

She has received the highest praise from those on both sides of the aisle. A group of 26 former United States Attorneys from both Republican and Democratic administrations have written, “Ms. Lynch has the experience, temperament, independence, integrity, and judgment to immediately assume this critically important position.” A former Associate Attorney General serving at the Justice Department under President Bush wrote to me saying that “[Ms. Lynch is] uniquely qualified to serve as Attorney General.” Former Republican mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, said, “If I were in the Senate, I would confirm her,” and Louis Freeh, former director of the FBI and Federal judge, has written “[i]n my twenty-five years of public service—23 in the Department of Justice—I cannot think of a more qualified nominee to be America’s chief law enforcement officer.” This is just a glimpse of the broad support she has received.

Loretta Lynch deserves to be considered by this Chamber based on her record, her accomplishments, and her extraordinary character. Let us come together. Let us make history by confirming Loretta Lynch to be the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General of the United States.

I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Loretta E. Lynch, of New York, to be Attorney General?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 165 Ex.]

#### YEAS—56

Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murphy
Baldwin	Graham	Murray
Bennet	Hatch	Nelson
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Peters
Booker	Heitkamp	Portman
Boxer	Hirono	Reed
Brown	Johnson	Reid
Cantwell	Kaine	Sanders
Cardin	King	Schatz
Carper	Kirk	Schumer
Casey	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cochran	Leahy	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Feinstein	Menendez	Whitehouse
Flake	Merkley	Wyden
Franken	Mikulski	

NAYS—43		
Alexander	Fischer	Roberts
Barrasso	Gardner	Rounds
Blunt	Grassley	Rubio
Boozman	Heller	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott
Capito	Inhofe	Sessions
Cassidy	Isakson	Shelby
Coats	Lankford	Sullivan
Corker	Lee	Thune
Cornyn	McCain	Tillis
Cotton	Moran	Toomey
Crapo	Murkowski	Vitter
Daines	Paul	Wicker
Enzi	Perdue	
Ernst	Risch	

#### NOT VOTING—1

Crus

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. As a reminder, expressions of approval or disapproval are not permitted from the gallery.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the majority leader making the usual request that the President be notified, but I have a sneaky suspicion the President knows what the final vote was.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

#### FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE REPUBLICAN-LED SENATE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last Thursday marked the 100th day of the new Republican-led Senate. While it is still very early, and there is still much to be done, we can report there has been bipartisan progress in a number of important areas. So I am optimistic. I am optimistic that the momentum we have seen over the last several months is going to translate into further successes on behalf of Americans.

It is interesting to read from last Thursday’s USA TODAY: The first 100

days of Republican Congress. The headline is: “Lawmakers try to prove it’s possible to be productive.” So people are noticing the fact that we are keeping our campaign promises.

During the last campaign season we told people all across the country that if they just gave us the opportunity to govern, we would do it in a bipartisan way. In November, the American people did send an unmistakable message to Washington. Voters across the country said they were tired of gridlock and tired of a lack of action. They said it was time for a new majority—a Republican majority—a majority to get the Senate working again and to get America on a better course.

Republicans have responded, and we are working hard to make the Senate accountable again to the people who sent us here. And you don’t have to take my word for it. Just the other day, the Bipartisan Policy Center came out with its healthy Congress index. This is a group of former Republican and Democratic leaders of Congress. They talked about how the new Senate has been showing signs of life. The total number of days worked, they report, is up from that of previous years—43 days in the first 100 calendar days of this Senate versus 33 days at the same point last Congress, and 33 days in the Congress before that.

Also, the number of bills reported out of committee is way up. In the first 100 days we had 15 bills reported out of committees in the Senate compared to just 8 in the first 100 days of the previous two Congresses. Imagine that, our committees are working, and we are pushing out bipartisan bills, such as the Iran congressional review bill that passed unanimously in the Foreign Relations Committee.

The number of amendments voted on is larger than it has been in previous Congresses. In the first 100 days of this Congress, we voted on more than 100 amendments. These are amendments by both Republicans and Democrats. For all of last year there were only 15 up-and-down votes on amendments—just 15 for the entire year. This year we topped that number of amendment votes by January 22.

That is just one more way the Senate is working again. In the first 100 days we passed a dozen bipartisan bills. We passed the bipartisan Keystone XL Pipeline jobs bill. We passed a bill to make much-needed reforms to the Medicare program and to reauthorize the Children’s Health Insurance Program. We passed the Clay Hunt Veterans Suicide Prevention Act. We reached an agreement to help victims of modern slavery who are abused and exploited by human traffickers. These important bills are just part of our commitment to work together to solve problems for the American people.

On top of all that, we passed a budget that actually balances over the next 10 years. Even former Democratic Senate leader Tom Daschle recently said that ‘there’s been more open debate and

consideration of issues" under Senator MCCONNELL's leadership. Well, that is exactly right. The Senate is working again, and we are just getting started.

I am hopeful we can continue to work together to find solutions for more issues that matter to the American people. As chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee, I can say that we have made real progress on bills to improve the lives of people across Indian Country. We have passed bills to improve irrigation projects, to help protect children in foster care, and to increase self-governance by Indian tribes. It has been a positive agenda, and I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of all the committee members.

Along with a group of six Democrats and six Republicans who are working as cosponsors, I introduced a bill to speed up exports of American liquefied natural gas. We have bipartisan agreement on the need to streamline the permitting process for the sale of this clean American energy.

This week we also made great progress on a bipartisan bill on the waters of the United States. I am optimistic we can reach an agreement with Senators on the other side of the aisle to get that issue behind us.

The American people want an honest debate on important issues such as these. The American people want their representatives in the Senate to be able to offer amendments. The American people want to see their Senators take a stand and cast a vote up or down. That is how the Senate should work. That is how the Senate has been working for the first 100 days under Republican leadership.

I am pleased with how productive the Senate has been over the first 100 days. Of course we want to do more, and we will have the chance shortly. I look forward to more votes, more debate, and more consideration of ideas from both sides of the aisle. This is the commitment Republicans made to the American people, and we are keeping that commitment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.  
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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am happy to stand here today knowing that the Senate has had a pretty good week of getting its work done—or I should say the people's work done—and overwhelmingly passing important legislation that will actually help, first of all, victims of human trafficking, but generally speaking, help make the lives of our constituents, the American people, just a little bit better. I am talking about the antitrafficking legislation in particular—something I am particularly excited about—the unani-

mous, 99-to-0 vote yesterday. We passed this piece of legislation after a hard-fought few weeks of debate. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act was a bill we all agree was worth fighting for. Why? Is this important to the rich and powerful, the people who have a lot of influence here in Washington and around the country? No. We thought it was worth fighting for because it would help the people who, frankly, need a voice. They need somebody to speak up for them because they can't speak for themselves. This antitrafficking bill, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, protects the most vulnerable people in our country.

I thank the majority leader for his tireless help and commitment to making sure we got this job done to fight this monstrous crime and punish those who seek to hold our children in what has been appropriately called nothing less than modern-day slavery.

As the majority leader said yesterday, today is a new day. Under his leadership, the Senate is now in a new era of bipartisanship and functioning. If there is one thing I heard last year as I was campaigning for reelection in Texas or traveling around the country—I am sure the Presiding Officer had the same experience—it is that people would tell me how frustrated they were with Washington and the fact that no one seemed to be working together to try to solve the problems that were making their lives more difficult. "Dysfunction" was the word most commonly used.

But now, after this first 100 days of a new Congress, I think we are demonstrating that we are capable of functioning and working together in the best interest of the American people. Does that mean we are sacrificing our principles? People are Republicans or Democrats for good reason: They have a different point of view. But what is inexcusable is for Republicans and Democrats to refuse to work together and get nothing done.

We have a colleague, a very conservative colleague who years ago told me, while working with a very liberal colleague—I asked him: How is it that somebody who really represents the book ends in terms of ideology—Republican versus Democrat, liberal versus conservative—how is it that you actually are able to get things done?

He said to me: Well, it is easy. It is the 80-20 rule. We take the 80 percent we can agree on and we leave the 20 percent we can't agree on for another day and another fight.

As we are celebrating, in a sense, a new era of bipartisanship and functioning here in the Senate, it is clear we can't rest on our laurels. We still have a lot of work to do, and I would like to spend a couple minutes talking about that.

Our upcoming agenda will include some very important and weighty matters, including the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which will give Congress the ability and time to scrutinize

any agreement reached between the Obama administration and the P5+1 nations, while also prohibiting the President from lifting sanctions on Iran during this period of review.

This commonsense bill was unanimously reported out last week by the Foreign Relations Committee. I think that is a little bit of a surprise to many given the fact that the President initially said that if Congress were to pass this sort of legislation giving the American people a voice in this nuclear agreement, he would veto it. Well, when this came roaring out of the Foreign Relations Committee with unanimous support and when it became clear that enough Democrats were going to join together with Republicans to pass this legislation and prevent a veto by having enough votes to override a veto, then the President very commonsensically said: Well, I think I will sign it. I will agree to go along with that.

So the President finally agreed with Republicans and Democrats in the Senate that congressional oversight was warranted and admitted last week that he would not stand in the way of this legislation.

We are here not to guard our own prerogatives or privileges as individual Senators. That means essentially nothing. What we are here for is to stand in the shoes of our constituents—the 26.9 million people whom I represent in Texas, the people of Arkansas whom the Presiding Officer represents—and it is absolutely critical that we, as the representatives of the American people, have the opportunity to review this Iran deal and to consider its implications, to debate it, and to make that entirely transparent to the American people because this is about not just the national security of the nation of Israel, this is about our national security as well as that of our other allies.

We will spend much of the next few days and perhaps through next week discussing this bill, so I won't belabor my thoughts on that at this time, but I did want to express a few concerns on the current state of the proposed framework with Iran.

On April 2, President Obama announced not a deal with Iran but a "historic understanding with Iran."

Well, people naturally asked: What does that understanding look like? What does it consist of? Where can I get a copy of it so I can read it?

To our surprise, there wasn't a deal. Nothing was written. It was somehow a historic understanding that—even the parties who negotiated it disagreed about the details. So it should come as no surprise that the President and the P5+1 countries have not been able to secure an actual deal with Iran, which is our biggest threat and most dangerous adversary in the Middle East. After all, let's think about whom we are talking to and with—the nation of Iran. This is the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism, a country that has repeatedly lied to and deceived inspectors in the past as a matter of

standard operating procedure. As Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel reminded us just last month, for more than 30 years Iran has been hostile to America and her allies. In fact, Iran first killed Americans back in the early 1980s and has subsequently killed Americans mainly through proxies since that time until the present time. This is the same regime that has continued to target the United States since 1979. It is the same regime that has been on the State Department's terrorism blacklist since 1984 following an Iran-backed terrorist attack that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of American servicemen, including many from my State. Given this track record, does anybody really wonder what Iran would do with a nuclear weapon?

As these important negotiations continue for the next months, there remain a lot of question marks about Iran's true intentions and about whether the deal—once it is done—the Obama administration is finalizing will essentially cement Iran's status as a nuclear threshold nation.

I remember Prime Minister Netanyahu speaking to a joint meeting of the Congress. He said the framework he has seen doesn't prevent Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon. What he said is that essentially the framework paves the way or paves the path to a nuclear weapon, which, of course, would represent a tremendous change in American policy.

Our policy has been—the administration's policy has been, as stated, no nukes for Iran, none. But at least according to the framework that has been leaked, there appears to be more of the nature of a pathway toward a nuclear weapon as opposed to a prohibition. I look forward to continuing the discussion in the coming days, but Iran is only one issue we will be turning to as the Senate continues to work on bipartisan legislation to get work done for the American people.

We will be working on the very important issue of trade. Trade is important to my State, and it is important to the United States. Anytime we can open new markets to the things we grow in our agricultural sector or the livestock we raise—the beef, pork, poultry sector—anytime we can create and open new markets to the things we manufacture and we make in the United States, it strikes me it is a good thing, because while we occupy only 5 percent of the world's territory, we constitute 20 percent of the purchasing power in the world. That means 95 percent of the population—80 percent of the purchasing power in the world—lies beyond our shores. It just makes sense to me that we would want to open our markets, our goods that we make and grow and raise to markets overseas; in this case, primarily to Asia. But once we take up the Trans-Pacific Partnership, once it is negotiated, then at some future point we will turn to Europe and the so-called TTIP negotiation.

Last night, I am glad to report that the Finance Committee reported out the trade promotion authority piece of this legislation. This is something that has been a little bit misunderstood and, frankly, it is a little confusing. People have asked, Why in the world would you want to give the President authority to negotiate this Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiation? The simple answer is this trade promotion authority is not just for President Obama and his administration—he is only going to be there for the next 20 months. This will last for 6 years and go into the next Presidential administration.

The fact is, you can't negotiate something as complex as a trade deal like the Trans-Pacific Partnership with 535 negotiators; in other words, all the Members of the Senate and all the Members of the House. But what this does provide is that once a deal is reached, it has to be laid before the Congress and it has to be laid before the American people so they can read it and understand it.

After about 6 months, then there will be a debate in the Senate, and we will have an up-or-down vote. If we do not think it serves the interests of the United States, of our citizens and of our country, we can vote it down. But conversely, if we think this does improve trade and the economic prospects, jobs and wages for the American people, then we can vote to approve it. This bill will open American goods and services to global markets, which is good for our economy, good for jobs, and good for better wages, something that has been under a lot of negative pressure over the last few years.

To sum up this week, we passed legislation that will help thousands of victims of modern-day slavery—typically, a girl between the ages of 12 and 14—who are routinely sex trafficked in our own backyards. This will provide real resources. It will not only help rescue them but begin to help them heal and to begin the path to restoration.

I think this should be a proud accomplishment for the Senate. But the bottom line is, we still have a lot of work to do, and I look forward to more accomplishments with my colleagues and for the new spirit of bipartisanship to continue as we tackle real problems for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

#### TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I come to the floor to discuss the importance of trade and the Nebraskans who depend upon it. Since 1989, U.S. agricultural exports have nearly quadrupled in value. This is a direct result of our trade agreements, which have opened foreign markets to our goods. In 2014 alone, the value of U.S. agriculture exports was \$152.5 billion, yielding a trade surplus of more than \$43 billion.

This surplus is the result of hard work by millions of American farmers and ranchers.

My home State of Nebraska is leading the way in progress as a top producer and exporter of agriculture and manufacturing products. In 2013, Nebraska exported \$7.3 billion in products tied to agriculture and the processing industries. By trading internationally, we are creating jobs and long-term income here at home. From farms and ranches to food processing, transportation, and manufacturing industries, countless parts of our economy rely on flow of goods across our Nation and around the world.

Nebraska's Governor, director of agriculture, and 22 Nebraska agriculture stakeholders echoed the necessity of these trade agreements, urging congressional leaders to quickly pass important legislation for these agreements to materialize. This point was reinforced in a recent Omaha World-Herald Editorial, which noted that Nebraska producers operate on a global scale and therefore understand the economic benefit of robust free-trade agreements.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that every \$1 billion of U.S. agricultural exports generates \$1.3 billion in economic activity and supports the full-time work of approximately 6,600 Americans throughout the economy. Simply put, international trade is an essential component of opening foreign markets to U.S. agriculture and food products. The best avenues we have to open new markets, increase that productivity, and create jobs are through strong, fair, and inclusive free-trade agreements.

With more than 95 percent of the world's population located outside the United States, economic growth and job creation depend on trade opportunities that allow our U.S. companies and our producers to tap into new markets to sell more American products.

As we debate, the world's population continues to grow. In more and more countries, we see a growing middle class with a mounting appetite. What do they want to eat? They want high-quality meat, produce, and food products from the United States of America. What a tremendous opportunity for American producers to capture new markets and reach more consumers worldwide, but these new markets cannot be developed unless the United States is at the table and at the table negotiating for comprehensive free-trade agreements that ensure producers and exporters receive that fair deal.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Senate must first pass trade promotion authority or the TPA. TPA effectively combines Congress's authority to regulate foreign commerce alongside the President's authority to negotiate treaties. It reinforces the role of Congress to set negotiation priorities, and it requires the President to consult extensively with legislators throughout