

its constitutional duty by holding a hearing for Chief Judge Garland.

We are hearing that call from so many around the country, including historians, faith groups, civil rights organizations, and legal leaders. In an op-ed yesterday, the president of the Vermont Bar Association, Jennifer Emens-Butler, and others, including a former president of the American Bar Association, made clear that Republicans' obstruction of Chief Judge Garland's nomination undermines the rule of law. They wrote: "As leaders in the legal profession, we are committed to protecting the rule of law. Thus, we cannot remain silent as the Senate refuses to consider Garland. This level of obstructionism is unprecedented in American history and undermines the rule of law, the very foundation on which this great nation was built." I ask unanimous consent that a copy of this op-ed be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

Some Republican Senators have claimed that their unprecedented obstruction against Chief Judge Garland is based on "principle, not the person." There is no principle in refusing to confirm Supreme Court nominees in election years, as the Senate has done over a dozen times, most recently for President Reagan's last nominee to the Court. Furthermore, we have seen Republican Senators and outside interest groups attack Chief Judge Garland's judicial record, but then refuse to allow him the chance to respond at a public hearing. This is not principled, it is not fair, and it is not right.

To deny Chief Judge Garland a public hearing and a vote would be truly historic—but that is not the kind of history the Senate should be proud of. Over the more than 40 years I have served in the Senate, I recall times when the consideration of Supreme Court nominees was controversial.

But in every one of those instances, the nominee received a public hearing and a vote. We did not avoid doing our jobs simply because it was hard.

We must remember why we are here in the United States Senate. We are all here to serve the American people by carrying out our sworn oaths to uphold the Constitution. Protection of our enduring constitutional system requires that we hold our constitutional duties as Senators above the partisan politics of the now. I hope that Republicans will soon reverse course and put aside their obstruction to move forward on Chief Judge Garland's nomination.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Hill, Apr. 26, 2016]

SENATE'S REFUSAL TO MOVE ON GARLAND
CONTINUES TO UNDERMINE RULE OF LAW

(By Monte Frank, James R. Silkenat, and
Jennifer Emens-Butler)

A month ago, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Monte Frank (one of the co-authors of this piece) warned that the Senate's refusal to consider President Obama's nomination of Chief Judge Merrick Garland to the

U.S. Supreme Court would undermine the rule of law. Despite this warning, the Senate Judiciary Committee has continued its blocking tactics and has rebuffed calls for hearings and a vote. As leaders in the legal profession, we are committed to protecting the rule of law. Thus, we cannot remain silent as the Senate refuses to consider Garland. This level of obstructionism is unprecedented in American history and undermines the rule of law, the very foundation on which this great nation was built.

The rule of law is the restriction of the arbitrary exercise of power by subordinating such exercise to well-defined and established laws. As discussed in the earlier piece with Blumenthal, in the United States, the rule of law is grounded in our Constitution, which unambiguously lays out the process for filling vacancies to the Supreme Court. Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution states the roles the president and the Senate must play in the appointment process: "The President . . . shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint . . . Judges of the Supreme Court." The Constitution is also clear that the president's term is four years, not three or three-and-one-fourth years.

Now that Obama has fulfilled his constitutional responsibility and made a nomination promptly to fill the current Supreme Court vacancy, the Constitution requires the Senate to likewise fulfill its responsibility to consider and act promptly on the nominee. The Senate needs to move forward by holding meetings, conducting hearings and ultimately taking a vote.

While Garland is preeminently qualified, having served as chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit since 1997, whether the Senate ultimately confirms him is an entirely different question than whether the Senate should even consider him. The current arbitrary exercise of power to deny Garland a hearing and a vote is the kind of abuse the rule of law is designed to protect us from. If the well-defined and established provisions of the Constitution are permitted to be willfully ignored, then the rule of law will be undermined.

In a letter to the leadership of the Senate, 15 past-presidents of the American Bar Association emphasized their utmost respect for the rule of law and the "need for the judicial system to function independently of partisan influences. The founding fathers understood this as well, and structured the constitutional system of government to insulate the judiciary from changing political tides. The stated refusal to fill the ninth seat of the Supreme Court injects a degree of politics into the judicial branch that materially hampers the effective operation of our nation's highest court and the lower courts over which it presides."

The Senate should follow the example set by President Reagan and then-Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Joe Biden (D-Del.) in considering Justice Anthony Kennedy, who was confirmed in an election year. Reagan urged the nation to "join together in a bipartisan effort to fulfill our constitutional obligation of restoring the United States Supreme Court to full strength." He asked the Senate for "prompt hearings conducted in the spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship." Biden responded: "I'm glad the President has made his choice. We will get the process under way and move as rapidly as is prudent. We want to conduct the committee's review with both thoroughness and dispatch." Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) was also on the Senate Judiciary Committee at that time. Now that he is the chair, he should follow the example set by Reagan and Biden.

The Senate's refusal to process the nomination has already impacted the lives of everyday people throughout the United States. If lower court decisions are confirmed simply because of a tie in the Supreme Court, as has already occurred and will continue to occur until the vacancy is filled, then the court will not have created precedent and the lower courts will not be able to rely on those decisions. Open questions of law on significant issues will continue to be left unanswered. To fill this void, the Senate must move forward on a bipartisan basis with meetings and hearings, consideration of and a timely vote on the nominee.

President Reagan's words in 1988 on the confirmation of Justice Kennedy are just as applicable today: "The Federal Judiciary is too important to be made a political football. I would hope, and the American people should expect . . . for the Senate to get to work and act." We urge the Senate to put partisan politics aside for the good of the American people and to avoid undermining the rule of law.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to speak in strong support of the United Nations' Paris climate change agreement and the President's decision for the United States to be among the first nations to sign the agreement.

Last Friday, April 22, the United States and more than 170 nations came together in New York to sign the international climate agreement negotiated last year that would slow global warming and help poorer nations most affected by it. I find it very symbolic that April 22, the first day that nations could officially sign the agreement, was also Earth Day. Earth Day is a reminder of our obligation to preserve and protect our environment for our children and future generations to come.

Last year, I joined nine of my Senate colleagues in Paris to attend the 21st United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP 21, where the climate agreement was negotiated. What we witnessed at COP 21 was monumental: 195 countries, representing more than 95 percent of global carbon emissions, came together to adopt the first universal climate agreement that calls for international cooperation on addressing the causes of global warming and helping poorer nations most affected by it.

I am proud to say that the United States was a big part of that effort. President Obama's leadership was key in encouraging China, the world's largest emitter, to submit an aggressive climate action plan, and helping countries to find consensus necessary to make such a landmark agreement.

The Paris agreement establishes a long-term, durable global framework for countries to work together to reduce carbon emissions and keep the global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius in order to avoid some of the worst consequences of climate change. For the first time, countries have committed to putting forward ambitious, nationally determined climate targets and reporting on their

progress towards those targets using a standardized process of review. The Paris agreement encourages transparency, accountability, and collaboration among nations not only to meet their climate targets, but to encourage innovation while doing so.

No country is insulated from the increasingly present and escalating effects of climate change. In the United States, we are seeing it throughout the country, and we are certainly feeling its effects in New Hampshire. Rising temperatures are shortening our fall foliage season, which is so important to our State's tourism economy. Milder winters have led to increases of insect-borne diseases that endanger our wildlife. In New Hampshire, we have already seen a 40 percent decline in our moose population. The changing climate is also putting more stress on sugar maples, and this is already affecting syrup production.

Investments to improve the resiliency of our communities at all levels is critically important to our ability to mitigate the impacts of climate change. And that is what we are doing in New Hampshire. At the grassroots and statewide, Granite Staters recognize the urgency of addressing climate change and are leading the way by reducing pollution and transitioning to a more efficient, clean energy economy.

For example, last month in Durham, the New Hampshire Climate Action Coalition joined with the University of New Hampshire to host a pancake breakfast and discuss the negative impact of climate change on the maple syrup industry. The event featured a panel of local maple syrup producers, scientists, and others who understand the impacts that climate change is having on forests and maple trees. Over 80 people came together to enjoy maple syrup, hear the speakers, and take action to protect our environment.

New Hampshire is also a part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, RGGI—the Nation's first regional cap-and-trade program designed to reduce harmful carbon emissions from the power sector. Through our participation in RGGI, New Hampshire has reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the power sector by nearly 50 percent since 2008 and is on track to meet the administration's Clean Power Plan's carbon-reduction goals 10 years ahead of schedule.

The events happening in New Hampshire show that there truly is broad momentum in the fight against climate change. But in order to achieve our goals, State and local actions must be accompanied by national and international involvement. This is why the international climate change agreement is so essential.

Under the Paris agreement, the United States has made a commitment to reduce carbon emissions by at least 26 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. While this goal is indeed ambitious, it is something that we can achieve. By implementing administrative policies

like the administration's Clean Power Plan, which will reduce pollution from our Nation's dirtiest power plants, and by doing what this Chamber did last week, which was to take up and pass a comprehensive energy bill that will encourage energy efficiency and improve our Nation's energy policies, we can meet our commitments.

The United States must also be responsive to climate change's impact on our friends in the world's least developed and most vulnerable countries. As one of the world's largest emitters of carbon emissions, we have a responsibility to the world on climate change.

Climate change represents an enormous challenge, but the solutions are within reach if we put into place policies that allow for swift action. The world must work together to ensure that the goals of the Paris agreement are realized. We have a responsibility to help protect our children and grandchildren from the most severe consequences of global warming by reducing emissions now.

101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, last Sunday I had the opportunity to attend the 101st anniversary commemoration of the Armenian genocide, hosted at the Armenian Martyrs Memorial in Providence, RI. I was pleased to be able to join with so many in the Armenian community in my home State for this solemn event.

Over a century ago, the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire summoned and executed over 200 Armenian community leaders and intellectuals, beginning an 8-year campaign of oppression and massacre.

By 1923, an estimated 1½ million Armenians were killed, and over a half a million survivors were exiled. These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, throughout the world. The survivors of the Armenian Genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit and steadfast resolve and went on to greatly contribute to the lands in which they found new homes and communities, including the United States. This genocide should no longer be denied, which is why I have joined with several of my colleagues on resolutions over the years to encourage the United States to officially recognize the Armenian genocide.

But as we remember our history, we must also look to the present and to our future.

Violence against Armenians in Nogorno-Karabakh has escalated in recent months. These attacks on the Armenian people are completely unacceptable and call into question the sincerity with which Azerbaijan has approached recent peace negotiations. We must remain vigilant and do all that we can to encourage Azerbaijan to return to the negotiating table and make a good faith effort to ensure a lasting peace agreement in the region.

As ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I remain committed to supporting efforts to provide assistance to Armenia to strengthen security, promote economic growth, and support democratic reforms and development.

We also must find a way to come together to recognize our past and to show our unwavering support to those facing persecution today.

TRIBUTE TO DR. RUTH ELLEN WASEM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, Dr. Ruth Ellen Wasem, a specialist in immigration policy, will be retiring from CRS at the end of this month. Dr. Wasem is a graduate of the University of Michigan, where she received a Ph.D. and M.A. in history. She completed her undergraduate degree at Muskingum College—a private university located in New Concord, OH—where she graduated magna cum laude. Dr. Wasem was raised in Cadiz, OH.

Dr. Wasem came to CRS in 1987 as an analyst in social legislation, where she worked on teenage pregnancy, youth policy, homelessness, and immigration policy. She eventually moved full time into immigration policy, where she became a recognized and leading expert in the field.

Throughout her time at CRS, Dr. Wasem provided substantial legislative support to Members and congressional staff on various aspects of immigration and social welfare policy. Dr. Wasem's work was used by Congress in hearings, legislative development, markups, and preconference negotiations.

Dr. Wasem wrote numerous analytic and concise reports for Congress—well over 300 during her tenure at CRS. Dr. Wasem also testified before congressional committees numerous times throughout her tenure at CRS, providing testimony on issues ranging from asylum to unauthorized migration to immigration and social policy data.

As CRS's immigration team leader, Dr. Wasem served as a mentor to all of the other team members, and she always displayed great generosity and selflessness in devoting time and energy to their professional development.

The Congressional Research Service has given Dr. Wasem a number of outstanding commendations and special achievement awards for legislative analysis in the areas of immigration policy, Haitian relief, health care reform, homeland security, temporary foreign workers, and welfare reform.

Dr. Wasem recently spent a year as a Kluge Staff Fellow at the Library of Congress where she researched legislative efforts to end national origins and race-based immigrant admissions to the United States, all of which culminated in the Immigration Act of 1965. During her time as a Kluge Fellow, Dr. Wasem was awarded the Abba P. Schwartz Research Fellowship, which is administered by the John F.