

Washington State has a proud history of supporting our Nation's Armed Forces. From Fairchild Air Force Base in eastern Washington to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the Puget Sound region, our State is home to thousands of military families.

In addition to those active-duty servicemembers, Washington State is also home to thousands of civilian defense employees who work at these various military installations. Under sequestration, these men and women have borne the brunt of these across-the-board budget cuts. This month, weekly furloughs began for nearly 10,000 of these civilian employees in my home State of Washington. So now, once every week, they can't go to work. That amounts to a pay cut for them of 20 percent.

These are men and women—many of them veterans—with mortgages and medical bills and tuition costs, just like the rest of us. And thanks to the gridlock here in Congress, their lives have become 20-percent tougher. One of those people who is impacted is Will Silva. He lives in Tacoma, WA, and he works at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. We call it JBLM. Will is a former marine, he is an amputee, and he is a fire inspector at the base. Thanks to sequestration, he is one of 6,700 people in that community who won't be going to work tomorrow because Friday is furlough day at JBLM.

So tomorrow, Friday, in my home State of Washington, the 911 call center and fire departments will be understaffed, air fields will be shuttered except for emergencies, the military personnel office and the substance abuse center will be closed, the Madigan Army Medical Center will be forced to close clinics, and even the wound care clinic is going to be understaffed. All of this is because of the cuts we all agree are hurting our country.

Jennifer-Cari Green is another person who won't be going to work at JBLM tomorrow. Jennifer happens to be a single mother of a 6-year-old boy. She works at the Madigan Army Medical Center in the neurosurgery department. Her job is to care for servicemembers, many of whom are undergoing serious brain operations.

Jennifer was here in Washington, DC, on Tuesday to testify at our Budget Committee hearing about the impacts of sequestration. It is impossible to forget her story. Jennifer works very hard. She started there as a volunteer in the surgery center but has worked her way up. She doesn't make much money to support herself and her young son, and so she budgets every month right down to the dollar. She has no luxuries, and in her only spare time she cares for her son and works toward an associate degree at the community college.

Jennifer told me that because of these furloughs her take-home pay will be almost exactly \$1,000 a month—\$1,000 a month. That isn't enough for her to pay her most basic expenses. But

even with all of the challenges she faces, Jennifer came here to talk about what those cuts will mean for others, for the people she cares for at the army hospital where she works.

Because she has been furloughed—by the way, along with doctors and technicians and other employees at the hospital—servicemembers and veterans aren't going to get the care they need. These furloughs mean that everything from routine checkups to brain surgeries is being delayed for these men and women who served our country. Let me repeat that: brain surgeries at military hospitals are being delayed because of cuts from sequestration. That is unacceptable and, unfortunately, it is very real.

The impacts on our civilian defense employees are just the tip of this iceberg. Sequestration has resulted in dramatic cuts to countless other programs throughout our country. Head Start facilities have been forced to shut their doors. Meals-on-Wheels Programs—vital to our Nation's seniors—are serving less needy seniors, and even our judicial system has been forced to let go of prosecutors and public defenders. The cuts are clear and they are, across the board, impacting so many people in this country in our communities and in our families.

I understand many of us have different opinions here on how to address our Nation's financial challenges, but before we do that, all of us have to understand the devastating impact sequestration has already had on our Nation. I want to remind all my colleagues that it doesn't have to be this way. It doesn't have to be this way. It is now 124 days since the Senate passed a budget that fully replaced the sequestration, and 17 times my colleagues and I have stood here and asked to go to conference with the House to fix these ridiculous cuts. But 17 times now our Republican colleagues have said no. They have refused.

So I am here today absolutely committed to replacing sequestration. If some of my colleagues think this is about politics or this is some kind of game, I would ask them to talk to Will or Jennifer or any of the thousands of families who suddenly today can't pay their bills, because, for them, these cuts are very real and they need a solution now.

I hope other Members of the Senate will come and talk about these cuts. We can fix this. We can replace sequestration. We can manage our country responsibly. We can be much smarter about what we are doing, but we need the will of the Senate to allow us to go to conference to fix this and move forward and tell Will and Jennifer we, as a country, can work for them.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DEREK ANTHONY WEST TO BE ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Derek Anthony West, of California, to be Associate Attorney General.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form prior to a vote on the nomination.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Senate considers President Obama's nomination of Tony West to be the Associate Attorney General, the No. 3 position at the Justice Department. He is a superbly qualified veteran of the Department of Justice who has been serving in this position in an acting capacity for over a year. He had previously been confirmed by the Senate to be the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division.

Before his work in the Justice Department, Mr. West spent 8 years in private practice in San Francisco, where he was a partner at a well-respected law firm and specialized in complex commercial litigation. He also served as a special assistant attorney general in the California Department of Justice, as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California, and as a special assistant to two Deputy Attorneys General at the U.S. Department of Justice. Mr. West earned his B.A. from Harvard, and his J.D. from Stanford University Law School, where he was elected president of the Stanford Law Review.

The Judiciary Committee received dozens of letters in support of Tony West from various individuals and organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Sheriff's Association, and Taxpayers Against Fraud. The National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives wrote that "throughout Mr. West's career, he has proven to be an effective partner to law enforcement. With this experience, we believe him to be well-qualified to serve as Associate Attorney General and look forward to working with him on a broad range of law enforcement and public safety issues. It is our hope that the Senate will confirm Mr. West promptly to serve as the Associate Attorney General of the United States."

This endorsement is typical of the many letters sent in support of Mr. West. I ask unanimous consent that a list of all 36 letters of support for Mr. West's nomination be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

I am confident that Tony West is well-qualified to be Associate Attorney General, and I hope he will be confirmed without further delay.

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

LETTERS RECEIVED FOR TONY WEST

May 14, 2013—Esta Soler, President and Founder, Futures Without Violence

May 14, 2013—Ann Harkins, President and CEO, National Crime Prevention Counsel

May 14, 2013—William J. Bratton, President and CEO, The Bratton Group LLC

May 15, 2013—Randy I. Bellows, Circuit Court Judge, Fairfax County

May 15, 2013—Gregory P. Suhr, Chief of Police, San Francisco

May 15, 2013—Robert Wolf, CEO, 32 Advisors, LLC

May 15, 2013—Anthony W. Batts, Police Commissioner, Baltimore Police Department

May 15, 2013—Charlie Beck, Chief of Police, LAPD

May 16, 2013—Christine Varney, former AAG (Antitrust)

May 16, 2013—Aaron D. Kennard, Executive Director, National Sheriff's Association

May 16, 2013—Richard Parsons, Senior Advisor, Providence Equity

May 16, 2013—Kim J. Raney, President, California Police Chiefs Association

May 16, 2013—Scott R. Seaman, Chief of Police, Los Gatos/Monte Sereno Police Department

May 16, 2013—Jamie S. Gorelick, former DAG

May 17, 2013—Luis G. Fortuño, Former Governor, Puerto Rico

May 17, 2013—Alejandro J. Garcia-Padilla, Governor, Puerto Rico

May 17, 2013—National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

May 20, 2013—Jefferson Keel, President, National Congress of American Indians

May 20, 2013—MARCIA L. FUDGE, Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

May 20, 2013—David S. Kris, former AAG (National Security)

May 20, 2013—NAACP

May 20, 2013—William M. Lansdowne, Chief of Police, San Diego

May 20, 2013—Bill Lee, former AAG (Civil Rights)

May 20, 2013—Ken Salazar, former Secretary of the Interior

May 21, 2013—Mai Fernandez, Executive Director, National Center for Victims of Crime

May 21, 2013—Bernard K. Melekian, former director, DOJ Office of Community Policing Services

May 22, 2013—State Attorneys General

May 22, 2013—Craig T. Steckler, President, International Association of Chiefs of Police

May 22, 2013—Leadership Conference

May 22, 2013—Michael A. Nutter, Mayor of Philadelphia, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors

May 22, 2013—Mark L. Shurtleff, former Utah Attorney General

May 22, 2013—Catherine W. Sanz, President, WIFLE Foundation, Inc.

May 23, 2013—National Association of Attorneys General

May 23, 2013—Janet Murguia, President and CEO, NCLR

May 28, 2013—Neil Getnick, Chairman, Taxpayers Against Fraud

May 28, 2013—Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra Club

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate is considering Tony West's nomination to be Associate Attorney General of the United States today. I have a great deal of respect for Tony. As a fellow Californian, I know he will serve the position of Associate Attorney General with distinction.

The role of the Associate Attorney General—the third-highest ranking position at the Department—is to help lead the Justice Department and to oversee the Department's civil units, such as the Civil Division, Antitrust Division, and Tax Division, as well as the Office of Justice Programs, which provides grants, including to State and local law enforcement.

Mr. West's qualifications for this position are unquestionable. He has served as Acting Associate Attorney General since March 2012. He also spent 3 years as Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Division, so he is no stranger to the responsibilities and demands of leadership in the Justice Department.

From 2001 to 2009, Mr. West was a partner at Morrison & Foerster LLP, where he represented major corporations in securities litigation, antitrust cases, and white-collar criminal defense.

From 1994 to 1999, he served as assistant U.S. attorney in the Northern District of California for 5 years. He prosecuted high-tech crimes, bank robberies, fraud schemes, and sexual exploitation offenses.

He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University and later earned his law degree at Stanford Law School, where he was president of the Stanford Law Review.

Simply put, Tony West brings a great deal of experience in Justice Department leadership, private practice, and criminal prosecution to this position.

I am confident he will do an outstanding job, and I urge my colleagues to support his nomination.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time under the quorum call be divided equally.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THUD APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise to propose and support two amendments to the appropriations bill that is on the

floor today and will continue into next week. They both have a common theme, and that theme is to keep faith with the American people; to not put ourselves here in Washington, here in Congress, in a different, higher class than middle-class Americans but to be one of them; to truly represent them; to truly fight for them here in Washington.

The two amendments address this in different ways. One is to block a pay raise that would otherwise happen for Members of Congress even in the midst of this very sluggish economy, barely getting out of the recent recession. There is an automatic pay raise in the law. This was done years ago, really behind closed doors in a bit of a smoke-filled room, to put an automatic pay raise for Members of Congress in the law so that almost every year it just happens automatically. There is no inconvenience of having to propose it, actually having to come to the Senate floor and come to the floor of the House of Representatives and justify it and, God forbid, have to vote for it. It just happens.

I disagree strongly with that system. I think that entire system and premise is offensive. For that reason, Senator CLAIRE McCASKILL of Missouri and I have a bill, a proposal to undo that and require that any future pay raise has to be proposed, justified on the floor of the Senate and the floor of the House, and actually voted on. This amendment is not that entire bill. This amendment is focused on the here and now, to block the automatic pay raise that would happen this year if we do not act.

You will hear from members of the committee, handlers of this appropriations bill, that this amendment is not relevant, is not germane to this bill. The folks who set up the automatic pay raise system several years ago were very clever. They figured out a way that an amendment such as this would not be germane to any appropriations bill, would not be germane to any bill. That is why we need to act on this bill—because this may be one of the few appropriations bills, spending bills we actually deal with on the floor of the Senate this year.

To the credit of Congress, in the midst of the recent recession Congress denied itself these automatic pay raises, so they have not happened since 2009. But we are not into healthy growth. The American middle class is not doing just fine. Unemployment is still over 7.5 percent—7.6 percent, which is well above the 5 percent promised when Congress and President Obama passed a \$1 trillion stimulus. In fact, we have had 53 straight months with unemployment above 7.5 percent. That is not a healthy economy. That is not recovery.

As Americans continue to suffer, continue to look for work, continue to look for full-time work as part-time becomes more the norm, particularly in the era of ObamaCare, we need to relate to them and not set ourselves