

Board does. It looks out for the rights of millions of U.S. workers every day—Democratic workers, Republican workers, independents, tea party workers—regardless of whether they are in a union.

Mr. Griffin has extensive experience in employment law. He is highly respected by his fellow labor lawyers on both the union and the business sides. As general counsel for the NLRB, he will safeguard fair compensation and working conditions for all American workers.

This week the Senate will also vote on a number of other crucial executive nominations, some of which have been stalled for more than a year. The Senate will consider the nomination of Katherine Archuleta to serve as Director of the Office of Personnel Management. That is an extremely important position. She started her career in public service as an elementary school teacher. She will be the agency's first Hispanic director. Her desire to serve is earnest. This is what she said:

You do it [as a public service] because you have a deep passion for public good, for civic engagement.

She has worked in both the Transportation and Energy Departments under President Clinton. She served as chief of staff to Labor Secretary Hilda Solis for 3 years. She is eminently qualified. Yet Ms. Archuleta is the first OPM Director to be filibustered in the entire history of this agency.

This week the Senate will also consider the stalled nomination of Alan Estevez to be Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. This man's nomination has been stalled for 402 days. He will be responsible for a \$170 billion logistics budget—\$170 billion. That is a year. This budget supports our men and women in uniform as well as millions of machines that take them where they want to go. He specialized in military logistics for more than 10 years. It is unfortunate that Republicans will hold up confirmation of such a crucial Defense Department nomination.

I am told most of it is that it is held up for an unrelated matter, dealing with some other issue. It is just wrong. If you do not like this guy, stand and say why you don't like him and vote against him. Don't stop us from moving forward on the nomination.

Most of the opposition to this man, who has been held up for 200 days, is, I am told, by the senior Senator from Texas.

The junior Senator from Texas has placed a hold on another nomination, a man by the name of Tom Wheeler to be Democratic member of the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, a very important agency. In addition to writing two books, Mr. Wheeler has founded several technological companies—important companies. He cofounded the largest online targeted news service and helped develop the U.S. Government's telecommunications policy.

President Obama nominated Tom Wheeler as well as Republican Michael

O'Rielly to fill two vacant seats on the FCC; so what is stopping us from filling these vacancies with a bipartisan pair of nominees? Listen to this. The Senator from Texas has stalled the nomination because he opposes legislation proposed by Democrats in Congress that would require shadowy groups that spend millions on political advertising to disclose their donors.

This next one is really a doozy: the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. It is an extremely important job. This man is qualified. He has run the Office of Management and Budget. He has been the President's Chief of Staff. He is now Secretary of the Treasury. What a fine, fine man—Jack Lew. Jack Lew, even though he is the Secretary of the Treasury of this great country, cannot go to meetings that other finance ministers from around the world can go to. Why? Because Republicans are holding up his nominations to all these important bank boards, finance boards, the International Monetary Fund. He is supposed to be there. He cannot go.

He is a talented and dedicated public servant. He has already been approved by the Senate, confirmed by the Senate. Every Treasury Secretary serves as the U.S. representative on the international bank boards and offers input on America's position on global financial matters. That is his job. He cannot do that because of what I have just said. It is an embarrassment that we have not acted more swiftly to confirm him in this role. To think that we have to file cloture on this. Yet the junior Senator from Kentucky has subjected this nomination to partisan wrangling—and others have joined with him, I assume—as he threatens to do with the nomination of Janet Yellen to serve as the Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

The Presiding Officer and others who serve in this body and have served in the House of Representatives have served with a fine public servant by the name of MEL WATT. I got to know MEL WATT when he was chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. He would come over and visit with me every month or so—a fine man. He has represented North Carolina's 12th Congressional District since 1993, and as senior Member of the House Financial Services Committee he understands the mistakes that led to the housing crisis.

He also has proposed legislation to crack down on the worst abuses in mortgage lending and helped to pass the Dodd-Frank bill to prevent predatory lending. By any measure Congressman WATT is qualified to help struggling homeowners recover from the worst downturn in generations. My Republican colleagues should give him the up-or-down vote he deserves, not filibuster him.

I know some Republicans do not like Dodd-Frank. Obviously, they didn't mind the abuses that took place that led to the crashing of Wall Street. But he should not be punished for that.

At a time when America faces difficult economic times at home and var-

ious threats abroad, it is crucial the Senate confirm these talented and dedicated individuals to serve in the executive branch of government. Let us vote on these nominations. These normally easily confirmable positions should not have a filibuster. Not long ago I can remember Republicans who, in this body, were concerned because they could not get the votes they wanted on their nominees for President Bush. They spread on this record, clearly, that it is a right of the President to choose the players on his team. We should return to that custom, remove partisanship from the confirmation process and ensure highly qualified nominees receive the fair and speedy confirmation they deserve.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I think at this point Senators from both parties can agree that healthcare.gov is a rolling disaster. Every day seems to bring more near-comic calamities. We hear about visitors being told things like their wife is really their daughter or that they have multiple spouses or that they are unable to apply "due to current incarceration."

Unsurprisingly, just 12 percent of Americans think the rollout has gone well. That is less than the 14 percent of Americans who believe in Bigfoot. Those who have succeeded in actually enrolling in a plan are vastly outnumbered by those who have lost their plan. The real tragedy is that many who have succeeded are finding out the product is actually worse than the Web site.

The only thing the Web site seems to be good at right now is creating punchlines for late-night comedians. It is almost as though Americans are being forced to live through a real-life "Saturday Night Live" sketch. If you caught last week's opener, it is getting harder to tell the ObamaCare headlines from the ObamaCare punchlines these days.

Paper applications, 800 numbers, applying by fax—ObamaCare appears to be leading us boldly into the 1980s. Remember, before this thing launched, the administration swore up and down that ObamaCare was ready to go. Democratic leaders in Congress told Americans that the law's implementation was fabulous and that ObamaCare was wonderful. The President reassured everyone it was working the way it was supposed to, and of course Washington Democrats bragged about their fancy new Web site, the Web site that cost taxpayers—\$100 million? \$200 million? \$300 million? No one is quite sure. That is just one of the unanswered questions we hope they will clarify soon.

To be fair, the President likes to say that ObamaCare is about more than just a Web site. He is absolutely right, and that is why fixing a Web site will not solve the larger problem. The larger problem is ObamaCare itself. The larger problem is what the few people who actually have signed up for coverage have discovered about this law. The larger problem is how ObamaCare is hurting people out there.

It is about college graduates and middle-class families getting hit with massive premium increases they cannot afford. It is about workers seeing their hours cut and their paychecks shrink because of this law. It is about millions of Americans who will lose their current health coverage because of ObamaCare, despite the President's promises.

According to news reports, the Obama administration knew for at least 3 years that millions of Americans would not be able to keep their health care coverage. The President's press secretary basically admitted yesterday that Americans would lose coverage too. Remember, this is the same President who said:

If you like your health care plan, you'll be able to keep your health care plan, period . . . No one will take it away, no matter what.

This is just one of the many reasons Americans feel betrayed. One woman who was quoted in the Los Angeles Times put it this way:

All we have been hearing for the last 3 years is if you like your policy, you can keep it . . . [well] I'm infuriated because I was lied to.

Here is how one North Carolinian put it to NBC News:

Everybody's worried about whether the website works or not, but that's fixable. That's just the tip of the iceberg. This stuff isn't fixable.

That was after he lost a \$228-a-month plan and was faced with a choice of taking a comparable plan for \$1,208 or the best option he could find on the exchanges, one for \$948 a month.

After looking at all of that, he said: "I'm sitting here looking at this, thinking we ought to pay the fine and get insurance when we're sick."

Americans up and down the country are beginning to experience the cost of ObamaCare firsthand, and they are realizing they are the ones stuck with the bill. It is not fair, it is not right, and Republicans are going to keep fighting to get our constituents relief from this partisan law.

Of course, the most logical course would be to stop this train wreck and start over, but Washington Democrats still appear more interested in protecting the President's namesake and legacy than protecting their constituents from this law. I hope that will change because we cannot move forward without Democrats.

We have seen some signs that at least some Democrats are coming around slowly—slowly—much more slowly than we would like. I am happy to en-

gage in discussions to see where we might find common ground. Hopefully, we will eventually get to the increasingly obvious endgame: Repeal, followed by true bipartisan health care reform. It may be universally accepted that healthcare.gov is a disaster, but as the President reminds us, that disaster does not exist in a vacuum. The failure of the ObamaCare Web site is emblematic of the larger failure of ObamaCare itself and of the kind of problems we can expect if Washington Democrats continue their stubborn defense of this partisan law.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Politicians regularly come to Washington promising fiscal responsibility, but too often they can't agree to cut spending when it counts, and that is why the Budget Control Act is such a big deal. Since Congress passed the BCA with overwhelming bipartisan majorities in 2011, Washington has actually reduced the level of government spending for 2 years running. That is the first time this has happened since the Korean war.

The BCA savings are such a big deal, in fact, that the President campaigned on it endlessly in 2012. He bragged about the bipartisan cuts in Colorado and in Iowa. He trumpeted the reductions from coast to coast, telling audiences from California to Baltimore that he "signed \$2 trillion of spending cuts into law."

As our Democratic friends like to say these days, elections matter, and the President explicitly staked his reelection on the back of these bipartisan spending cuts.

Look at the exit polls from November. A majority of Americans said the government was doing too much. About two-thirds said raising taxes to cut the deficit was a nonstarter. Compared to ObamaCare, which more voters said they wanted to repeal, these levels of support are striking.

If our friends on the other side want to keep trying to claim an electoral mandate for retaining ObamaCare—contradicted by the facts as that might be—using their own logic, we would then have to call the mandate for reducing the size of government a supermandate. That is why their new plan to undo the cuts the President campaigned on and increase the debt is so outrageous.

We hear that the senior Senator from New York will soon announce a proposal to give the President permanent power to borrow more; in other words, he wants to extend the debt ceiling permanently by going around Congress. Let me repeat that. The so-called Schumer-Obama plan is a plan to permanently hand the President a credit card without spending limits and without lifting a finger to address the national debt. It is truly outrageous, especially when we consider that our debt is now \$17 trillion, which makes us look a lot like a European country. We have to get our debt under control before we move any further down the

road to Greece or Spain, and time is not on our side.

I hear the Senator from New York is going to try and sell his proposal as a "McConnell" plan. I appreciate the attempt at a PR gimmick, but there are two huge differences between the Schumer-Obama plan and what I have proposed in the past.

First, Schumer-Obama would raise the debt ceiling permanently. I reject that idea entirely. Second, unlike Schumer-Obama, I believe that increases in the debt ceiling should be accompanied by reforms. That is what we did in 2011 when Congress raised the debt ceiling in return for enacting \$2 trillion in bipartisan spending control—the spending control the President endlessly campaigned on last year. That is the real "McConnell" plan.

If the Senator from New York is interested in working with me to enact another \$2 trillion in bipartisan cuts, then let's get down to brass tacks. The American people would love to see us working in a bipartisan way to actually help them. If he insists on pushing the Schumer-Obama plan, he is not going to find any dance partners on this side of the aisle. Handing the President a permanent blank check, increasing the size of government, and trying to overturn the most significant bipartisan accomplishment of the Obama years is a nonstarter.

Our debt is a serious problem. I know Kentuckians think so. Similar to Americans all across the country, they understand it is completely unsustainable over the long run, and they understand it is standing in the way of jobs and economic growth today.

Let's shelve the gimmicks and the blank checks and get to work on bipartisan plans to get spending under control. That is what our constituents expect.

DISAPPROVAL OF THE PRESIDENT'S EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND THE DEBT LIMIT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to S.J. Res. 26.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion to proceed.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 223, S.J. Res. 26, a joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 on October 17, 2013.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.