

bill. He has already gone through all the vetting. He would be an extraordinary judge, but you would lose him as your first assistant. He said: I can't stand in his way. I couldn't think of a better choice to be a judge in this district.

Colin Bruce was born in Urbana, IL. He got his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Illinois and went straight to the U.S. Attorney's Office out of law school. He has handled criminal, civil cases, and bankruptcy and tort claims filed against the government. He then shifted to prosecuting complex criminal matters, drug fraud and cyber crime cases. In 2007, he was appointed branch chief of the Urbana division of the U.S. Attorney's Office, and in 2010 he was named first assistant U.S. attorney, which is the No. 2 position, as I mentioned.

In his current capacity, he oversees the day-to-day operations of the U.S. Attorney's Office, supervises all the Federal criminal investigations, prosecutions, and appeals in the district, as well as civil defensive and affirmative litigation in the district in which the United States is a party.

He has received numerous recognitions, including certifications of appreciation from the Justice Department, the FBI, and the DEA, as well as awards from the Illinois State Police and the Metropolitan Enforcement Group and Task Force.

He has a record of giving back to the Urbana community through his association with charities, such as the Central Illinois Chapter of the American Red Cross and Imagine No Malaria, a charity that purchases mosquito nets for families in Africa.

He is an outstanding nominee for the Federal bench, and has a great family whom he brought to the hearing. I certainly urge my colleagues to join Senator KIRK and me in supporting his nomination.

The second nominee is Sara Ellis. She has been nominated for a Chicago-based judgeship that was formerly occupied by the distinguished Judge Joan Gottschall. Ms. Ellis currently works at the prestigious law firm of Schiff Hardin in Chicago, where her practice involves white-collar criminal matters, complex civil litigation, and corporate counseling.

She was born in Ontario, Canada, to parents who had emigrated from Jamaica. She moved to the United States and became a citizen at the age of 15. Her undergraduate degree is from Indiana University and her law degree is from the Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

After law school, Ms. Ellis joined the Federal Defender Program in Chicago, where she served for 6 years as a staff attorney. In this capacity she represented indigent criminal defendants in all aspects of criminal litigation, preliminary hearings, trials, sentencing hearings, and appeals. She then worked in private practice for several

years before joining the City of Chicago Department of Law in 2004, where she served as assistant corporation counsel for 4 years, primarily handling section 1983 cases.

In 2008, Ms. Ellis joined Schiff Hardin, where she handles criminal and civil matters. She has served as an adjunct professor at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, teaching Federal criminal practice and legal writing.

She has a distinguished record of pro bono work and community service. Among her endeavors she has taught reading and legal skills to children living in juvenile detention and she has provided legal advice and guidance to the Warren Park Youth Baseball League.

She is also actively involved with St. Gertrude Catholic Parish in Chicago and is on the board of the parish school, Northside Catholic Academy.

Ms. Ellis is an excellent nominee for a Federal judge. She too is a person with great family and children backing her up, and I am happy Senator KIRK and I can commend her as well to the Senate for this nomination.

I hope my colleagues will join me in voting to confirm these two nominees who have bipartisan support and will be outstanding Federal judges.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, I want to thank the Senator from Illinois for his kind words, and I certainly support the appointments, and I am glad we were able to get that legislation passed on a bipartisan basis to help American industry.

On Friday last, it was thrilling to read the United States is now No. 1 in the world when it comes to energy production—not Saudi Arabia, not Russia, but our country. It was a particular source of such satisfaction because, after all these years of the American people hearing about how we are dependent on foreign sources of energy, at the top of our papers Friday last the energy experts said the red, white, and blue was at the top in terms of energy production.

This good news story about the energy boom is, obviously, as the Presiding Officer knows, absolutely essential to creating more high-skilled, high-wage jobs. I saw it, along with my colleague, when I was in his State, and we see it all across the country. This energy boom, for example, has been key to triggering a manufacturing renaissance—the lower cost of natural gas in particular being a magnet to bringing companies that had gone overseas back to the United States again and employing our workers with good-paying jobs. It has been key to the falling imports of foreign oil. Of course, wind and solar farms are adding tremen-

dously to the power mix. In our part of the country, Shepherds Flat in eastern Oregon is our country's biggest wind farm, and we are especially proud of it.

The current senseless government shutdown is putting this good news story at risk. When it comes to causing problems, unfortunately, this shutdown has something for everybody. If you care about oil and natural gas development, Federal agencies now cannot approve drilling permits either on Federal land or offshore. If you care about renewable energy, wind and wave energy permitting is now at a standstill. It is at a standstill because of the shutdown. Environmental reviews for solar farms on Federal land have stopped. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has canceled a meeting about implementing two hydropower bills that passed this Congress on overwhelming votes.

In my part of the country we are especially proud of this legislation. Hydropower is responsible. It is actually the biggest source of clean power in the United States. Industry estimates it could generate perhaps as much as 60,000 megawatts of additional clean power. These hydropower bills—there were two of them—were the first stand-alone energy bills to become law since 2009. Now they languish because of the shutdown.

All of these developments—the developments I have described with respect to natural gas development, solar and wind energy, the hydropower laws that passed overwhelmingly in both the Senate and the House—are now, in effect, languishing. What it means is less new energy, fewer new jobs, and less revenue—less revenue that we are going to need in both the public and the private sector.

I might also add this shutdown harms the important safety work that needs to be done by blocking work that is going to speed up the response to oil spills and accidents offshore. Of particular concern to me, and I know to so many others in the Senate—I see my colleague from Alaska is here—are the people who get hammered, who get hit hardest by these consequences who live in our rural communities, the ones who depend upon producing energy, timber, and recreation. They are the ones who feel the biggest hit from the shutdown.

I am going to talk about what this means in terms of recreation and hunting and fishing. The hunting season starts at different times in different parts of the country, but between recreation and hunting and fishing we are talking about something in the vicinity of \$646 billion a year which goes just to the recreation sector, and another \$140-billion-plus in terms of hunting. I am going to describe the consequences there, but we are talking about policies with enormous impact for our rural communities.

I mentioned the thrilling news of last Friday, about how we were tops in terms of energy production, but I got some additional news that wasn't exactly thrilling last Friday when I was

called by the Chief of the Forest Service, Tom Tidwell, who called to report the Forest Service had canceled 450 timber sales on 120 national forests across the country. What that means is loggers, such as the hardworking folks I represent in Oregon, who want to do a hard day's work, are being benched because of this shutdown.

The shutdown comes at a particularly ominous time because winter is at hand, in effect putting an end to logging operations for the year in many parts of our country. That means workers won't be able to make up for this lost time and money this year. Those loggers will simply have to get by with less. So again, rural communities are the face of what this means. They are the ones that are going to get walloped because of a handful of Members of Congress—a handful of Members of Congress—who won't fund the government.

So logging, energy, recreation, I mentioned the hunting season, the sort of flip side of the coin with respect to recreation. While the hunting season for ducks and geese is starting in my home State and across the country, the government shutdown here is closing hundreds of wildlife refuges where those waterfowl are normally fair game. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, hunting, fishing and wildlife-related activities generate about \$144 billion per year. Hunters contribute \$5.4 billion in State and local taxes each year. Because the waterfowl season is only 3 months long in Oregon, if you lose 1 week, every lost week is a huge bite out of the benefits that hunting brings to our local economy.

What Senators may also not be aware of is the shutdown also means our government is less prepared to respond to these fires, these rapidly developing dangerous infernos in our national forests. The fires have lessened in some parts of the West, but there are areas of high to extreme danger in California, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, South Dakota, and other States. While many firefighters are considered essential, others, such as our off-duty firefighters, have been furloughed. Public safety on Federal lands is also impacted by these furloughs. Although law enforcement continues, without rangers and other agency employees on hand, the conditions are ripe for visitors to find their way into severely understaffed forests and pose a safety risk. And, of course, thousands of hardworking employees at these key natural resource agencies are now out of work.

As we speak, there are 24,000 furloughed at the Forest Service, more than 10,000 furloughed at the Bureau of Land Management. If they are not working, Bureau of Land Management employees can't issue permits for grazing on Federal lands. Energy Department workers and contractors can't clean up nuclear waste sites, such as that at the Hanford Reservation that threatens the Columbia River and the million people who live downstream.

Our committee, recognizing the situation, recently had to cancel a hearing on the Columbia River Treaty, which is vital to the energy and environment of the Pacific Northwest. It is vital to our relations with Canada. This treaty is about managing a river that is the lifeblood for the Pacific Northwest. It is our lifeblood for transportation, for electricity, for fish, and there isn't much time for our two nations to come together to decide the treaty's future.

I have tried to describe what the shutdown means in terms of our status as No. 1 in energy production, what it means with respect to logging and forest fires, hunting and recreation, and it is all happening because a small group of Members in the other Chamber is demanding negotiations with the American economy tied to the train tracks. It is especially ironic that in many cases the districts of those Members are the ones that are going to bear the brunt of the impasse, those rural communities. They are the ones that are going to bear the consequences of stalled energy production and stalled logging.

I hope we can quickly come together and pass this budget without all the various additions that have made it impossible for Congress to go forward. It is time to reopen the government. I have spent a lot of time working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle on these other issues, and I will continue to do so, and I know a lot of Senators will. Right now it is time to reopen the government and end the shutdown.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, if the Senator will stay on the floor for a moment, one of the bills mentioned by the Senator from Illinois was the helium bill. Within that there is an important Alaska priority. I know my colleagues worked with the Senator—important to my State—on cleaning up those legacy wells that have been on Federal land for years with oil literally seeping out of those wells. And now there is money for the first time in I don't know how many years to actually clean up these wells. But from what I just heard, and correct me if I am wrong, what the Senator just indicated is that the Bureau of Land Management doesn't have the capacity to do permitting and other staffing. So there is no work to be done even though we finally passed a bipartisan bill in both Houses, signed by the President—something that has been waiting for decades to be cleaned. Am I correct on this, that BLM now can't do the work we want them to do? And Alaskans have been desperately waiting for decades.

Mr. WYDEN. I say to the Senator, we know for certain that 10,000 individuals have been furloughed at the Bureau of Land Management. And I tried to describe particularly getting these new permits. I guess if we are already out there with something—and I talked to Chief Tidwell about how we would try

to stabilize operations that have, in effect, been put in place now. But we are not going to be able to go forward with new operations like the Senator from Alaska is describing.

Mr. BEGICH. I know the Senator came to Alaska a few months ago and had an opportunity to see some of the great ability of our energy companies and what we are trying to do. Today I got an important announcement from Exxon and ConocoPhillips about building an LNG plant in an area the Senator had a chance to see. I didn't want to tell them yet, but I wanted to say thank you for the announcement, the multibillion-dollar investment in our State, something we have been doing already for 40 years—exporting to Japan. But now if there are any Federal Government permits they will need, the odds of them getting them in a timely manner are now delayed. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. WYDEN. Again, the Senator is right, because in Alaska, like Oregon, there is an extraordinary level of Federal ownership. In my State the Federal Government owns more than half of the land. The Senator is absolutely correct. With the shutdown, Federal agencies cannot approve drilling permits either on Federal land or offshore, and I saw both when I was in Alaska.

The point is that these are issues we can work on in a bipartisan way. As soon as the government gets reopened, we will go about the task of getting those permits out and coming together on a bipartisan basis, as we have done on so many issues. But we can't do it if the government is shut down. We can't do it if we can't pay our bills. That is what we are going to have to deal with.

Mr. BEGICH. I think this is more of a question/comment. One of the statements at the end talked about how this was held up. We passed a bill out of here—a continuing resolution—in which we cut, on an annualized basis, \$70 billion. We didn't compromise. We took their number. Let's make sure we are clear. We negotiated starting back in July, reduced and reduced, and then we went with their number, a \$70 billion annualized reduction. The body passed it, and nothing passes out of this body unless we get a motion to proceed with some sort of unanimous consent or bipartisan, and that was 99 to 0—people forget that—to move us to the bill. Then we moved it and sent it over to the House, where it has sat since the day we sent it over there. That would have kept this budget operating. Again, it had a \$70 billion annualized reduction.

I think that was the point toward the end of the Senator's comment, that a simple vote over there would put everyone back to work—these permits we just talked about, cleaning up the legacy wells.

The timber we have in southeastern Alaska is now in jeopardy because our Federal lands are now at risk. Is that a fair assessment?

Mr. WYDEN. It is. And I am sure the Senator was involved in this as well,

where, after all these years about hearing that the Senate hadn't passed a budget, we stayed up one night until the wee hours and passed a budget. We had scores of votes. Then a lot of us simply wanted to have a conference with the other body. After hearing that there hadn't been a budget, we thought we would be able to get that conference going, and we haven't been able to do that either.

Mr. BEGICH. And they have passed their budget too. So we have two budgets ready to go to conference; is that fair?

Mr. WYDEN. It was there for the doing. I remember coming to the floor and asking unanimous consent to go to conference. I knew there had been some conferring. But there was an immediate objection. At that time I pointed out that Republican and Democratic economists were saying look to the long term. I talked about it that day, saying that Senator ISAKSON of Georgia—a very able Member of the Finance Committee—and I have some new ideas on Medicare that we think can protect the Medicare guarantee and hold costs down. But we can't get at those kinds of issues unless, as the Senator says, we first reopen the government with that simple vote.

Mr. BEGICH. I appreciate the comments, and I thank the Senator for answering these questions. I think it is important again to point out that budget was passed back in April-May. We did ours, and they did theirs. We have tried 18 times to bring the two parties together. We have tried unanimous consent, as the Senator noted, here on the floor 18 times.

Then we went to this continuing resolution. That debate and negotiation started in July. The House had one number, and we had one number. As time progressed, we took their number—a \$70 billion annualized reduction. Some would not call that a compromise, but we will call it a negotiated compromise because we wanted to get it done. We again sent it over there. It has sat idle. One person—the Speaker—could put it on the floor. I heard him on the radio or TV this weekend explaining how the votes aren't there. Well, if the votes aren't there, put it on the floor and it will fail. But the reality is that the votes are there.

Just as we have taken every one of their items, brought it to the floor—we have voted on every single item over here. They haven't prevailed, but we voted because that is the process. But for whatever reason, it has gone over there and sat idle.

So if the Speaker doesn't think the votes are there, put it up. His side will win then. But there are clearly Republicans and Democrats over on the House side who want to put the government back in operation so we can get on to these bigger issues.

Is that a fair chronology of events?

Mr. WYDEN. It is. And what I was struck by over the weekend with re-

spect to those comments is, why not at least try that? If we add up all the Members on both sides of the aisle who said they would vote, for whatever—

Mr. BEGICH. House Members.

Mr. WYDEN. Yes, the House Members who said they would vote for it, it sure looks as though the votes are there. And if they are trying to break the gridlock, why not try?

So I hope that kind of thinking will set in here in the next few hours because that would be the fastest way, as the Senator from Alaska has made clear, to get the government open.

Mr. BEGICH. I thank the Senator for allowing me to ask some questions.

Mr. WYDEN. I thank my colleague, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, we are in day number 7 of this government shutdown. As was pointed out by the Senator from Alaska and the Senator from Oregon, we started with a continuing resolution of \$1.058 billion. That was compromised down, with the expectation that there would be a clean CR, to \$986 billion—over a \$70 billion reduction. That wasn't good enough because there were some who wanted to add different amendments to deal with the affordable health care act. The bottom line is that we are in the throes of a governmental shutdown.

It is interesting that since the government was shut down—midnight tonight will be a solid week—we have seen bills come over from the House that would fund the VA and the National Park Service. The Senator from Alaska is on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We both work very hard for rural veterans in this country, but we both know the VA can't do their job unless the IRS has funding and CMS has funding. So it is great to put that political gesture out there, but the truth is that they can't do their job until we have more than just the VA funded.

Then there was a story of childhood cancer, so the House came across and said: Maybe we ought to fund the National Institutes of Health.

Then there was the terrible scene last week where Capitol police officers—who are actually working without pay—had to address a lady who drove up here by the Hart Building. Since those officers responded, maybe we should pay them. So they came across with a bill for them. They should be paid all the time, I might add.

Then there is the issue of Hurricane Karen, so we need to fund FEMA. So they came across to fund FEMA.

Then they thought, all these furloughed Federal employees, we should pay them. And I agree, we should. The fact is that they do a great job and they should be back here working, and every one of them wants to be back here working to get that backpay.

Then they decided to fund things such as food inspectors because they understand our food security is at risk.

These guys can't see past their political noses. The bottom line is, as the previous speakers talked about, if the Speaker of the House put the clean resolution up with \$986 billion, it would pass the House. He said it wouldn't this weekend. OK. So if it doesn't, put it up anyway. Prove us wrong. The bottom line is that it would pass and this senseless shutdown would be over.

There are plenty of things out there that continue to hamper this country's moving forward economically due to this economic shutdown. We have talked about Head Start. We have talked about the Forest Service suspending logging contracts. The Senator from Alaska talked about drilling permits. Montana is an outdoor State, and people live for this time of year. It is called hunting season. Access to a lot of the hunting, camping, and fishing sites has been severely restricted. This weekend the National Guard furloughed its drill for 3,500 guardsmen. Communities around our national parks are being severely impacted, losing literally millions of dollars, which is real money.

So how do we get out of this? It is pretty simple: If the Speaker would put the bill on the floor, it would pass. He refuses to do that. I think he refuses to do it for another reason, and that reason is that I think a lot of his Members want to cater to the tea party movement but go back home and want to appear as if they are moderates. If they had that vote, it would certainly point out who stands for what in that body. That is why he needs to have the vote.

As was said by the Senator from Oregon and the Senator from Alaska, we have had votes on everything they sent over here, just about. The fact is they need to do the same. We sent a clean CR to them. Unless they want this shutdown to go and on and on for some unknown reason, they would vote on that clean CR.

Then we are rapidly approaching the debt ceiling, which puts the full faith and credit of this country at risk if we do not increase it. I might add this is not money that is yet to be spent, this is money that has been spent. It is not unlike the mortgage on your house or your credit card bill. If you do not pay them, interest rates will go up. If we do not increase the debt limit, interest rates and our national debt will go up. Those who are concerned about the debt and the deficit, as I am, and others on both sides of the aisle, we will see our national debt increase, not decrease, by doing something as silly as not increasing the debt ceiling.

I know there are some in this body who would love to put issues on the debt ceiling, and they are playing with fire. We saw what happened in 2011 when our credit rating was downgraded because some were just talking about not increasing the debt ceiling.

The truth is I will be the first to work with anybody in this body to try

to reduce the debt and deficit by reducing spending, by removing tax loopholes in the code. We need to do that at the front end, not the back end. The debt limit is dealing with the issue at the back end. If we do not do it, if we do not increase the debt ceiling, we will see the economy spiral down out of control, potentially even putting us into a depression.

I don't say that to scare people. I say that to make the point that we should not be fooling around with this issue. We are adults here. We need to get together and realize that the debt ceiling is too important to play politics with. I know since I have been here—and this government shutdown issue is a prime example—politics has trumped policy nearly every time. It is time to endorse the right policy and get a long-term comprehensive deal that is not a patch, that doesn't add to the uncertainty, yet gets us by the continuing resolution, gets us out on the debt ceiling so we do not have to deal with this every 45 or 90 days and do not have to deal with the debt ceiling just about every year.

I think if we were to do that and cooler minds prevailed, we could see this country start to grow economically. We would see unemployment drop even more than we have seen previously. We would see this country go on to have an opportunity to pay down our debt and deficit in a way that makes sense for our kids and grandkids.

I do not know where this is going to end. I can tell you the folks back home see it for what it is, and they are tired of foolishness and they want to see it stopped. I can tell you what makes it particularly frustrating for me is that as I see businesses start to expand, as I see entrepreneurs ready to take chances, they look at what goes on in Washington, DC, and: Whoa, this is not worth it. We don't know what the future is to bring because of the uncertainty of not only the continuing resolution, keeping the government open, but also the talk that has been revolving now around the debt ceiling talks.

I hope this body will do the right thing, and that it would push the House to do the right thing; that is, put the clean resolution on the floor in the House. Let's get the debt ceiling behind us. Let's talk about debt and deficit reduction in a meaningful way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. Could the Senator from Montana stay for a second so I can ask for a clarification of one of his beginning statements?

Mr. TESTER. Yes.

Mr. BEGICH. The Senator had at the beginning some good numbers there. If I do the math right, when the Senator from Oregon was here and from what I saw, we hear over and over there are not negotiations or compromise going on. But if I hear my colleague's numbers right, there were negotiations, there was compromise. As a matter of

fact, there was so much compromise we went to the House number—not our number, we went to their number. We actually reduced the budget on an annualized basis \$70 billion. Isn't that what the Senator's numbers are? He is on the Appropriations Committee, I am on the Appropriations Committee. There is one thing we do know a lot about and that is numbers.

Mr. TESTER. It is. It is a much lower number. I will tell the good Senator from Alaska this: That is what happened in the negotiations. The upshot of all that is that we would get a clean CR coming back if we would negotiate it back down to that figure; there would not be a bunch of games being played.

Mr. BEGICH. Not a lot of stuff added on later that wasn't necessary. We would debate that later but—

Mr. TESTER. Absolutely. And we should debate them later. But the bottom line is it is important that we keep our government open. Why? Because we are wasting a ton of money the way it is being done now, and this piecemeal funding, trying to get a political advantage, is crazy. People see it for what it is: Political gamesmanship.

Mr. BEGICH. Isn't it odd they pass "let's pay everybody," 435 to 0, they pass it but they only want to have some of them come back to work? If you are a fiscal conservative—I think I am; we are from Montana, Alaska, you know, conservative States—I want them working if we are paying them. Doesn't that make sense?

Instead, it seems as though we are given a couple of agencies, but they still want to pay everybody. I don't know what the logic is there.

Mr. TESTER. Why don't we have them come back? We know the value of work to their self-esteem.

Mr. BEGICH. Absolutely.

Mr. TESTER. We know those folks are important to my office. If they were not important to my office, they would not be working for me. They tell folks what is going on, help constituents when they have problems with some of the agencies around.

But the bottom line is they are sitting at home. These are not rich folks. A lot of them are hand to mouth. They don't know how long this government shutdown is going to go on and they want to go back to work.

Mr. BEGICH. I guess I have one more. The Senator said something I thought was very interesting on the budget deficit. The Senator is older than I am. I came here 2 years after the Senator. When we came in, we dealt with the debt ceiling, which is about paying the bills. We have to pay the bills that were racked up for a period of time before we got here.

In 2009, I think the deficit per year was \$1.4 trillion. This year—which just closed out because we are still not done—it was about \$630 billion. That is almost a 60-percent reduction in the deficit. We are headed the right way. But this is not helping.

Mr. TESTER. My last point would be this. If we are going to get the debt and deficit under control, one of the things we have to do is grow the economy. By stopping government with this continuing resolution, by talking, simply talking about increasing the debt limit, it does not do good things for our economy. In fact, it takes it in the wrong direction. We see businesses contract when they see what is going on here in Washington.

It is time to start using some common sense. There are folks who claim to be business representatives out there. I talked to a bunch of businesses this afternoon.

Mr. BEGICH. The Senator runs a business. He is a farmer.

Mr. TESTER. I am. Every one of them said they ought to quit messing around, get to an agreement, have the debates on debt and deficit we need to have, because they are important, but don't hold up the debt limit and don't hold up the government funding in the process.

I thank my friend from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. I thank my good friend for allowing me to take a few minutes and ask a couple of points.

Mr. President, I am here to say that is what this debate is about, a simple question, allowing a vote on the House side. If they do not have the votes, because obviously the Speaker there believes he doesn't have the votes and he doesn't support it being voted on, let it be on the floor, it will fail, and we will go back to the drawing board.

But the reality is he knows the votes are there. We would be out of this shutdown. The result would be people would be back to work, services will be provided, and businesses will not be losing the confidence they are losing every day or like the market once again. Since this debate started, the threats of shutdown, of actual shutdown, the stock market over the last 15, 16 days has lost almost 600 points. Most people do not pay a lot of attention to that. But if you have an education account, a 401(k) account, a retirement account, an IRA, or you have a little money set aside, it has a direct impact to your livelihood over the long haul.

I encourage the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Speaker BOEHNER, to allow a simple vote. We have, on every bill that has come over here. They have not prevailed, but we allowed a vote. That is the process.

But over there they refuse to do it. They keep sending back gimmicks. It is hard for me to understand this logic. They want to pay every single Federal employee, but they are only going to have some of them come back to work. It makes no sense. If you are paying your employees, have them come back and work.

I run a small business, my wife runs a small business, I know the Senator from Montana, who just left here, runs a small business. You don't pay your people not to come to work. When you pay them to work, you pay them to work.

The Presiding Officer was a Governor. He would not say one day: Oh, by the way, I am going to pay everyone, stay home for a month. No, he would have them come to work when he is paying them unless they have leave or vacation time. This is crazy. It passes unanimously on the House side.

Then they say: But we don't want you to work.

The taxpayers should be outraged about that. I want to vote on that bill. I want to vote on that furlough bill here. I want to make sure everyone gets paid, and then I went to follow it up with the CR and put everyone back to work. That is what we should be doing here, not these games where they bring over political statements with the items they are bringing over.

Do we want to vote against veterans? I have a higher per capita number of veterans in my State than any other State. Veterans are important to our economy. They have served our country. They deserve every benefit. But to play this game of leveraging—the American people see right through this. These guys who keep bringing these little schemes over here are thinking they are one step ahead of the American people. They are absolutely wrong. The American people are two or three steps ahead of us. They see the show-and-tell that is going on and it doesn't make sense.

Again, if you are going to fund all the employees—again, 435 to 0 they voted to fund all the employees who get paid, but then they only want some of them to go to work. It makes no sense to me at all.

I appreciate the time of the Presiding Officer allowing me the opportunity to engage with a couple of my colleagues here, but every time they spoke I wanted to explain and show kind of the farce that is going on over there and what is happening over there with a small group of the tea party—very small, 30, 40 Members over there, who decided they are going to run the government here.

The government is not run by one group, it is run by compromise and negotiation. We have negotiated all the way down to their number, we have put every one of their bills on the floor and voted on them. Now all we ask is one simple vote, a clean CR that sits in the Speaker's office, ready to be put on the floor.

He even says it will fail. OK. Let's see. Let's see where his votes are. Let's see where it all is. If it fails, we will be right back to where we are today, no difference. What does he fear? He fears the fact it will pass.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BEGICH. I thank the Chair.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF COLIN STIRLING BRUCE TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

NOMINATION OF SARA LEE ELLIS TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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 legislative clerk read the nominations of Colin Stirling Bruce, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of Illinois and Sara Lee Ellis, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

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

Mr. BEGICH. I ask consent the time be equally charged to both sides during the quorum call, and I suggest an absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering judicial nominations from a previous order.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today we are going to vote on two of the district court nominations pending before the Senate. I am glad we are getting to these important nominations, as we should have weeks ago. They should have been done in a routine fashion in the normal course of events, but there has been this concerted effort to slow down President Obama's judges—something we have never seen with other Presidents, but we do with him. I am glad that these are at least going through.

In the same vein, we see a needless government shutdown. I hope it comes

to an end so the Senate can tend to the business of the country, including, as I said on the floor the other day, ensuring that the courts have the judges they need. In fact, speaking of judges, they are both from Illinois and have the support of Senator DURBIN and Senator KIRK.

I ask that my full statement regarding the judges be printed in the RECORD.

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

NOMINATIONS OF COLIN BRUCE AND SARA ELLIS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, we will vote on two of the district court nominations pending before the Senate. While I am glad we are considering these important nominations today, I hope that this needless government shutdown soon comes to an end so the Senate can tend to the business of the country, including ensuring that our courts have the judges they need.

Colin Bruce is nominated to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois. Mr. Bruce is a lifelong Federal prosecutor who has served in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois for nearly 25 years. He has served as the first assistant U.S. attorney since 2010. He has extensive experience in Federal court and has handled over 600 cases, including 60 jury trials, 3 bench trials, and 80 appeals involving a broad range of issues such as drugs, fraud, national security, and cyber crime.

Sara Ellis is nominated to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Ms. Ellis works in private practice in Chicago and also serves as an adjunct professor at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. She has substantial experience litigating in the civil and criminal context, having previously worked as a staff attorney for the Federal Defender Program and as an attorney for the city of Chicago Department of Law. Over her 18-year legal career, she has tried 11 cases to verdict.

Both of the nominees have the bipartisan support of their home State Senators, Mr. Durbin and Mr. Kirk. They were reported by the Judiciary Committee by voice vote more than 2 months ago. While I am pleased that we are finally getting to vote on these nominees, voting on just 2 of the 13 judicial nominees currently pending on the floor is not enough to make real progress in reducing the vacancies on our Federal courts. Our Federal judicial vacancies currently number more than 90, including 39 that have been designated as emergency vacancies due to high caseloads by the nonpartisan Administrative Office of the Courts. There is no good reason for us to not get back to what used to be the regular order in the Senate of taking up and confirming consensus nominees within days of being reported out of committee. We need to get these talented men and women off the Senate calendar and into the courtroom so they can get to work on behalf of the American people.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I think I have spoken on the floor every day since this happened. In what has become an all-too-familiar scene around