

nominees at every stage of the process."

Statistics from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service confirmed Professor Goldman's assertion. Under Chairman GRASSLEY's leadership, the Judiciary Committee is grinding the nomination process to a halt. The number of judicial nominations confirmed in this Congress is the worst. To date, this Republican-controlled Senate has confirmed only 16 judicial nominations. That is one judge a month.

Contrast that with the last years of George W. Bush's Presidency. We had a Democratic Senate and we had a Republican President. Then-Democratic Chair LEAHY and his Senate colleagues confirmed 40 judges—40 confirmations compared to 16 under Chairman GRASSLEY. The numbers speak for themselves.

But to better understand the dysfunction of Senator GRASSLEY's committee, we have to consider the slow pace at which he and Republicans are reporting judicial nominations. We have to go back more than six decades to find a Senate Judiciary Committee that was less productive than Chairman GRASSLEY's committee is today.

Republicans will doubtless claim that their committee has stopped working because it is the last year of Obama's Presidency. That is simply nonsense. In 1988—President Reagan's last year—the Senate Judiciary Committee reported circuit and district court nominations as late as October. The Senate considered President Reagan's, President Clinton's, and President George W. Bush's judicial nominations in the eighth year of their terms, and many other Presidents were treated the same way.

The Republican leader is on the record advocating for the confirmation of judicial nominees in a President's last year in office. This is what the Republican leader said in July of 2008: "Even with lame duck Presidents, there is a historical standard of fairness as to confirming judicial nominees, especially circuit court nominees." Those are the Republican leader's own words. Yet now he refuses to extend that "historical standard of fairness" to President Obama's nominees. Why are Republicans changing the rules for President Obama's nominees?

Given that the chairman of the Judiciary Committee refused to attend to the judiciary, how is the Republican Committee spending its time? We know Chairman GRASSLEY's committee is refusing to consider President Obama's Supreme Court nominee, Chief Judge Merrick Garland. We know Chairman GRASSLEY's committee is refusing to adequately report district and circuit court nominees.

This much is clear: The Republican Judiciary Committee is not doing its job. Instead, the senior Senator from Iowa is taking his marching orders from the Republican leader and has instituted a blockade of judicial nominations at every level. The once proud

and powerful Judiciary Committee, established hundreds of years ago, has become a mere shadow of its former self. He has turned the once powerful and independent Judiciary Committee into an extension of the Republican leader's office.

This is the same gridlock the Republican leader has imposed upon the Senate for the last 8 years. Since his party assumed the majority in the Senate last January, the Republican leader's carefully orchestrated obstruction of judicial nominations has accelerated to historical levels and judicial emergencies have tripled.

My friend—we have served together in the Senate for decades—can come to the floor all the time to speak about the success of the Senate. No matter how many times you say a falsehood, it is still false.

Senator MCCONNELL once declared himself the "proud guardian of gridlock." Senator GRASSLEY has become his most willing disciple. It is disappointing that the senior Senator from Iowa has surrendered his committee to the Republican leader.

The lack of progress on judges should alarm Members of the Senate—even Republican Senators. Take, for example, the nomination of a man by the name of Waverly Crenshaw, who was recommended by Senators ALEXANDER and CORKER to be a district judge in the Middle District of Tennessee. Mr. Crenshaw is a superb nominee who has broken barriers all of his life. He is currently a partner at a well-renowned law firm in Nashville where he became the first African-American partner in 1990. The senior Senator from Tennessee said that Mr. Crenshaw would be "an excellent federal district judge." I agree. He was reported out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously in July of 2015—almost 10 months ago.

The vacancy in the Middle District of Tennessee is a judicial emergency, meaning there are more cases than the judges on the court can handle. The junior Senator from Tennessee said: "I know there is a tremendous load of work in the Nashville office that needs to get done, and we've talked a great deal with the other judges there and know this position needs to be confirmed."

Last month, the Senators from Maryland asked to bring the Crenshaw nomination to a vote, but the assistant Republican leader objected. Both Senators brought this forward. The objection was the same. The senior Senator from Texas said it will lead to "chaos" to schedule a vote on Mr. Crenshaw.

Chaos is exactly what the Republicans are bringing to the judiciary. From the Supreme Court, to the circuit courts, to the district courts, our entire judicial branch of government is under siege by this Republican Senate. After they have crippled the judiciary, the Republican leader and Chairman GRASSLEY want to hand it over to Donald Trump. That would be disastrous. That is not what the American people

want. They want Republicans to do their constitutional duty and give these judges due consideration. That is not asking too much.

So I say to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee: Stop blocking these nominees. Do what other Judiciary chairs have done for 200 years and move the process forward. These nominations are important. Or, put simply, do your job. This—a historic slowdown of judicial confirmations—isn't your job, and it is not what the people of Iowa sent you here to do, as indicated by the Des Moines Register: "Grassley leads slowdown of judicial confirmations."

Mr. President, I see no one here wanting to speak. Would the Chair announce the business for the rest of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING DR. JOSEPH MEDICINE CROW

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, yesterday Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow passed away after a long life at the age of 102. Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow leaves an unmatched legacy as the Crow Tribe's historian and storyteller, a decorated World War II veteran, and the first member of the Crow Tribe to ever obtain a master's degree.

Medicine Crow lived a life filled with numerous accomplishments. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and joined the 103rd Infantry Division. As a proud member of the Crow Tribe, he never went into battle without his war paint beneath his uniform and a sacred Eagle feather beneath his helmet. In fact, during World War II he achieved the war deeds to be declared chief. In 2006 his personal memoir, "Counting Coup" was published by National Geographic. When he earned the Medal of Freedom in 2009, our Nation's highest civilian honor, the White House identified him as both "a warrior and a living legend." He is considered one of the most

celebrated Native American soldiers due to his selfless service in World War II.

Medicine Crow's spirit, his humility, and his life achievements leave a lasting imprint on Montana's history. I personally will never forget the time I got to shake his hand and greet him and thank him for his service to our country.

I wish to express my deepest condolences to Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow's family and all of the Crow Nation.

REMEMBERING RUSS RITTER

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to speak about Russ Ritter.

This past week longtime Helena mayor and dedicated public servant Russ Ritter passed away at the age of 83.

Russ was one of those guys who really made a notable difference in Montana, especially in our State capital of Helena. He was a true inspiration for Montanans seeking public office, and he was the first person to inspire others to run for mayor, including our current mayor, Jim Smith.

Russ was instrumental in the construction of a 10-mile water treatment plant. That was a big-ticket expenditure on the part of the city, and all bonds are now paid off and the plant is up and running. I might suggest that Washington, DC, could take a few lessons from Russ Ritter. During Russ's time, Helena transformed the solid waste system, and he also helped automate the system. He provided true management of the city and improved it for generations to come by helping prevent the spread of diseases and creating a healthier Helena.

Russ also had a soft spot in his heart for the USS *Helena*, the nuclear powered submarine. He went to the christening of the launch in 1986 and spent 9 days on the USS *Helena* underwater.

Another great story about Russ was reported recently in the Helena Independent Record:

Russ met President Ronald Reagan in Billings on August 11, 1982. But this meeting, one for which their father had planned and prepared his remarks, the children said, did not go as envisioned. Russ greeted the President by saying, "Hello, mister mayor, I'm the President of Helena," to which Reagan responded, "No, I think you've got that wrong," Mike said. "This left their father a bit flustered," Mike continued, adding that Russ made his living talking to people and always knew the right thing to say.

On behalf of Montanans and the people of Helena, we thank Russ for his selfless service and will never forget his legacy on the history of our State.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MADE-IN-MONTANA ENERGY

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, made-in-Montana energy means good Montana jobs that on average pay two to three times more than the State average. In fact, Montana's ability to create more good-paying energy jobs is immense. Our State leads the Nation in recoverable coal deposits. We are the Nation's fifth largest producer of hydropower, with 23 hydroelectric dams across the State, and we are fifth in wind energy potential.

In fact, Montana was center stage in the national energy debate and provides our Nation a template of a true "all of the above" energy portfolio. We have coal, natural gas, oil, as well as renewables such as hydro, wind, biomass, and solar opportunities.

What makes our State most valuable are the people who make our energy systems work—towns such as Colstrip, MT, that build communities around livelihoods that are reliant on good-paying energy jobs. That is the good news.

Here is the bad news: Montana energy jobs are under assault. Over the past 2 weeks, I heard from Montanans about the future and importance of made-in-Montana energy and made-in-Montana good-paying jobs. During my week-long tour across our State, I once again saw our vast natural resources and our true energy potential, whether it was touring a wind farm near Baker, MT, on the far eastern side of our State, or seeing the hydropower facility at Helena's Hauser Dam, or hosting a townhall at Colstrip. I was hearing directly from the community about the devastating impacts that President Obama's anti-coal regulations will have on hard-working Montanans.

My statewide energy tour culminated this past week at Montana Energy 2016, where over 600 people gathered in Billings, MT, for a Montana family conversation about our State's energy future. During that 2½-day summit, we heard a consistent and powerful message about the need to maximize our opportunity for growth and expand made-in-Montana energy and the good-paying jobs it supports.

Montanans are leading American energy innovation; for example, Montanans such as Chrystal Cuniff, a Montana tech engineer from Choteau, who helped drill the deepest well in the Gulf of Mexico, or Ryan Lance, a Montana native, a graduate of Montana Tech, who is leading one of the largest oil and gas companies in the world, or Ashley Dennehey from Colstrip, who highlighted how the boilermakers, operators, and other hard-working labor groups in her community are working hard to keep the lights on in the face of adversity.

We must continue investing in our 2-year colleges that provide training in trades such as welding and heavy machine operations so we can keep our kids in Montana with good, high-paying energy jobs. In fact, Business Insider released a map that shows how

hard these times are for millennials, highlighting their median income across the United States. Montana ranked 50th, dead last, at a median income of \$18,000 a year for millennials.

We cannot forget that Montana coal provides tax revenues of \$145 million a year which supports our teachers and our schools. Montana should lead the world in developing clean coal technology. We must continue to develop renewable technologies that will store the power created by wind.

The bottom line is, we should not allow Washington, DC, and the Obama administration to dictate and regulate coal and gas out of existence. We need more made-in-Montana energy, not more made-in-the-Middle-East energy. Make no mistake, President Obama's Environmental Protection Agency and their regulations are killing Montana energy.

Our country's future is very bright if we could unleash the power of innovation and rein in the overregulation of Washington, DC. I couldn't agree more with what Darrin Old Coyote, chairman of the Crow Nation tribes, said in his keynote address at Montana Energy 2016 in Billings just last Thursday. He said this: "All of Montana citizens need to work together for a better tomorrow: renewable energy, fossil energy, conventional energy, Indian or non-Indian, regardless of political affiliation, whether we are Democrats, Republicans or Independents."

Montanans can find better solutions than Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INSPECTOR GENERAL EMPOWERMENT ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this body was last in session during Sunshine Week, but the principle of government transparency is one that does not expire. So I would like to take a few moments now to reiterate my support for that timeless principle.

Open government is good government. And Americans have a right to a government that is accountable to its people. In 1978, following the lessons learned from the Watergate scandal, Congress created Inspectors General—or IGs—to be our eyes and ears within the executive branch. These independent watchdogs are designed to