

that? Stalling these nominees is jeopardizing America's interests abroad. It is damaging our Nation's role in global affairs. It is damaging our national security. Is this conjured-up political retribution worth harming the United States? Of course not.

There was a New York Times article within the last 48 hours where Secretary of State John Kerry said: I have 52 important State Department officials who are waiting to be confirmed in the Senate—52. I was stunned to read in that same article a quote from the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee over here, the junior Senator from Tennessee.

Here is what he said: "Rather than filling vacant embassies to alleviate the national security concerns raised by Secretary Kerry and others, the majority leader—Listen to this one.

—who controls the Senate floor—has chosen to spend this week on a sportsman's bill and previous weeks confirming judges.

Why criticize me for bringing up the sportsmen's bill? This bill was sponsored by a majority of the Republicans. Twenty-six Republicans cosponsored that legislation. The junior Senator from Tennessee is complaining that I brought that up. I guess he is also complaining that I brought up raising the minimum wage, which the Republicans filibustered. Maybe he is also complaining that we have student debt in this country—about \$1.3 trillion—and we brought that up to alleviate the pain to families in America with student debt.

Maybe he is complaining because we brought up on the Senate floor something extremely important; that is, that if a woman does the same work as a man, she should get paid the same amount of money—not different work, the same work. She should get the same money. I guess he is complaining because we brought up something that addresses the needs that Americans have; that is, the Hobby Lobby decision from the Supreme Court. We think that is wrong. Women in America, families in America, with some exception, believe that is wrong.

So I agree with the junior Senator from Tennessee. There is an urgent need to fill these diplomatic posts as soon as possible, but for heaven's sake, how could he complain about the substantive legislation which is so important to America that I have just run through?

Then he complains about judges, we are confirming judges. I have been here a while in the Senate. Until Obama became President, with some exception, these nominations went through on unanimous consent. We were not holding up ambassadors. There would be a spat on a judge here and there but not holding up all of the judges. The reason it is taking so long is we have, under the rules of the Senate, what we call postclosure time. That time was originally set up so after we got on a piece of legislation or on a nomination, we could think about it for a little bit.

They think about it a lot and do nothing.

Thirty hours on a lot of nominations postclosure, 8 hours on others, judges only 2 hours. We have been able to go through a lot of judges because of that rule change that we made. I thought it was an urgent need 4 months ago when I came to the Senate floor to talk about the growing logjam of our ambassadorial corps around the country. But Senator CORKER's reasoning that these ambassadorial confirmations were delayed unnecessarily by legislation and judicial confirmations is a little weird, a little strange. It is strange and weird for a number of reasons.

I take issue with the notion that the Senate somehow wasted time by legislating and confirming judicial nominees. These are our constitutional duties. We are going to confirm, in the next few days, a post in Georgia. We have two to be filled there. One of them has been waiting for more than 1,000 days. So I think it is important we do this. Why? Because it is our constitutional duty.

We only have so much time to confirm judges, because as I indicated, filibustering nominees, they do it to everybody. We are working through the judges quickly because we changed the rules. Thank goodness we did. The Senate did consider Senator HAGAN's sportsmen's legislation last week. I repeat. That important bill affects—the one that the junior Senator from Tennessee said we should not have brought up—affects 40 million Americans who hunt and fish.

Somebody I used to practice law with has a place in Montana. He took his grandson there and had a wonderful time fishing—no hunting but fishing. This place he has, a little stream goes by there. He said it was the best time he ever had with his grandchild. That is what 40 million people do. That is what we brought up. That is what the junior Senator from Tennessee said was such a bad idea. Twenty-six Republicans cosponsored that legislation. It contributes \$200 billion annually to our Nation's economy.

My friend from Tennessee thinks it is a waste of time; we should not have done that. The junior Senator from Tennessee was a cosponsor of the legislation. He is going to go back and tell the people in Tennessee that he made a mistake, he should not have been a cosponsor.

Earlier, he voted to proceed so we could work on the legislation. Then he voted to filibuster it. This is the same tactic we have seen so much over the past 6 years. Republicans obstruct. When asked why they are not accomplishing anything, they blame Democrats. They blame me. The truth is Senate Democrats have continued to press for more and more ambassadorial confirmations while also introducing legislation that helps working families.

As I came to the floor in March to highlight the backlog of ambassadorial confirmations, the Senate has consid-

ered an increase in the minimum wage, equal pay for women, student loan refinancing, extension of tax cuts, cost-cutting energy legislation, and a number of other items. These are all important bills to give working Americans a fair shot at a measure of prosperity. Republican filibusters blocked every one of them.

Another issue I have with the Senator from Tennessee is that undoubtedly he knows the Senate traditionally does much of its business through unanimous consent—in fact most of our business. If Republicans agree there is an urgent need to get these nominations done and give their consent, we could confirm all of these ambassadors in a single afternoon. It would only take a few hours in the afternoon. We could do it today.

But it is clearly not a priority for Republicans; otherwise, they would expedite these confirmations. Their behavior on these ambassadorial nominations reminds me of a quote by Gandhi: "Action expresses priorities." Republicans' lack of action on this matter illustrates that they have no priorities in this regard.

So enough with the stalling and enough with retribution. The Senate standoff is not good for this body, and it is hurting American interests abroad. Let's get these ambassador posts filled. Our national security depends on it.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 2 p.m. today the Senate vote on cloture on Executive Calendar No. 849, Carnes; further, that if cloture is invoked, at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, July 21, 2014, the Senate resume executive session and all postclosure time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nomination; further, that following the 2 p.m. cloture vote, the Senate proceed to the consideration and vote on Executive Calendar Nos. 709, Shear, and 834, Mader; further, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with this agreement, we expect one rollcall vote beginning at 2 p.m. and two additional voice votes as I have mentioned. I apologize to the Republican leader for taking so much time.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

CITIZEN VICTORIES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday the American people actually scored a victory in the ongoing battle against government overreach. They literally rose, spoke out, and they forced the Obama administration to withdraw the latest gem from the “department of terrible ideas” over at the Environmental Protection Agency.

They showed two things in the process; first, the need for constant vigilance when it comes to protecting our liberties, especially with the current crowd down at the White House; and, second, the impact ordinary citizens can actually have.

The proposal in question was a uniquely awful idea. The goal was for the EPA to grant itself the authority to garnish the wages of private citizens without even giving them a day in court. Imagine. You received a letter from the government accusing you of violating some obscure regulation, a regulation most likely you never heard of and did not even know you were violating. The government then hits you with massive fines, sometimes on the order of tens of thousands of dollars a day, as you weigh your legal options and whether to fight it in court.

If you cannot or will not pay these fines in the meantime, too bad. Bureaucrats in Washington will take them out of your paycheck anyway—out of our paycheck anyway—without even the option of contesting the government’s actions in court for it. This is certainly government overreach at its very worst. That is why I joined Senators THUNE, VITTER, and BARRASSO in speaking out against it. That is why we developed a resolution of disapproval to block it.

But the real key to our success was the action of the American people themselves. They got our help, but they did not sit back and wait. They let their outrage be known. They fought back against this brazen power grab. Thanks to all of those efforts, the administration finally literally threw in the towel yesterday. Certainly we were glad to see it.

But look, the fact that the Obama administration’s EPA even introduced this rule in the first place should concern all of us. It was truly outrageous, but it is also not surprising because this is the same administration that just proposed a so-called waters of the U.S. regulation that would expand the government’s authority so broadly that the Agency could regulate and fine almost every pothole and ditch in our backyards.

This is the same administration that has been waging a costly war on coal jobs in my State through similarly onerous and arbitrary regulations aimed at pleasing hard-core activists in Washington without any regard for real-world consequences.

It is as though these distant elites in Washington view their mission as ideological warfare. They do not seem the least bit concerned about the casual-

ties they leave behind in the process. I have tried to get some of these bureaucratic foot soldiers down to Kentucky to see the impact of their efforts firsthand, but of course they are not interested. They are not interested in people such as the 32-year-old unemployed miner who walked into a Pikeville pregnancy center to ask for baby clothes. An employee at the center wrote to tell me what this miner had to say.

Here is what he said:

I don’t come from a family that has ever had to ask for help. I feel humiliated, but my baby is suffering.

That pregnancy center employee wrote that the look on his face broke her heart. She wrote: “[But] this is the plight of many of our families in Eastern Kentucky, their livelihood is being taken away by the War on Coal.”

These are the people whom distant bureaucrats in Washington should be forced to meet before they draft their rules. This guy just wants to put food on the table, to keep the lights on, and to give his kids a better life. But the war on coal jobs is taking away more than just his livelihood and that of so many others. It is taking away his dignity as well. Maybe that is why the administration doesn’t want to meet Kentuckians like him. Maybe that is why they don’t want to look my constituents in the eye. It is a big problem, and that is why I am so proud of the people who stood up to this latest ominous regulation.

Yesterday the EPA confirmed that it won’t hold a single hearing within hours of my State as it works to finalize national energy tax regulations that could devastate the lives of tens of thousands of Kentuckians. They don’t care, and they are not listening.

Well, I care. I see these folks when I go home. I hear their stories. My heart breaks for them. I am going to keep fighting. I am going to keep fighting against the Obama administration’s various power grabs and its regulatory overreach. I am going to keep fighting against the national energy tax. I am going to keep fighting for practical ideas that aim to help struggling families for once—a marked departure from the administration’s constant attacks against them—ideas such as the Coal Country Protection Act and the Saving Coal Jobs Act.

These proposals are common sense. If the majority leader would stop blocking them, we could deliver some relief to middle-class families for once. So he should know I am not going to let up and neither are the American people who won this important victory yesterday on another subject over the EPA’s latest power grab because, as we also saw with the administration’s recent withdrawal of an IRS regulation aimed at restricting free speech, the people can still win with enough determination. Civic involvement works—and given the pattern of abuse we keep seeing with this administration, it is absolutely critical.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of S. 2244, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2244) to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill (S. 2244) to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italic.)

S. 2244

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2014”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF TERRORISM INSURANCE PROGRAM.

Section 108(a) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2014” and inserting “December 31, 2021”.

SEC. 3. FEDERAL SHARE.

Section 103(e)(1)(A) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended by inserting “and beginning [in the calendar year that follows the date of enactment of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2014] on January 1, 2016, shall decrease by [1 percent] 1 percentage point per calendar year until equal to 80 percent” after “85 percent”.

SEC. 4. RECOUPMENT OF FEDERAL SHARE OF COMPENSATION UNDER THE PROGRAM.

Section 103(e) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “shall be” and all that follows through subparagraph (E) and inserting “[shall be \$27,500,000,000 and beginning in the calendar year that follows the date of enactment of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2014 shall increase by \$2,000,000,000 per calendar year until equal to \$37,500,000,000.”; and] “shall be the lesser of—
“(A) \$27,500,000,000, as such amount is adjusted pursuant to this paragraph; and

“(B) the aggregate amount, for all insurers, of insured losses during such calendar year, provided that beginning in the calendar year that follows the date of enactment of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2014, the amount set forth under subparagraph (A) shall increase by \$2,000,000,000 per calendar year until equal to \$37,500,000,000.”;