

Its leadership rightly sees Ukraine's future with the West. But when you join the community of democracies, you simply do not throw your former political opponents in jail over policy disagreements. You instead offer better ideas and beat them in an election.

That is why this summer, regrettably, I introduced a followup resolution again calling for the release of Ms. Tymoshenko. I am happy to note that Senators BARRASSO, BOOZMAN, BOXER, CARDIN, INHOFE, MENENDEZ, MURPHY, PORTMAN, RUBIO, SESSIONS, and SHAHEEN have joined me on that resolution. Let me add that is not a group of Senators we see agree on too many issues. We all agree on this. For months, we have been waiting, assured that a resolution to Ms. Tymoshenko's case would come to fruition. We saw Ukraine take promising steps toward political reform. We saw some of Ms. Tymoshenko's allies pardoned.

Over the course of the last few weeks in particular, we were optimistic that the negotiations led by former President of the European Parliament Pat Cox and former Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski were seemingly making headway toward a solution in which Ms. Tymoshenko would leave to go to Germany for medical treatment. We were hopeful such a solution would come in time for Ukraine to sign an association agreement with the EU during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius at the end of this month—a step strongly supported by the United States.

We held off in calling this resolution with the hope that real progress would take place. But last Wednesday, after 2 years of delay and obfuscation on this issue, the Ukrainian Parliament postponed a vote on the bill that would have secured this resolution—a move that only adds to the long list of missed opportunities in Ukraine. That is why today, with some disappointment, my colleagues and I have decided to move forward and pass this resolution in the Senate.

There is still time to find a solution before the Eastern partnership summit takes place at the end of the month, so I am hopeful our friends in the Ukraine will be able to find an honorable way forward to put the best interests of the country first and end Ms. Tymoshenko's detention.

I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment to the resolution be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution, (S. Res. 165), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

#### TORNADOES IN ILLINOIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, search and rescue operations are underway in several Illinois communities today after deadly tornadoes tore through my home State yesterday.

Eight people died as a result of the storms—six in Illinois—and dozens are seriously injured.

My heart goes out to the people who have lost so much and today are beginning to sort through the rubble.

Take a look at what the people in Washington, IL, near Peoria, woke up to this morning.

This photo shows what is left of the neighborhood on Devonshire Road.

It is difficult to know which property is which because the homes have been reduced to splinters.

The tornado cut a path from one end of Washington to the other, knocking down power lines, rupturing gas lines, and ripping off roofs.

This is another picture of the devastation in Washington, IL. It looks as though this whole neighborhood has been destroyed.

Mayor Gary Manier says between 2,000 and 3,000 homes were damaged by tornadoes in his city, alone. He credits the advance warning system for saving many lives. Mayor Manier estimates people in Washington had about 4-to-5 minutes to take cover.

Washington is a city of about 15,000 people. It is about 150 miles southeast of Chicago.

At least 400 homes were destroyed there—wiped off their foundations.

Standalone homes, multifamily homes, and apartment buildings were damaged. Rescue teams are searching the debris to make sure all the victims of the storm are accounted for.

Several stories have been reported of debris from Washington ending up near Streator, IL, which is more than 50 miles away. People in Streator found part of a plastic recycling bin with the Washington city emblem on it and a UPS package addressed to one of Washington's hardest hit neighborhoods. A person in Lockport, IL; which is two hours away, found a savings bond with a Washington, IL, address.

Many other Illinois communities were struck by the twisters. This photo shows some of the aftermath in Brookport, IL, which is in Massac County, in the southern part of the State.

Several people in Brookport said some homes moved as much as 20-feet off their foundations. Seventy homes were destroyed and many more are damaged.

Three of the six people who died in Illinois lived in Massac County.

The Village of Gifford, IL, a small community of 500 people, suffered severe damage. About 160 homes were destroyed there. People there say it looks as though half of the town has been wiped away.

In Washington County, two siblings, Joseph Hoy, who was 80 years old, and Frances Hoy, who was 78, died in the storms. They lived in the Village of New Minden.

Coal City, Nashville, East Peoria, Pekin—many Illinois communities were struck by the tornadoes.

In the face of all this devastation, people all over the State are beginning the painful task of assessing the damage.

In fact, we are starting to hear stories of bravery during the tornadoes.

In Washington, a 6-year-old boy is being credited for saving the lives of his mother and older brother.

Six-year-old Brevin Hunter was playing a video game when he heard the wail of the siren yesterday. He urged his mom to go down to the basement.

His mother, Lisa Hunter, had heard the siren, too, but said the skies looked deceptively calm, so she thought it was a drill.

Brevin wouldn't let up. He told his mother that he learned in school that when you hear the siren, you have to go somewhere safe.

Brevin, his mother, and Brevin's older brother, Brody, grabbed a futon and went to the basement just minutes before the tornado slammed into their duplex in Washington Estates.

Lisa Hunter credits her little boy for saving their lives.

Lorelei Cox, a teacher in the City of Washington, credits a former student for saving her life and her husband's.

Cox's house was directly in the path of the storm. She and her husband, Dave, took shelter when they heard the sirens, but they were buried by debris when the twister hit. They survived but could not get out.

Cox says she and her husband were dug out from under the rubble by one of her former students.

Governor Pat Quinn has declared seven Illinois counties State disaster areas.

Champaign, Grundy, LaSalle, Massac, Tazewell, Washington, and Woodford Counties are receiving the trucks, communications equipment, and heavy equipment needed to remove debris. More than 60 National Guardsmen are helping with recovery.

Earlier today I spoke with Jonathon Monken, the head of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. He assured me that FEMA representatives are in the State, assessing the damage, and working with State and local officials to help people.

The State has dispatched technical rescue teams to a number of locations across the State, and is providing emergency generators, light towers, and communications systems.

The extent of the damage is breathtaking. I commend the mayors and first responders who are on the front lines, bringing order to the chaos, and Governor Quinn and his team, who are getting immediate help to the communities hardest hit.

And I am confident that the State will need Federal assistance to help

with the cleanup and recovery. I stand ready to help ensure there is Federal assistance to augment the arduous but critical recovery work that the municipalities and the State already have begun.

Tornadoes aren't new to Illinois. They are pretty common in our part of the world, but this is an unusual situation we face. In the last 27 years, there have been approximately 194 tornadoes in our State recorded in the month of November; 101 of them were recorded yesterday—again, 194 in 27 years, and 101 yesterday. Is the weather changing in America? I think the people in Illinois would say it is changing for the worse when it comes to the incidences of tornadoes out of season in our State of Illinois.

There are two things I can predict about this disaster, without fail. One year from now, we will go back to these scenes and we will see the most amazing work having been done by so many families and so many neighbors to pitch in and rebuild. They never quit and never give up. They will be back. They will be back with their homes and playgrounds and churches and schools and shops. They will be back.

The second thing I can predict without fail—and it is not unique to Illinois, but I am so proud of it—is that neighborly quality where people pitch in to help one another in ways large and small, from showing up last night in Washington, IL, at one of the shelters with 35 hot pizzas; somebody just brought them in and said give them to whoever wants them. It is the little gestures such as that, and many others, large and small, which I am so proud to report that are just part of who we are. Again, not unique to Illinois, not unique to the Midwest, maybe not even unique to America, but time and again in times of crisis it comes out and shows itself over and over again.

#### WILKINS NOMINATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the President's nominations to fill vacancies on the Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit.

The DC Circuit, which is considered to be the second most important court in America, has 8 active judges of the 11 judgeships authorized by law. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have argued that the Senate should not confirm any of President Obama's nominees for these vacancies. But when there are vacancies in the Federal judiciary, it is the duty of the President to fill them, and it is the duty of the Senate to advise and consent in an honest and professional way to the filling of these vacancies. The Senate does not have the right to unilaterally determine that certain judicial seats and posts should never be filled by certain Presidents. That is exactly what is happening today in the U.S. Senate.

Today we are considering the nomination of Judge Robert Wilkins to

serve on the DC Circuit. He currently serves as a Federal judge for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. He was confirmed by the Senate in 2010 by a voice vote—no controversy. Seventy of my colleagues, including 28 Republicans, were here for that confirmation.

There is no question that Judge Wilkins has the experience, qualifications, and integrity to be an outstanding circuit court judge. He is a native of Indiana and a graduate of Harvard Law. He worked for 11 years as a public defender in Washington, DC, and then joined the Venable law firm, where he served as a partner for nearly a decade.

As a judge, he has presided over hundreds of civil and criminal cases. He has a reputation, an unblemished reputation, for fairness and integrity. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, which strongly supports his nomination, said he has a "wealth of experience and impartiality" and a "steadfast commitment to enforcing the rule of law."

He has been rated "unanimously well-qualified" to serve on the DC Circuit by the nonpartisan American Bar Association.

No Senator—not one—questioned his qualifications during his hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee. As a sitting Federal judge, he has already demonstrated sound judgment and integrity.

He deserves an up-or-down vote on his nomination. And he deserves to be confirmed. But my Republican colleagues have made it clear that, once again, they are going to filibuster President Obama's nominee to the DC Circuit. It has nothing to do with Judge Wilkins, they say. They just do not want any Democratic President to fill this vacancy on this important court, period. This is becoming a pattern, an embarrassing pattern, in the U.S. Senate, and this court is exhibit A in the abuse of the filibuster.

President George W. Bush made six nominations for the DC Circuit during his Presidency. Four were confirmed by the Senate. President Obama has made five nominations for the DC Circuit. If the Republicans filibuster Judge Wilkins today, as they have threatened, then four out of the five of this President's nominees will have been filibustered.

Let's go through these nominees, just to recollect.

Caitlin Halligan, Patricia Millett, and Nina Pillard—some of the finest attorneys in the country, some of the most outstanding women who have ever been nominated for a Federal judgeship—were all filibustered and stopped by the Republicans.

My Republican colleagues say this is an argument about caseload because there is not enough work to justify these judges. This argument does not make sense. My Republican colleagues were eager to confirm nominees for the 9th, 10th, and 11th seats on the DC Circuit when it was a Republican Presi-

dent. You did not hear them talk about caseload then. This is a manufactured excuse for them to filibuster President Obama's nominees.

When it comes to DC Circuit nominees by our current Democratic President, it looks as though we will see four times as many filibusters as confirmations. This is unacceptable. It is disgraceful. These judicial vacancies are authorized by law, and the President has nominated extraordinarily well-qualified women and men to fill them. These nominees do not deserve a filibuster. They deserve a chance to be judged on their merits.

I urge my Republican colleagues to stop these filibusters now and to allow an up-or-down vote on Judge Wilkins and these other outstanding nominees.

We reached a bit of an agreement here a number of years ago that we would not stop these nominees unless there were "extraordinary circumstances." That was the term that was used. It turns out one of those extraordinary circumstances is when a Democratic President named Barack Obama makes a nomination. Too many Republicans think that is extraordinary and that they can stop well-qualified, good people from serving our Nation and serving on this important court.

We will have a chance this afternoon. I hope Judge Wilkins will be given that chance to serve on this important court.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RETIREMENT CRISIS

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the retirement crisis in this country—a crisis that has received far too little attention and far too little response from Washington.

I have spent most of my career studying the economic pressures on middle-class families—families who worked hard, who played by the rules, but who still found themselves just hanging on by their fingernails. Starting in the 1970s, even as workers became more productive, their wages flattened, while core expenses such as housing and health care and sending their kids to college kept going up.

Working families did not ask for a bailout. Instead, they rolled up their sleeves. They sent both parents into the workforce. But that meant higher childcare costs, a second car, and higher taxes. So they tightened their belts more, cutting spending wherever they could.

Adjusted for inflation, families today spend less than they did a generation