

works for the American people, but time and time again, whether it was in the Appropriations Committee or here on the Senate floor, Members of this body refused to have a conversation about how to do that. They dug their heels in and said: It is my way or the highway.

Now here we are, down to the wire, and they finally realize that sequestration is damaging. It is something that we have been saying from day one. Unfortunately, it cost the Speaker of the House his job, it wasted months of time, and it continued to erode what is left of the faith that the American people have in Congress.

Coming from Montana, I find this incredibly frustrating. Folks back home are reasonable. They talk to their neighbors even if they don't agree with them. They compromise, negotiate, give a little, and most of the time they get a lot. This body could learn a lot from my constituents.

The Senate was designed to be a deliberative body. It was supposed to be a place where conversations and compromise happen, where we reach across the aisle and partner with our colleagues with whom we might not always agree. That kind of bipartisanship requires more time, harder work, and tougher conversations. Sure, it is a lot easier to scream and yell at the other side so the super PACs and millionaires who fund too much of our politics these days know we didn't back down, but at the end of the day, that doesn't move the country forward, and unfortunately that happened again this year.

Had we started these budget negotiations back in July when 10 moderate Members of this body first rang the alarm, we wouldn't be in a last-minute scramble today. I am disappointed. I am disappointed in the Senate. The only time folks are talking to one another is when there is a crisis. The only time folks are working together is when we are faced with fiscal cliffs, economic meltdowns, and catastrophes. I hope we realize that Congress is the only place in this country that operates like this. Businesses and families plan, talk, and they certainly don't wait until the last minute to get their financial house in order.

Why does it take an emergency for Congress to govern? Why does it take a looming deadline for folks to come to their senses and to do their jobs? It is because the voices in the middle are getting drowned out by the voices on the fringes. We have become afraid of compromise. In many circles it is a dirty word, one that should never be uttered.

So here we are today, just a few days before we default on our debt, and we have wasted so much time. Our inability to tackle these issues earlier this year caused the appropriations process to break down. It caused an unnecessary veto of the Defense authorization bill, something our troops are waiting for us to resolve while they stand on the frontlines.

I know this budget deal isn't perfect, but it is the product of compromise, however last minute it may be and however limited the ability of Senators to weigh in on it is. But by raising the debt ceiling, we will prevent interest rates from skyrocketing and the value of the dollar from plummeting. By ending the sequester, we will do away with severe budget cuts that are hurting our veterans, seniors, students, and working families.

We will shore up Social Security and allow ourselves to make responsible investments in our national security, education, health care, and public lands. It will reduce a massive premium hike that was scheduled to impact 46,000 Montana seniors who use Medicare for their health insurance. This legislation will keep those premiums more manageable.

Those accomplishments are critically important to our economy and worthy of this Senate's support, but as with anything that comes together at the last minute, there are provisions I don't like, things that could have been fixed if we had taken more time to negotiate. Take, for instance, the budget's impact on our rural hospitals. There are provisions in here that could severely limit access to rural health care. I am committed to addressing those concerns in the upcoming appropriations process because folks in Montana and other rural States shouldn't have to drive hundreds of miles to see a doctor.

As I said, this budget isn't perfect. The most disappointing thing is that it could have been so much better. But in the spirit of compromise that got us here today, we need to use that conversation to make sure we get things done.

I know there will always be those who refuse to get off the ideological soapbox and who like to watch others do the hard work of governing, but those folks usually don't last long with my constituents.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SPEAKER PAUL RYAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, when responsibility calls, it is usually not at a time of our choosing. The decision to answer is rarely easy or straightforward. PAUL RYAN knows this. He spent his nights dreaming about tax policy, not the Speakership. But our country is fortunate that he stepped up to lead, and I know I am grateful that he did.

Speaker RYAN is thoughtful about the issues facing our Nation. He is sober-minded. He knows the job he is walking into is tough. He also understands the potential it holds in terms of conservative solutions for our country and in terms of more opportunity for the middle class.

When I called to congratulate Speaker RYAN, we discussed our many shared goals in Congress. We pledged a strong partnership. We aimed to continue ad-

vancing conservative reform. I look forward to working closely with him as we move forward.

Speaker RYAN knows what it means to work hard. He knows what it means to dream big dreams. He knows what it means to achieve them as well. Something we all admire about Speaker RYAN is his determination to ensure others are able to achieve big things in their lives too, to ensure others can lead fulfilling lives defined by meaning and punctuated with purpose.

There is no doubt he cares deeply. He cares about combating poverty effectively. He cares about lifting up the middle class successfully. And because he cares, he is willing to call out failed policies when they hurt those they are supposed to help, and he has suggested better ways forward as well.

In short, here is what we can say about Speaker RYAN: He has a big heart, he has an extraordinary intellect, and he knows how to lead with both. That quality is rare around here. So is having a reputation that so greatly precedes oneself in such a positive way. But that is Speaker RYAN.

Nothing is going to come easily in his new role, and he certainly knows that. Neither of us will be under any illusions about the positions we hold. We face a Democratic Party that continues to move left. We face a President who doesn't seem very interested in cooperation on the big things or the hard things, nor on making divided government work. These are the realities that face us, and we might as well acknowledge them, but it won't stop us from working together to advance conservative reform as well as to achieve solutions for the middle class whenever we can.

Today, though, let's celebrate Speaker RYAN's extraordinary achievement. He has already proven his stature as a leader in our party. From leading the Nation on responsible budgeting and pro-growth tax reform to serving as an extraordinary candidate for Vice President, he always rises to the challenge.

I would note for my House colleagues that their incoming leader campaigned vigorously to become President of the Senate, but he was drafted into the Speakership.

But, look, on a more serious note, PAUL RYAN may not have asked for this job, but the moment called for him to lead, and I am grateful that he will because we know he is a leader who has repeatedly demonstrated the talent, the vision, and the experience to succeed.

I look forward to building a strong partnership on behalf of our country.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar Nos. 345

through 355 and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, and 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; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Thomas K. Wark

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Howard P. Purcell

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Allan L. Swartzmiller

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. David D. Halverson

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Kenneth R. Dahl

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army Veterinary Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 3064 and 3084:

To be brigadier general

Col. Erik H. Torring, III

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Thomas S. Vandal

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Valeria Gonzalez-Kerr

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. John J. Morris

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Stephen E. Markovich

IN THE ARMY

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Marta Carcana

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN603 AIR FORCE nominations (1451) beginning BRANDON R. ABEL, and ending BRANDON A. ZUERCHER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of June 24, 2015.

PN805 AIR FORCE nominations (19) beginning MICHELLE T. AARON, and ending KIRK P. WINGER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN808 AIR FORCE nominations (50) beginning QUENTIN D. BAGBY, and ending MARY A. WORKMAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN811 AIR FORCE nominations (126) beginning ROBERT H. ALEXANDER, and ending JUSTIN DAVID WRIGHT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

IN THE ARMY

PN784 ARMY nomination of Matthew P. Tarjick, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 8, 2015.

PN816 ARMY nomination of Judith S. Meyers, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN817 ARMY nominations (2) beginning THOMAS W. WISENBAUGH, and ending HAROLD P. XENTELIS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2015.

PN898 ARMY nomination of Michael A. Blaine, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 5, 2015.

IN THE NAVY

PN906 NAVY nomination of Terry A. Petropoulos, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 8, 2015.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 343; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nomination, the motion 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 nomination; that any statements related to the nomination 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.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Edward L. Gilmore, of Illinois, to be United States Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gilmore nomination?

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 action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRADE ACT OF 2015—Continued

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to raising the debt ceiling. I rise particularly in opposition to raising the debt ceiling without getting any sort of spending reform or budgetary reform in return. In fact, it will be completely the opposite. We will be raising the debt ceiling in an unlimited fashion. We will be giving President Obama a free pass to borrow as much money as he can borrow in the last year of his office—no dollar limit. Here you go, President Obama, spend what you want. We do this while also exceeding what are called budget caps.

We have been trying to have spending restraint in Washington. It hasn't worked very well, but at least there are some numbers the government is not supposed to exceed. These include spending caps for military spending as well as domestic spending.

When I first arrived in 2010, I was part of the movement called the tea party movement. We came into prominence, and I was elected primarily because I was concerned about the debt, worried about the debt we were leaving to our kids and our grandkids, worried that we were destroying the very fabric of the country with debt.

We came here in 2010, and we negotiated and negotiated, and President Obama said: I won't negotiate with you. I won't negotiate with a gun to my head.

The media said: You always have to raise the debt ceiling. It is irresponsible to use that as leverage to get reform.