WICKER to make our communities more resilient in an era of extreme weather that we live in. No corner of America is being spared: blazing wildfires in the West, massive tornadoes in the South, crippling droughts in the Midwest, routine hurricanes battering the gulf coast and the northeast coast.

We cannot accept the status quo. I think we must do more, because as we have seen in New York, the storm of the century has literally become the storm of the year. In 2011, we saw widespread and devastating damage from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. One year later, Superstorm Sandy hit us harder than we could have ever imagined.

The Federal Government must step in. It must step up to do the hard work, to lead the way in preparing for and protecting against these extreme weather events. This does not mean just building a higher flood wall or moving public infrastructure out of the flood zone; it means taking a smarter, longer term regional approach to disaster planning.

Along with saving lives, this makes smart economic sense. For every \$1 we spend to reduce disaster risk, we save \$4 in recovery costs. Our bipartisan amendment can help achieve this goal. It is called Strengthening the Resiliency of Our Nation on the Ground—the STRONG Act—to give the Federal Government a real plan to strengthen our resiliency.

First, the bill would investigate effective resiliency policies, identify the gaps, and identify the conflicting policies. Knowing what resources we have, what works, what does not, we can write and implement a national resiliency strategy to support the local efforts.

This would include a one-stop shop to gather and share data to develop

smarter resiliency policies, incorporating existing databases and ongoing efforts across a range of sectors, from weather and climate to transportation and energy. It also eliminates redundancies, ensuring all levels of government are coordinating effectively and efficiently, sharing their expertise, their data, and information.

This national resource will work hand in glove with local efforts, providing the most recent scientific information and best practices to help our communities plan for and survive the worst. As we learn the lessons of Superstorm Sandy and other natural disasters, we need to ensure that our communities are thinking broadly about resiliency across all sectors of society. The STRONG Act is the foundation to build smarter and stronger cities, States and a nation. Only with communities built for the 21st century can we withstand the extreme weather of our time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I wish to talk a bit about the health care bill. Every time I am home, I hear more and more concerns from more and more families and more and more individuals and more and more employers. In 2009, the President repeatedly said that if you like your health care plan, you can keep it. Notice nobody is saying that anymore.

Maybe that is not what the measure should be because that is certainly not going to happen. I think the question is, are you going to have health care and can you afford it. During the Presidential campaign, the President said he liked the term "ObamaCare." So I feel a little more free to use that than I did previously. I do not mean it to be disparaging in any way. I just happen to think it is a plan that will not work.

In the 3 years since the Affordable Care Act became law, it has become increasingly clear that this plan will only deliver more broken promises and bad news. Opponents have long warned this overhaul is bad for the economy. There are now over 20,000 pages of new regulations. In talking to the people I work for, they say they were concerned when people did not read the 2,000-page bill. Since the election, there have been 20,000 pages of regulations. There will be at least 159 new bureaucracies, boards, and programs.

A number of recent reports have reinforced everybody's concerns, noting that the health care bill will burden Americans with \$1 trillion of new taxes over 10 years and penalties. It will stifle job creation.

Investors Business Daily noted that retailers are cutting worker hours at a rate not seen in more than three decades, a sudden shift, according to them,