

Kirk	Murray	Sessions
Klobuchar	Nelson	Shaheen
Lankford	Paul	Shelby
Leahy	Perdue	Stabenow
Lee	Peters	Sullivan
Manchin	Portman	Tester
Markey	Reed	Thune
McCain	Reid	Tillis
McCaskill	Risch	Udall
McConnell	Roberts	Vitter
Menendez	Rounds	Warner
Merkley	Sanders	Warren
Mikulski	Sasse	Whitehouse
Moran	Schatz	Wicker
Murkowski	Schumer	Wyden
Murphy	Scott	

## NOT VOTING—5

Ayotte	Graham	Toomey
Cruz	Rubio	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The majority leader.

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

## TRIBUTE TO ETHELENE THOMPSON

Mr. REID. Mr. President. I rise today to recognize Mrs. Ethelene Thompson.

She was born on June 6, 1925, in Water Valley, MS, as the third child of Minnie and Solomon Morgan. Today, Ethelene is a caregiver known to many in her community for her willingness to provide free childcare and transportation to those in need. She lived through the Great Depression, World War II, the civil rights movement, and the election and tenure of the first African-American President. In 1946, she married Willie Thompson, and they raised six beautiful daughters, until his passing in 2000.

Mrs. Thompson has been instrumental in helping raise her 14 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great-grandchildren. She is known to give selflessly of her time and wisdom and to countless folks in her neighborhood and at her church.

She helped lead the Girl Scout troops for her daughters and granddaughters, ensured that her grandson and his friends made it to every sports practice and game, and has served faithfully as a member of the Bloomfield Full Gospel Baptist Church for more than 50 years, where she has been a member of the choir, Sunday school, and kitchen ministry.

I take this opportunity to celebrate Mrs. Ethelene Thompson's life and leg-

acy. May she continue to grow in her steadfast faith and love for her family.

## LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, while the Senate was in recess, Loretta Lynch, the nominee to be our next Attorney General, announced that her office brought charges against two residents of Queens, NY, for conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction and plotting a terrorist attack on American soil. U.S. Attorney Lynch continues to work tirelessly to protect our Nation, but the Senate Republican leadership continues to play politics with our law enforcement and has prevented the Senate from fulfilling one of our most essential constitutional duties—the duty to provide advice and consent on Presidential nominations. The same baseless political obstructionism that has stalled Ms. Lynch's nomination has also led to the Senate's failure to confirm a single Federal judge so far this year.

As one of the country's top Federal prosecutors, Loretta Lynch has an unparalleled record of keeping Americans safe from dangerous criminals and terrorists. This includes the successful prosecution of six individuals for their roles in a 2009 Al Qaeda plot to attack the New York subway system, the convictions of four terrorists who plotted an attack on John F. Kennedy Airport, and the conviction of a terrorist who sought to detonate an explosive device at the New York Federal Reserve. Despite her distinguished record of service, the Republican leadership is trying to use Ms. Lynch's nomination for political gain. This is not how the Senate should be treating a nomination of such importance to law enforcement and our national security.

It has now been more than 5 months since President Obama announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch to be Attorney General. Her nomination was reported out of the Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support in February, yet it has been pending before the full Senate for 46 days. That is nearly twice as long as all of the past seven Attorneys General combined: Richard Thornburgh, 1 day; William Barr, 5 days; Janet Reno, 1 day; John Ashcroft, 2 days; Alberto Gonzales, 8 days; Michael Mukasey, 2 days; and Eric Holder, 5 days. This historic delay is an embarrassment for the Senate.

In January, Ms. Lynch testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee for nearly 8 hours and she responded to nearly 900 written questions. Not a single witness invited by Republicans opposed her nomination. When Republicans stalled consideration of Ms. Lynch's nomination in committee, Democrats noted the unnecessary delay and raised concerns about filling this vital position. The assistant Republican leader dismissed this as "faux outrage." But in November 2007, that same Senator complained that a 7-week process on the Mukasey nomina-

tion threatened our national security. He issued a press release stating:

It is imperative that the president has his national security team at full strength and the unnecessary delay of Judge Mukasey's nomination has prevented that. He deserves an immediate up-or-down vote by the full Senate.

Similarly, in early October 2007—just 3 weeks after Mr. Mukasey's nomination was announced, the Republican leader criticized me for not yet having set a hearing date, saying that Democrats should "not hold Judge Mukasey hostage while they play partisan games." This is the same Republican leader who is now holding Ms. Lynch's nomination hostage and who has kept her nomination languishing on the floor for nearly twice as long as the past seven Attorneys General combined.

No one can deny that Ms. Lynch is eminently qualified for the job. The Republican leader should schedule a vote on Ms. Lynch's nomination today. She has the votes to be confirmed, and a vote on this highly qualified nominee is long overdue. The Majority must stop playing political games with our law enforcement.

We should also be voting on all 10 judicial nominees who have been pending in the Senate since last year, two of whom just passed the 1-year mark since they were first nominated. Tonight, we will consider just one of those nominees. Once confirmed, Alfred Bennett will fill a "judicial emergency" vacancy in the Southern District of Texas that has been empty for more than 2 years. There is no good explanation why it has taken us nearly 7 months to vote on his nomination, nor is there a good reason for why we are not voting on the other two pending nominees to district court vacancies in Texas. There are still two Fifth Circuit vacancies and seven other Federal district court vacancies in Texas for which there are no nominees. Texas has two times the number of Federal court vacancies of any other State, and these vacancies account for one-third of the judicial emergency vacancies on our Nation's courts. I urge the Texas Senators to work with the President so that we can receive nominees for those vacancies as soon as possible.

Despite promises to govern responsibly, the Republican majority has continued to obstruct when it comes to judicial vacancies. When Senate Democrats were in the majority, we confirmed 15 of President Bush's district and circuit court nominees by April 2007. We confirmed 68 judges during the last 2 years of the Bush administration, building on a record I established at the very beginning of the Bush Presidency when 100 judges were confirmed in the 17 months that I served as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. The fact that it has taken more than 3 months into the 114th Congress for the Republican majority to schedule a vote on a single judicial nominee is disconcerting, especially because all four

of the district court nominees who have been languishing on the Senate floor were recommended to President Obama by their two Republican home State Senators.

Judge Alfred Bennett, whom we are voting to confirm today, is currently the presiding judge on the 61st Civil District Court in Houston, TX. From 2010 to 2011, he served as the administrative judge of the Harris County Civil District Courts. Judge Bennett has presided over 8,400 cases, 640 jury trials, and 550 bench trials. Prior to becoming a judge, he was in private practice for a decade and litigated a range of civil matters. Judge Bennett has the support of both his Republican home State senators, Senator CORNYN and Senator CRUZ. He was voted out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously by voice vote on February 26. He has strong qualifications and should be confirmed.

I urge the Republican majority to schedule votes to confirm the remaining judicial nominees pending on the Executive Calendar. None of the nominees are controversial. We should do our jobs and vote on their nominations so that they can start doing their jobs working for the American people.

#### TRIBUTE TO KIM KRUEGER

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to honor Kim Short Krueger, a dedicated public servant for the U.S. Congress and the people of the State of Montana for over 39 years.

On behalf of all Montanans and all Americans, I stand to say "thank you" to Kim for her service to our State and Nation.

It is my honor to share the story of Kim's public service and commitment to her country.

Kim grew up in the small railroad town of Three Forks, MT. Kim was only 21 when she packed her bags and moved to Washington, DC. She began her congressional career as a receptionist for Montana Congressman Dick Shoup, back when Montana still had two congressional districts.

Always proud of her small town roots, Kim went to work for Nevada's only Congressman, Jim Santini, in the mid 1970s. Kim wore many hats, serving as both the personal secretary and the scheduler, and eventually became office manager.

Ever dedicated to putting Montana constituents first, Kim once gave a young Montana law student her personal ticket to Nelson Rockefeller's swearing-in as Vice-President of the United States. As fate would have it, Kim later married this same young law student and he became a district court judge in Butte, MT.

In 1983 it was time for Kim to head home to Montana. Kim went to work for Senator Max Baucus as field director of the Butte District office for southwestern Montana.

Along the way, Kim built up an impressive record of accomplishments while always meeting the day-to-day

demands of serving constituents. Kim consistently demonstrated her skill and grace in handling the needs of Butte and southwest Montana's constituents. She worked on all sorts of issues—from the Butte superfund, housing, banking, taxation, natural resources, immigration and military academy appointments.

In 2010, Kim was appointed State casework director.

Kim had a strong hand in boosting Montana's economic ties. Kim ran three Montana economic development summits hosted by Senator Baucus in Butte. The summits brought in folks from all around the world, like investors, ambassadors, and top business leaders. Almost 3,400 folks attended the final summit in 2013. Thanks to Kim's tireless work on the summits, new businesses have moved to Montana.

Kim also worked on superfund issues, the Beaver Dam Park, the Old Work Golf Course, and the Maiden Rock Bridge on the Big Hole River.

Senator Baucus depended on Kim to run his Butte office smoothly and to represent him at local events. She often worked nights and weekends, going above and beyond her duties to meet the needs of the people of southwest Montana.

In February 2014, Senator Baucus was confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to China and Governor Steve Bullock appointed John Walsh to serve out the rest of his Senate term. Senator John Walsh asked Kim to continue as field director of his Butte office and as the State casework director.

While I could go on and on about Kim's incredible congressional achievements, I know she is most proud of her amazing family. Kim and her husband Kurt have two terrific children, Krista and Derrick. A true Montana native, she is very proud that her children were born and raised in the historic city of Butte, MT.

Kim recently retired from my Butte District field office where she was working on special projects.

During her years of service, Kim always went beyond the call of duty to ensure the Montana congressional offices met the needs and requests of the constituents of our fine State. Her professionalism and dedication to her jobs and Montana constituents are outstanding examples of how government should work. Kim's positive attitude, indispensable knowledge and talent for serving constituents were invaluable to the citizens of southwest Montana.

Everyone who knows Kim is touched by her energy, kindness, dedication and positive attitude.

I am honored to know Kim and grateful that she was able to serve on my Senate staff. I know her family and friends join me in thanking her for her commitment to others. I wish her best of luck in all of her endeavors and many years of success to come.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING CANTOR IVAN E. PERLMAN

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to remember and honor the late Ivan E. Perlman, who served as the president of the Cantors Assembly of America from 1983 to 1985. Cantor Perlman was devoted to his faith, his family, his community, and his country. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and received the Bronze Star for his heroism at Iwo Jima. He stood next to Lt. Roland B. Gittelsohn, the Marine Corps' first Jewish chaplain, at the dedication of the 5th Marine Division Cemetery on Iwo Jima in March 1945. He chanted a version of "El Malei Rachamim," which is only sung for fallen U.S. soldiers. The division chaplain had asked Chaplain Gittelsohn to deliver the sermon at a joint service for all those who were killed in the epic battle, but some Catholic and Protestant chaplains objected, so three separate services were held. But three of the Protestant chaplains boycotted their own service to join Chaplain Gittelsohn. They sent copies of his sermon, "The Purest Democracy", extolling the cause of democracy and freedom and equality to the entire regiment. It was widely circulated, appearing in newspapers and magazines nationwide, and was read on the radio and into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

After the war ended, Cantor Perlman, who was born in Flushing, NY, married Muriel Herman in 1947 and completed his cantorial studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1950. Cantor Perlman served congregations in Lyndhurst and Fairlawn, NJ; Tulsa, OK; Des Moines, IA; Providence, RI; Stockholm, Sweden; and Sarasota, Boca Raton, and Tamarac, FL. Along the way, he and his wife had four sons: Eli, Emanuel "Manny", Richard "Rick", and Josh. He trained all four of his sons in the cantorial arts, and they have carried on the family tradition is an exemplary way.

Cantor Perlman was cantor emeritus at Temple Emanu-El in Providence, RI, where he served for 23 years. After he retired from Temple Emanu-El, at the age of 76, Cantor Perlman became the cantor at Temple Beth Kodesh in Boynton Beach, FL. Two years later, he was elected the congregation's Ritual Leader. Cantor Perlman conducted his last service there in 2005 and then he and his wife returned to Rhode Island, where he was a founder of the Friends of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. Cantor Perlman was a life member of the Marine Corps League, the Jewish War Veterans, JWV, and the Knights of Pythias. He served as the JWV post commander in New York City, and the department chaplain in Iowa, Nebraska, Rhode Island, and Florida. He was the JWV's first national cantor.

I mentioned that all four of Ivan Perlman's sons also became cantors.