

It is a fairly simple matter. We have waited all week to get a simple agreement to move forward on appropriations bills the way we have always done. If it had been just one appropriations bill we wouldn't need consent. We put three of them together, and that was the right thing to do. But it seems to me we spent all week doing, so much of the time, nothing. Sadly, I am sorry this is the norm around here. For every single matter, even wildly popular matters such as an appropriations bill, it requires the full play of the cloture rule to advance. This has been so even though on Tuesday, when cloture was invoked on proceeding, 95 Senators voted to get on the bill, only 3 voted against it.

Senators on both sides said they want to have amendments, and we should have amendment votes. I am willing to have amendment votes on this and other things. Let's talk about this today.

I want to have votes on the conditions that Senator MCCONNELL has so frequently stated, a 60-vote threshold. The idea of a 60-vote threshold will not come as a surprise to anyone in this Chamber, I don't think, because I wish to take a minute outlining direct quotes from my friend the Republican leader.

No. 1: Now, look, we know that on controversial matters in the Senate, it has for quite some time required 60 votes.

No. 2: Requiring 60 votes, particularly on matters of importance, is not at all unusual. It is the way the Senate operates.

No. 3: Matters of this level of controversy require 60 votes, so I will ask my friend [referring to me] if he would modify his consent request to set the threshold for this vote at 60.

Again he said: For him to suggest that a matter of this magnitude in a body of 60 votes for almost everything is going to be done with 51 votes makes no sense at all.

And he said: So it is not at all unusual that the President's proposal of this consequence would have to achieve 60 votes. That is the way virtually all business is done in the Senate, certainly not extraordinarily unusual.

Finally he said, quite recently: Mr. President, I can only quote my good friend [again referring to me] who repeatedly has said—most recently that in the Senate, as has been the case, we need 60 votes. It requires 60 votes, certainly on measures that are controversial.

So let's make this pretty simple. We are going to have the ability to offer germane amendments, and we will follow the McConnell rule and will have 60 votes on them. It seems fair.

That is my consent request, and I would ask that it be approved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Reserving the right to object, what I think I hear the

majority leader saying is that any amendment offered by any Republican is controversial and thus must require 60 votes.

It was my hope we could get forward on this appropriations bill with a full and open amendment process and a reasonable number of amendments from both sides.

The only restrictions on amendments to this bill are those in the Standing Rules of the Senate, which create a requirement that the amendments deal with an appropriations matter or, if legislative in nature, have a defense of germaneness to one of the underlying House appropriations bills.

Chairman MIKULSKI has been determined to try to get us back to regular order in considering appropriations bills.

In 2011, just a couple of years ago, we considered this same appropriations package—the very one we are considering now under the regular order—and all Senators, Democrat and Republican, were treated fairly—just 3 years ago.

Today's Senate is a totally different place. The majority leader has blocked all but nine rollcall votes on Republican amendments since July of last year. That is about a year ago.

By contrast, during that same period, House Democrats got 153 amendments, rollcall votes, over that same period of time. That is in the House where you would think it would be hard for the minority to get amendments.

In fact, one Member of Congress, SHEILA JACKSON LEE from Houston, has had 15 amendments herself. SHEILA JACKSON LEE has had more votes over the past year than Senate Republicans. In fact, the House seems to have turned into the Senate and the Senate seems to have turned into the House.

The gag rule, as was pointed out by Senator ALEXANDER and others this morning in an appropriations meeting, seems to now apply to committee meetings as well. So not only do we not get votes on the floor, we don't get votes in committee either.

They cancelled the scheduled markup on the Energy and Water bill, I assume out of concern that some Republican amendment might, my goodness, actually pass with Democratic support. So we are being shut out of amendments in committee as well as on the floor.

When do we start legislating again? What has happened to the Senate?

Therefore, I would ask unanimous consent that the proposed agreement by the majority leader be modified so that all amendments be considered under the regular order, Chairman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY, and move this bill across the floor in a bipartisan manner exactly as we did it on the very same bill back in 2011.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the majority leader so modify his request?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, my friend the Republican leader is obviously not in contact with what is going on around here. This doesn't

apply to Republican amendments, it applies to Republican or Democratic amendments—as all of his requests, which are in the record and I read.

A reasonable number of amendments he wants. Fine. That is what we want too. We want to have a reasonable number of amendments on this bill and move it forward. It is important we get this done.

I have served in the House of Representatives—not without going into a lot of detail here, as the Presiding Officer has served in the House of Representatives. The rules there are totally different. Of course, there are a lot of votes because every vote is predetermined in the House, with rare exception, because the Rules Committee sets the boundaries of what happens. So over in the House the majority never loses.

Here the Senate is the way it is. We are willing to do votes as the Republican leader has stated time and time again we should do it. I disagree, but as he has said, this is the way the Senate operates now. I wish it didn't, but it does and that is the way we should proceed.

I am willing to move forward on this bill. We should have a 60-vote threshold, and I think that would be the appropriate thing to do.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. My friend the majority leader always reminds me he gets the last word, and I am sure he will have something to say further, but let me briefly say that during this same period, going back to last July, Senate Democrats have only had seven rollcall votes. Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, in the minority in the House, has had 15 rollcall votes over the last year.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. The House is different than the Senate. There is no question about that. We could have on this bill a lot more than seven votes, so we should do that.

Would the Chair state the business that is before this body?

VOTE ON NICHOLS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Brian A. Nichols, of

Rhode Island, a career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Peru?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON MCWATTERS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of J. Mark McWatters, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Credit Union Administration Board for a term expiring August 2, 2019?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON WORMUTH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Christine E. Wormuth, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today, due to tornados and severe storms in South Dakota, which resulted in significant damage to homes and businesses in my State, I was traveling back to South Dakota to survey the damage and meet with local leaders coordinating response efforts during the scheduled vote. Had I been present for today's vote on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 770, Gustavo Velasquez Aguilar, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, I would have voted nay.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told there is 7 minutes remaining postcloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 4660.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 9 minutes remaining.

Mr. REID. I yield that time back.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I would like to claim those 9 minutes.

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

Mr. REID. If she wants to use the time, please do.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before we move to the adoption of the motion to proceed on CJS appropriations, if in fact we do so, I wish to speak as the chairperson of the Appropriations Committee and the chair of the subcommittee on CJS.

I am really sad about what has happened here. I am really sad we couldn't find a way to proceed to bring up these three outstanding bills.

I note that what we wanted to bring to the floor was the Commerce-Justice-Science bill, the Agriculture bill, and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development.

There are significant policy differences even on each one of those bills, whether it is truck requirements, whether it is school nutrition, whether it is environmental—important discussions and decisions on the environmental protection.

On my own CJS bill, we are going to really lose a lot. You know, I had money in this bill—working with Senator SHELBY—for bulletproof vests for cops to protect those who protect us and more money for domestic violence to be able to protect those in their own homes. I have also added more money to work with those people who have been rape victims, doubly assaulted by the system where they are not only raped by a perpetrator, but the very system didn't process the forensic evidence that would have validated the guilty party or even ascertained that there was a serial rapist.

Agriculture fed the hungry in this country and fed the hungry around the world. And of course transportation and housing both created jobs, solved problems in physical infrastructure, and also at the same time met compelling human needs in our housing. Particularly, I note the items such as housing for the elderly and the economic development.

I am not going to take my full 9 minutes, but I would hope that at the end of today we figure out how we could have another day.

I know on both sides of the aisle in the Appropriations Committee itself, those subcommittee chairmen really worked hard to produce bills. As of today, we have moved six bills out of our full committee and are pending on the floor. But now we have to truly arrive at a set of rules for the road on how we can proceed to bring these bills to the floor. I really hope we can do so.

There has been so much good will on both sides of the aisle and also on both sides of the aisle a really incredible effort to be able to meet the needs of our country, to have a more frugal government and a really, truly civil process.

So this day will come to an end. But I really hope that the Appropriations Committee coming to the floor doesn't die today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I know there are others who wish to speak, and if they want to use time remaining postcloture, fine; otherwise, I yield the time back, and the floor will be open for everybody. But I need to do that first. So, does anyone want to speak for the 2 minutes remaining on this?

I ask unanimous consent that all time postcloture be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

BIPARTISAN SPORTSMEN'S ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 384, S. 2363.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 384, S. 2363, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I know my friend from Tennessee is on the floor and would like to make a few observations. I would just very briefly make the following point ahead of him.

Another way of looking at the way the Senate is being run that affects Democratic Senators:

Democratic House Members from Oregon have had 12 rollcall votes on their amendments, but Oregon's Democratic Senator does not have any—none. Democratic House Members from Virginia have gotten 11 rollcall votes on their amendments, but Virginia's two Democratic Senators have gotten none—zero. Democratic House Members from Colorado have gotten seven rollcall votes on their amendments, but the Democratic Senators from Colorado have gotten none—zero. Democratic House Members from California have gotten 37 rollcall votes on their amendments, but California's Democratic Senators have gotten none—zero.

So that is the condition of the Senate today. It is not just affecting the Republican minority, but the Democratic majority as well.

I see Senator ALEXANDER is on the floor. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, let me see if I can say something that contributes to progress, especially while the Senator from Maryland, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, is on the floor.

She has really done a terrific job in working with the Republican and Democratic leaders to try to get us back to the business of appropriating. We are not that far away. We have three bills ready to come to the floor. We have consent on the Republican side—which had to be unanimous over here to be able to bring it up in this way.

Now we have a difference of opinion between the two leaders about whether all the amendments ought to be 60 votes. I would respectfully suggest that is not the norm.

It is true that the Republican leader has said many times that an important amendment ought to be 60 votes. Recently when we were working on the