

Moines Register, the very newspaper that has pointedly and repeatedly criticized his unprecedented obstruction, but the case Senator GRASSLEY made in his op-ed only left Iowans scratching their heads. In effect, the senior Senator from Iowa said it is no big deal that we only have eight Justices on the Supreme Court. It is no big deal that our Nation's highest Court is deadlocking on important cases. With all due respect, that is the type of argument one makes knowing that logic and reason is not on your side, when you know the Constitution is not on your side.

The senior Senator from Iowa seemed to understand the Senate's responsibility to act when a Republican was in the White House. In 2006 he came to the floor and said:

A Supreme Court nomination is not a forum to fight any election. It is the time to perform one of our most important constitutional duties and decide whether a nominee is qualified to serve on the Nation's highest court.

Now he has reversed himself—and that is an understatement. From the time he allowed the Republican leader to seize control of the Judiciary Committee and dictate his actions as committee chair, Senator GRASSLEY has done everything to deflect responsibility on himself personally.

He forced his committee members to sign loyalty oaths. He tried to force the committee to do its work away from the public eye. When Democrats objected, he canceled the meeting altogether. He tried to shut down debate from the Presiding Officer's chair in the Senate, which is unprecedented. He blamed conservative Chief Justice John Roberts for politicizing the Supreme Court. These are just a few of the things.

This morning Senator GRASSLEY finally met with Judge Garland. He met in private, far away from the public eye. These are not the actions of a Senator and chairman who is confident in his decision to block the Supreme Court nominee. This is the behavior of a Senator who knows he is on the wrong side of the Constitution and wrong side of history. Wouldn't it be easier for the senior Senator from Iowa just to do his job?

NATIONAL EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are 102 days into 2016, but because of wage discrimination, working American women are still stuck in 2015. Today is National Equal Pay Day, a date that symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what their male counterparts earned last year for doing the very same work. That is because, on average, women make only 79 cents for every \$1 their male colleagues make doing the very same job. That means our wives, daughters, and granddaughters have to work an additional 3 months and 11 days to make the same salary their male counterparts make in a single year.

This pay disparity between men and women for doing the same work is known as the wage gap and it is to our national shame. No woman should make less money than a man for doing the exact same work.

Democrats have tried repeatedly to pass Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI's Paycheck Fairness Act, which would provide women with the tools they need to close this wage gap. The Republicans have made it clear they have no intention of fighting wage discrimination. They have stonewalled Senator MIKULSKI's legislation five times in recent years—five filibusters—and when Republicans finally got around to offering legislation they claim will address this important economic issue, it is anemic and devoid of actual reform.

The bills offered by the junior Senators from New Hampshire and Nebraska are a case in point because the legislation does nothing to close loopholes employers use to justify paying discriminatory wages, it does nothing to help victims of wage discrimination recoup lost income, and it does nothing to incentivize employers to follow the law. This legislation is only designed to look good, to say they are trying to do something about this, when in fact it does nothing. Just about the only thing the Ayotte and Fischer bills actually do is make it harder for women to discuss wage discrimination at work. Their respective bills so narrowly define what a woman can and cannot say about wage discrimination that it completely ignores the reality of the situation.

Factually, many women learn of wage disparities through casual conversation at work. In the famous Lilly Ledbetter case, that is how she learned about it. They shouldn't be punished for realizing they are being discriminated against by their own employer. In short, the Ayotte and Fischer bills will not close the wage gap. Where the Republican legislation fails, the Mikulski Paycheck Fairness Act succeeds.

The Paycheck Fairness Act would help close the wage disparity by empowering women to negotiate for equal pay. This bill would give workers stronger tools to combat wage discrimination and bar retaliation against employees for discussing salary information. This legislation would help secure adequate compensation for victims of gender-based pay discrimination. These are commonsense proposals that are supported by the American people—not just women.

Later today President Obama will announce the designation of the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, which is located a few hundred yards from where I stand. Formally known as the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, this national monument will honor the work of the National Women's Party founder Alice Paul, who rewrote the Equal Rights Amendment. I think it is important that is done. President Obama says this designation is a reminder of the

many women who have fought for equality.

As we recognize Equal Pay Day, I hope my Republican colleagues will come to their senses and address this injustice that hurts millions of American families. Working women deserve more than just a half measure from Republicans. They deserve our best efforts to right this egregious wrong, because American women deserve equal pay.

I apologize to my distinguished friend from Vermont for having him wait while Senator MCCONNELL and I were having conversations on the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

NATIONAL EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. LEAHY. The distinguished Senator from Nevada owes me no apologies. I am delighted to hear what he had to say and I agree with him.

Mr. President, today we Vermonters and our neighbors, Americans across the country, are going to recognize Equal Pay Day, a day that shines a spotlight on the glaring pay disparity between men and women. The United States is often looked to as a leader in the global landscape, setting the gold standard for others to follow. Unfortunately, our country fails to lead when it comes to pay parity. American women continue to be treated unequally and unfairly in the workplace.

On average, women are only paid 79 cents to every \$1 paid to men. It is somewhat better in Vermont, but there is still a disparity of 83 cents to a dollar. Over a career, this means a woman is compensated hundreds of thousands of dollars to millions of dollars less than a man with no other explanation for the disparity than their gender. This practice is unacceptable, and it runs contrary to American values.

The fight for equal pay for equal work has spanned generations and continues to impact nearly every corner of our country. From corporate boardrooms to locally owned small businesses, women have long fought for their right to be treated with the same respect and dignity as their male counterparts.

When I think of this fight, I think of Lilly Ledbetter, a person whom I greatly admire and consider a friend. She

has changed the lives of millions of Americans with her courage to stand up for equal pay. It has been nearly 9 years since five Justices on the Supreme Court ruled, by just a one-vote majority, that her pay discrimination claim was invalid—not because of the facts. She had a good pay discrimination claim, but the narrow majority said she did not file a suit against her employer within the Federally mandated time period, even though the way the employer ran things, made it so she had no way of knowing she was being discriminated against at that time. I was proud to work with Senator MIKULSKI and others to overturn this injustice. We wrote and passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. This important legislation clarified the statute of limitations for filing an equal pay lawsuit regarding pay discrimination. I was proud to stand with President Obama when he signed this into law, the very first law he signed as President.

The progress achieved 7 years ago was important, but the fight for equal pay for equal work continues today. I am proud to cosponsor Senator MIKULSKI's Paycheck Fairness Act, an important bill to assure equal pay for equal work—a principle that people say they agree with but for too long has failed to be a reality.

Today women from all over Vermont will assemble at the Vermont State House. They will highlight the initiative known as Change the Story, which aims to improve the economic status of women in my State. They will note that while in Vermont women fare slightly better than the average around the country, at the current pace, the wage gap will not disappear before the year 2048. That is far too long for anybody to have to wait.

I would also point out that in Vermont, women are twice as likely to live in poverty in their senior years, when their savings amount to only one-third of that of their male counterparts.

Every year, Marcelle and I present the Vermont Women's Economic Opportunity Conference. For two decades, it has helped support women-owned businesses. It encourages good-paying, nontraditional careers. But as we prepare to mark the 20th anniversary of the Women's Economic Opportunity Conference in June, I would much prefer if we could eliminate the need for such a conference. I look forward to the day when there is no gender wage gap and when career opportunities are available to all women, but until that day comes, Marcelle and I will continue to present that conference.

Pay equality has recently received considerable attention at the international level. Why? In large part, due to the leadership of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team. We can all recall the thrill last year when this team of world-class athletes won for a third time soccer's most coveted title, the FIFA World Cup.

I remember, and I remember my children and my grandchildren watched that thrilling victory. It was the most widely viewed women's soccer game in our Nation's history. Like so many other Americans, men and women, I took pride in their historic win. But then fans from across the world were shocked to learn that members of the U.S. women's team received only \$2 million for winning the 2015 Women's World Cup, while the men's 2014 World Cup champions were awarded \$35 million.

We were also astonished to learn that our 2015 world champion women's team received \$7 million less than the U.S. men's team that lost in an early round of the men's 2014 World Cup. Even though this sports team made enormous amounts of money from the television rights, the women who earned those rights did not. They got paid less than the men who lost. They got paid less for winning than the men who lost.

So, as a result of this alarming inequity, I introduced a Senate resolution calling on FIFA to eliminate its discriminatory prize award structure and to award all athletes with equal prizes. It was disappointing that not a single Republican was willing to cosponsor this resolution. When I tried to get it passed to support fairness for our champion women's team, when I tried to get this passed to say that we should treat women fairly—we should treat the women athletes the same as men athletes—Senate Republicans blocked it from going forward.

As more Americans learn of this unfairness, I am hopeful that Senators will join me to support this passage and that Republicans will stop blocking it. Senators should not be afraid to be on record supporting equal pay for equal work for all athletes—in fact, equal pay for equal work for all women.

Opponents of an equal prize award structure in sports have pointed to revenue as the reason behind this gross disparity. This is unacceptable. Tennis icons such as Billie Jean King and Venus Williams did not accept these arguments; instead, they fought for equal prize awards in the face of overwhelming adversity.

Their impressive efforts led to equal prize awards at the U.S. Open Tennis championships and Wimbledon, which now provides all athletes, men and women, with the respect they deserve. So I am proud to stand in support of the U.S. Women's National Team in their fight for equal prize awards from FIFA and for equal treatment from the U.S. Soccer Federation.

The disparities that exist in these organizations are outrageous. They should be remedied immediately. They should be arranged so that men and women are treated fairly and equally. While every Democrat has supported that, I hope Republicans will stop blocking it.

As we reflect on the important meaning of Equal Pay Day, I would note

that it is not just Republicans or Democrats—but all Americans across the country who should continue to join the growing movement to eliminate discrimination from the workplace. Hard-working women—our mothers, our sisters, our wives, our daughters, and our granddaughters—deserve no less.

We should pass this resolution recognizing the achievement of the U.S. Women's National Team as the Women's World Cup champions. We should pass Senator MIKULSKI's Paycheck Fairness Act, which I have proudly cosponsored. We should take these simple and straightforward steps to guarantee pay equity protections against workplace discrimination. The time for equality is now. Let's be honest. Let's stand up and say: Both men and women should be treated equally.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, as my friend, the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, is leaving the floor, I want to thank him so much. I think the example of women's soccer is so perfect. People do not understand this disparity. Some say that many more people follow the women's soccer than the men's. I want to thank him for his leadership on that.

I also want to say that when it comes to equal pay for equal work, you need to remember three numbers—just three numbers: 79 cents—that is one number. Remember that one and \$11,000 and \$400,000. OK. Remember 79 cents, \$11,000, and \$400,000. And 79 cents on the dollar is what the average woman makes compared to the average man. So the man makes \$1; the woman makes 79 cents for the same work.

We are not talking about different jobs; we are talking about the same. It costs the average woman and her family \$11,000 a year. When you add up that disparity, it is \$11,000 a year. Think of what that could buy for a family. And \$400,000-plus is what the penalty is for the average woman against the average man in a lifetime—\$400,000. That could translate into a retirement that is not stressful.

We are going to be here later today talking about this. The Mikulski bill will resolve a lot of these problems. I hope we can get the Republicans to help us.

You know, this Senate has a rating of about 18-percent approval. Well, it is because people don't see us doing anything to help the average person. Most women work. We have not even raised the minimum wage. These Republicans fight for the wealthy few. That is the problem. We have given them a beautiful way to deal with it: Sign onto MIKULSKI's bill.

PILOT FATIGUE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, this morning, in addition to these comments that I just made, I want to talk