

Just think of it. We agreed to reduce the growth of spending from \$37 billion now at that rate 2 years ago. We were going to let it grow to 47, we reduced the growth to 45, and we come back to the American people and say we can't effect that now? We can't reduce the growth and spending just that little bit? We promised you that we would raise the debt ceiling, but I know it made you angry, American people. You were mad at us because we mismanaged your money. But we promise, we will reduce the growth of spending by \$2.1 trillion. Trust us. We will do it.

And here we are. President Obama, 6 months later, produced a budget that wiped out all those cuts and increased taxes, taxes and spending. This has been the pattern we have been in. I have to say, we do not need to have this happen.

So I am prepared to meet with the President. I am prepared to meet with the Secretary of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget, and talk about where we can find other reductions in spending and reduce some of the reductions on the Defense Department. We need to reduce a good many of those, frankly. Then the Defense Department can phase in some reductions in spending over the outyears. They can do that. But too much too fast is destabilizing. No business would do that. So we have to figure out a way to make this system work.

I was pleased to work with Senator LEVIN and Senator INHOFE today. I want to be cooperative and be positive in our efforts. I like much of what we did with the authorization bill in the Armed Services Committee, but we just didn't talk about the elephant in the room; that is, the sequester, the real danger we have there. We are going to have to discuss it now. It will be part of the floor discussion and debate if it is not fixed.

It can be fixed. I think we are all prepared to work for it. I don't believe this country will sink into the ocean. I don't believe this country is going to have to close its ports. I don't believe this country is going to have to end tours at the White House to reduce the growth of spending by \$2 trillion, from \$47 trillion to \$45 trillion over the next 10 years. I don't believe that is going to bankrupt us. But we ought to do it in a smart way. We should have every agency and department of government tighten their belts, not just some.

We slipped into this when the sequester was written to try to effect some political result that didn't occur, and now, as a responsible Senate, we have to consider what is right for America. The right thing is to have all agencies and departments tighten their belts and reduce the pressure that is now falling on our Defense Department.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that Senators proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators being permitted to speak for 10 minutes each.

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

B. TODD JONES NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on Tuesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the nomination of B. Todd Jones to serve as the director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, ATF. I thank Senator KLOBUCHAR for the exceptional job she did in chairing this hearing and setting the record straight with respect to distortions of the nominee's record.

Todd Jones continues to serve this country honorably. He volunteered for the U.S. Marine Corps in 1983, serving on active duty as a judge advocate and infantry officer until 1989. In 1991, he was recalled to Active Duty to command the 4th Marine Division's Military Police Company in Iraq. He also served as commanding officer of the Twin Cities Marine Reserve Unit. He has twice been considered for the important law enforcement position of U.S. attorney and twice unanimously reported out of the Judiciary Committee and unanimously confirmed by the Senate. In 1998 he was first appointed to be the U.S. attorney for the District of Minnesota and became the first African American U.S. attorney in Minnesota's history. In 2009, when that office was at a low point and needed a strong hand to lead it back, he answered the call, again.

When the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives needed new leadership after its poorly conceived and executed Fast and Furious operation, the President called upon him, again. He was called upon to clear up the mess and deserves our thanks for having made great progress in doing so. He has done so while all the while continuing to serve as the U.S. attorney for the District of Minnesota and has had to restore leadership and effectiveness in two important law enforcement agencies.

We have received numerous letters of support for Todd Jones' nomination from law enforcement, respected legal professionals, and veterans of the U.S. Marine Corps. He has critics; he has taken on difficult assignments. As he noted at his hearing, sometimes you have to take action to make a change and change is not always something that everyone is going to favor. A fair evaluation of what he has accomplished leads me to support his nomination to be confirmed as the director of ATF.

The ATF has been without a permanent director since that position was made a confirmable position in 2006. We lean heavily on the expertise of the ATF. For example, under the leadership of Todd Jones, since September 2011, ATF has been called on to analyze the bombs left near the finish line at the Boston Marathon, to sift through burned debris at the chemical plant explosion in West, TX, and to trace the weapons used in the Newtown and Aurora mass killings. Agents of the ATF have played a major role in investigating some of our Nation's worst tragedies. The agency needs a confirmed head. Todd Jones is the ATF's fifth acting director since 2006. The Senate should be doing everything it can to ensure that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has the tools it needs to keep Americans safe, and that starts with a Senate-confirmed director.

I had accommodated the ranking member on requests for further information and delay on this nomination for months. Senator GRASSLEY insisted on the production of documents from the Department of Justice that his staff had already had access to for months. He insisted that his staff be able to interview Todd Jones in his capacity as U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, as well as two other Justice Department officials, in order to try to build a case against another nomination, that of Tom Perez to be Labor Secretary. Those interviews have taken place. Senator GRASSLEY requested additional background information from the administration not usually required by the committee for an executive nomination and he received that information. When he sought information about an ATF operation in Milwaukee, I arranged a bipartisan briefing for our staffs from the agency.

Some are criticizing the nominee based on a complaint filed against him by an AUSA from the earlier Bush-era U.S. attorney office. After learning about the complaint, I had initially put on hold a planned hearing on this nomination. In late April, a news article reported that "an aide to Senator GRASSLEY" had released a letter from OSC that the ranking member and I had received about the existence of that preliminary inquiry. It was at that time that I determined that this hearing should move forward to allow the nominee an opportunity to defend his reputation. When a private complaint against him was disclosed publicly, I thought it unfair that the nominee could not respond. He did at his hearing and in my view that matter is put to rest.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel, OSC, closed the file on the underlying allegation made against the nominee of "gross mismanagement and abuses of authority." The allegation involving alleged retaliation has been referred to mediation. In deference to the complaining party and the request of the

investigating agency that the complaint not be made public, it has not been. I wish it were. It is not substantial or even substantially about Todd Jones. It is certainly not reason to oppose the confirmation.

The ranking member requested that the long-delayed June 4 confirmation hearing on the nomination to head ATF be postponed further, and I postponed it another week. During that postponement, over that last weekend, the ranking member threatened to use Senate rules for the minority to call an outside witness to testify at the hearing. There is no precedent for outside witnesses at a Judiciary Committee hearing for a subcabinet executive level position. I nonetheless sought to accommodate his last-minute demand by agreeing to his calling a witness.

The hearing proceeded on Tuesday and should have cleared the air. For instance, those opposing this nomination were unaware that Todd Jones had terminated a supervisor of the Fast and Furious operation.

The Judiciary Committee had for decades followed a tradition and practice of examining allegations against nominees in a bipartisan manner from the outset. That has not been the practice Republicans have followed during the last several years. They have, instead, not brought matters to the bipartisan staff but chosen to proceed on their own.

Sometimes we do delay committee consideration of nominations to allow a complaint to be resolved. Sometimes we proceed despite lawsuits involving nominees, such as the way we proceeded last year with the nomination of Judge Stephanie Rose of Iowa to the United States District Court for the District of Iowa even though there was a lawsuit pending in which there were allegations against her actions as the U.S. attorney for Iowa. Earlier this year, when defense counsel filed a motion against the U.S. attorney for the District of New Mexico making allegations, we independently examined the matter. The committee proceeded with that nomination rather than delay it.

I have reached out to the ranking member staff about getting back to our tradition of conducting bipartisan inquiries into allegations made against nominees. I hope that practice will be restored. With respect to the nomination of Todd Jones, we are further examining the matter, but I believe him qualified and at this time know of no good reason the Senate should not confirm his nomination to serve as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

RECOGNIZING THE WAYSIDE RESTAURANT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, I would like to pay tribute to the Wayside Restaurant—a trusted and venerated Vermont fixture and a staple of the community surrounding Montpelier, our State capital. The Wayside is

a local business that has remained true to the values of its humble beginnings. For nearly a century, the Wayside Restaurant has been a place where Vermonters can count on quality service, reasonable prices, and a quality meal that is sure to satisfy both the stomach and the heart. I am honored to join Vermonters in celebrating the Wayside Restaurant's 95th anniversary.

In 1918, when Effie Ballou first opened the Wayside's doors, many of the restaurant's offerings were prepared in the kitchen of her home and carried down to her roadside eatery. Never did she imagine that her small eating house would become the bustling spot that it is today, drawing both locals and out-of-State travelers and serving nearly 1000 customers daily. Every day, diners—from families to office workers pile into the Wayside Restaurant. Its warm environment, familiar staff and signature Vermont cooking make the restaurant a home away from home for locals and visitors alike.

The owners and staff of the Wayside Restaurant are devoted to providing extraordinary service to the crowds of loyal customers who stop in to pile their plates high with Wayside's fine fare. Regular customers of the Wayside Restaurant can order their meals to-go or can dine in while enjoying friendly conversation and classic Wayside dishes like the salt pork and gravy, honeycomb beef tripe, or maple cream pie.

Current owners Karen and Brian Zecchinelli have remained true to the restaurant's early virtues—preparation of quality, old-time favorites as well as modern cuisine, and a focus on family and community values. As a member of the Vermont Business Environmental Partnership, the Wayside Restaurant has implemented earth-friendly initiatives that are kind to our natural environment. In 2012, the Wayside Restaurant was recognized as the first and only "green" restaurant in Montpelier and was praised for its support of small business by buying locally produced products, a tradition they have kept throughout the years.

Today the Wayside Restaurant continues as a symbol of both longstanding tradition and effective progress. From Effie Ballou's humble beginnings to the eatery's current, booming success, the Wayside Restaurant holds a special place in Vermonters' hearts. Marcelle and I are always delighted to join them for a meal and visit with other patrons. I want to join the many others congratulating the Wayside on 95 successful years of enriching its community and supporting Vermont's local economy.

Every time I go there to eat I remember going with my parents, brother, and sister when I was a child. It was great then and still is.

TRIBUTE TO NORM BROWNSTEIN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to wish a happy, if slightly

belated, 70th birthday to Norm Brownstein—a dedicated husband, father, and grandfather, and a talented and effective advocate for the alliance between the United States and Israel.

Norm's story is a classic American tale of a young man rising from humble beginnings to achieve big things. Born to an immigrant family, Norm was orphaned at an early age and faced a number of hardships. But he did not let that stop him from working hard or realizing his dreams—even if they differed from his original goal of becoming a dentist. In fact, Norm became the first member of his family to graduate from college and received both undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Colorado-Boulder.

He then opened a law firm with two fellow UC-Boulder law graduates in the 1960s. In the ensuing decades, that firm would transform into an agency with hundreds of employees and offices in all corners of the country.

And, as a board member of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, Norm would also establish himself as a well-regarded supporter of the State of Israel and the relationship between our two countries. Clearly passionate on the issue, Norm has made his case effectively to numerous policymakers over the years—Republicans and Democrats alike.

As he looks back over his 70 years, though, I think Norm will be most proud of his role as a father of three, a grandfather of four, and as a husband.

So, today, please allow me to wish Norm a happy birthday, and to also wish him good health in the years to come.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, on June 10, 2013, I was regretfully absent during the vote on the Leahy amendment No. 998 because of travel delays due to inclement weather. Had I been able to attend the vote, I would have supported passage of this amendment, which establishes a pilot program to invest in gigabit networks in rural areas. This program has the potential to greatly improve Internet access in underserved communities, which can lead to significant improvements in commerce, education, health care and other areas. I applaud the Senate's passage of this amendment.

MICHIGAN'S GOOD NEWS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, much of what we read today in newspapers or on the Internet, much of what we hear on TV, much of what dominates our national conversation and our conversation here in the Senate is bad news. And it's understandable in a way that we're focused on righting wrongs and debating the solutions to problems. But too often we lose sight of the remarkable accomplishments and uplifting stories that are every bit as much a feature of the human condition as conflict and tragedy.