

stop ObamaCare or even to try to provide meaningful relief to millions who are hurt by that failed law every day.

I believe that Congress has no power to do anything about the President's unconstitutional Executive amnesty or sanctuary cities or anything else that might secure our borders.

I believe that Republican majorities in both Houses of Congress can do nothing meaningful on spending or the debt or tax reform or regulatory reform, that we can do nothing to rein in the EPA or CFPB, no matter how many millions of jobs they kill.

I believe that Congress must acquiesce to the Obama administration's declaring the Internet to be a regulated public utility and the administration's attempt to give away control of the Internet to an international cartel of stakeholders, including Russia and China.

I believe that Congress can do nothing—absolutely nothing—to stop this catastrophic Iranian nuclear deal. Yes, it will send over \$100 billion to the Ayatollah Khamenei, who chants “Death to America” in front of mobs burning American and Israeli flags, and even though it threatens the security of Israel and potentially the lives of millions of Americans.

I believe that Congress has the constitutional power of the purse, but I believe Congress can still do nothing whatsoever to protect the American citizens.

I believe that Congress can do nothing to protect religious liberty or free speech, that Congress must quietly accept an IRS that targets citizens for exercising their constitutional rights and a President who ignores Federal law and Federal judges who disregard the text of the Constitution.

I believed Republican leadership when they promised the American people that if only we had congressional majorities, we would fight ObamaCare and amnesty and lawlessness. And today, I believe Republican leadership when they say: Of course we cannot and will not do any of that. It was unreasonable for anyone to have believed those promises in the first place.

I believe that anytime President Obama threatens a shutdown, Republican leadership is exactly right to surrender and fund all of Obama's Big Government priorities, to fund ObamaCare and amnesty and Planned Parenthood and the Iranian nuclear deal. Otherwise, Obama might shut down the government and it would be our fault. So we must do whatever he demands no matter what.

I believe that it is unreasonable—radical even—to expect Congress to do any of the things we promised the voters on the campaign trail.

I believe that when a Republican Speaker joins with NANCY PELOSI and the Democrats to fund all of Obama's priorities, that it is the Republican Freedom Caucus who are the crazy ones saying we should stand for something.

I believe that when the Republican Senate majority leader publicly promises there is no secret deal to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank and then 1 month later contorts procedural rules to force through the deal that he had claimed did not exist, that it is not his public lie that matters but, rather, it is the junior Senator who has violated decorum by pointing it out, out loud.

I believe that the only thing we can expect Republican majorities to do is expand government, reauthorize corporate welfare, and grow the debt. That is called governing—always said one octave lower in Washington. Governing is measured by how many bills you pass, and one cannot govern without agreeing with Democrats across the board. If we pass a lot of bills, even if they do nothing to address the debt or bring back jobs or economic growth and even if they actually expand Washington power and make the problem worse, then I believe we should celebrate.

I believe that Democrats can never be forced to compromise on anything, that it is always unreasonable to ever try to win a political battle with them, and so it must always be the Republicans who agree to the Democrat's Big Government priorities. I believe the only way Republicans can win is to continue making these same mistakes over and over and over again.

Of course, I do sometimes wonder why it matters if we have Republican majorities in Congress. After all, leadership has told me that they cannot accomplish anything different from the Democrats, that it is an unreasonable demand to expect them to fight Obama on anything. Since it is only the crazy “kamikaze caucus” who thinks we can fight Obama on any issue, anything whatsoever, I believe that leadership is right to fight on nothing, to pass the very same bills filled with pork and corporate welfare, the Export-Import Bank, ObamaCare funding, and amnesty, and confirm the very same Attorney General the Democrats would have confirmed.

I do wonder sometimes, as Hillary Clinton would have put it, what difference does it make? But then I put aside such foolish thoughts. Instead, I believe.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Republicans continue to object to requests for unanimous consent on basic things we should be able to do in a bipartisan manner here in the Senate. In addition

to my request about gender discrimination, Republicans have previously objected to unanimous consent requests to allow votes on noncontroversial judicial nominees with bipartisan support to fill vacancies in our Federal judiciary. These requests are not remotely controversial; yet the Republicans continue to obstruct for obstruction's sake.

Since the Republicans took over in January, their leadership has allowed only nine judges to be confirmed. A few district court judges have been confirmed in the last few weeks, but this recent increase in activity is in sharp contrast to their inaction all year. When Senate Democrats were in the majority during the last 2 years of the Bush Presidency, we had already confirmed 34 judges by this point—nearly four times more judges than Republicans have confirmed this year.

Republicans have tried to justify their poor record by accusing Senate Democrats of scheduling votes for 11 judges during the lameduck session last December. They suggest that those 11 confirmations under last year's Democratic majority should somehow be counted towards this year's confirmation numbers. First, it is well-established Senate precedent to approve all pending consensus nominees before the end of a year. And second, even if we did ignore reality and count these 11 judges towards the Republicans majority's record, that would only bring their count up to 20 confirmations this year. That is still far behind the 34 nominees that Democrats confirmed in the last 2 years of the Bush administration.

The glacial pace in which Republicans are currently confirming uncontroversial judicial nominees is a failure to carry out the Senate's constitutional duty of providing advice and consent. We should be responding to the needs of our Federal judiciary so that, when hard-working Americans seek justice, they do not encounter the lengthy delays that they currently face today. Because of Republican obstruction, judicial vacancies have increased by more than 50 percent since they took over the majority this January and caseloads are piling up in courts throughout the country.

We can and should take action right now to alleviate this problem by holding confirmation votes on the 16 judicial nominees pending on the floor. A number of these pending nominees have the support of their Republican Senators; yet they continue to languish on the calendar without a vote.

If Republican obstruction continues and if home State Senators cannot persuade the majority leader to schedule a vote for their nominees soon, then it is unlikely that even highly qualified nominees with Republican support will be confirmed by the end of the year. These are nominees that members of the majority leader's own party want confirmed, including several from Tennessee and Pennsylvania. Last week,

we had a hearing for two Iowa nominees. I expect they will be reported out of the Judiciary Committee soon. We also have nominees from Massachusetts, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Hawaii, and Maryland who are waiting for their confirmation hearings. None of these nominees are likely to be confirmed by the end of the year if Senate Republicans continue at this historically slow pace.

I hope Republican Senators will explore their leadership to vote on the pending judicial nominees without delay for the sake of the American people who seek justice before those courts.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and commend the National Association of Social Workers, NASW, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Today NASW is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with 130,000 members, including 3,500 in my home State of Maryland. As a social worker myself, I am proud to be a dues-paying, card-carrying member of NASW, and I congratulate them on 60 wonderful years.

In 1955, seven organizations had the vision to come together to form NASW in an effort to unify and strengthen the social work profession. The visionary leaders of those organizations understood that we can achieve more when we work together.

And they have achieved so much. In the six decades since NASW's founding, members have been on the front lines, advocating and organizing for just causes such as fighting for child welfare and juvenile justice, working to end poverty, and protecting victims of domestic violence. NASW was directly involved in passing the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Violence Against Women Act and supported the creation of Medicaid and Medicare. I have seen the importance of this work firsthand, as I began my own career as a social worker in Baltimore, helping at-risk children and educating seniors about the Medicare program.

NASW has been there time and again, to help social workers do what they do best—care for people at every stage and every age. Social workers reach every part of our communities, from hospitals and mental health clinics to corporations and schools. Working every day and in every way for others, social workers truly put service above themselves. They meet people where they are—in their communities, in their homes, in their everyday lives.

I am so glad that NASW has been such a wonderful champion and partner, fighting to make sure social workers have what they need to make a difference for countless people nationwide. From professional development,

to ethics consultation, to publications on standards and changing trends in the profession, NASW continues to make a difference in the social work profession as it reaches its 60 year mark.

Social workers do so much, and they deserve someone in their corner who works as hard for them as they work for others. That is why I was proud to reintroduce the Social Work Reinvestment Act this year, which would create a National Coordination Center for supporting and sharing the good work and research that social workers are doing around the country. The bill also includes grant funding for education, training, and research; and it is going to help address the social worker shortage with better recruitment, retention, and compensation. Just this month, I was also glad to be an original cosponsor of the Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2015, which would help seniors gain access to vital mental health services provided by social workers through the Medicare Program.

Social workers constantly seek solutions that reduce economic inequality, racism, hunger, and all forms of discrimination. They also ensure access to health care and mental health care for our Nation's most vulnerable populations. For the past 60 years, NASW members have cleared paths to brighter days in America. And I am excited for what social workers and NASW will do in the next 60 years. Thank you.

REMEMBERING WWII VETERANS IN UMATILLA COUNTY, OREGON

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the honorable veterans and civilians of Umatilla County, OR, who worked tirelessly and fought valiantly for their community and country during the Second World War. These brave men and women served in a variety of capacities on all fronts, working to support the war effort at home, defending our coastlines from attack, and risking their lives in battle overseas. As the country continues to mark the 70th anniversary of World War II this year, I am proud to raise my voice to pay tribute to the men and women of Umatilla County for their part in the Allied victory.

Umatilla County played a unique and important role in helping our country achieve victory in World War II. In 1941, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers created an airport in Pendleton, OR, which became home to the U.S. Army Air Forces 17th Bombardment Group. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the 17th Bombardment Group was called upon to defend the west coast from Japanese submarines. The group's aircraft and many of its members participated in the daring Doolittle Raid on Tokyo—the first U.S. bombing of the Japanese homeland. All 80 of Jimmy Doolittle's raiders trained in Pendleton, and 5 of them were Oregonians.

Umatilla County also played home to another facility vital to the war effort: the Umatilla Army Depot, located near Hermiston, OR. The Umatilla Army Depot was a repository for munitions and supplies in hundreds of semisubterranean silos. The depot created an economic boom for Hermiston—then a town of 800—which ended up harboring 7,000 new workers. The Umatilla County Depot became the largest munitions facility in the world and stayed active in Hermiston until 2001.

Umatilla County lost 86 people during World War II, but their spirit and stories live on through their families and in their communities. One of these men, SGT Modie L. Hubbard, even has a great nephew who now works in my office. Sergeant Hubbard was killed in action, and his is just one of many stories of those fearless men and women who died preserving the freedom of future generations.

There is sometimes a temptation to focus on the massive scale of events like World War II, on the number of tanks built or brigades in the field. As we reflect on these and other aspects of America's war effort, I would encourage people to remember the communities across this country—communities like Umatilla County—that built those tanks or provided those soldiers. It must be our responsibility to honor these communities and their sacrifices to this great country, and it is my hope that their stories will continue to live on and inspire future generations of Americans to service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ALEX COLLIE

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the incredible service of Alex Collie from Mackenzie, MT. Mr. Collie is the recipient of the National Weather Service's General Albert J. Myer award for completing 65 years of service as a cooperative weather observer.

The cooperative weather observers consists of 11,000 nationwide volunteers who record official weather observations across the country. Mr. Collie joins an elite group of cooperative weather observers and is currently the longest serving observer in Montana's history. Nationally, only 16 others have served in Mr. Collie's capacity or 65 years or longer. His services are critical to Montana—from supporting our farmers and ranchers by providing accurate forecasts and helping our truck drivers complete their routes safely and on schedule.

This prestigious award was established in honor of General Myer, who was an observer at Eagle Pass, TX, and became the chief of the Signal Service. In 1870, by a joint resolution of Congress and signed by President Ulysses S. Grant, General Myer was appointed to establish and direct the Division of Telegrams and Reports for the Benefit