

Senate Democrats have already unanimously supported the \$1.1 billion in funding to combat the virus. Voting to block this bill now will delay Zika control funding well beyond the White House's deadlines.

So look, there is no reason Democrats should reverse course now and block funding for Zika control in the midst of mosquito season. There is no reason they should put partisan politics above the health of pregnant women and babies, and there is no reason they should block support for our veterans, either.

The legislation before us will honor commitments to the men and women who have served to protect us. It includes a significant increase for the VA to help improve the quality of health care services and benefits that our veterans have earned, it will enhance oversight and accountability at the VA, and it will help improve quality of life on military bases for soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and their families.

Our men and women in uniform make sacrifices daily on our behalf—sacrifices such as missing special moments with their families, being stationed in distant places far from home, suffering physical wounds they will carry with them long after their service is over.

Sadly, too many of our servicemembers are also burdened by wounds that cannot be seen, such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. We are reminded of their daily sacrifices on this National PTSD Awareness Day.

We know that too many of our veterans and their families are unfortunately all too familiar with the challenges and sorrows this condition can bring. We know too that while our warriors may return home from the battlefield due to effective medevac and trauma care, there is a generation of warriors who will need treatment and support literally for decades to come.

We owe this support to the servicemembers who drove Al Qaeda from Afghanistan and offered the Iraqis an opportunity for a better future. We owe it to each and every veteran who has sacrificed to help keep us safe.

We have an all-volunteer force in this country. The young men and women who sign up to defend our Nation don't ask for very much, but our Nation certainly asks a lot of them. They deserve the benefits, care, and treatment they have earned.

We need to pass the Veterans Affairs and Military Construction funding bill before us as soon as possible.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### ZIKA VIRUS AND VA-MILCON FUNDING BILL

Mr. REID. Madam President, here are just a few brief words on the Zika fund-

ing matter. This conference report is full of poison pills. I will give you just a few of them.

Again, the House Republicans can't help themselves and, of course, the Senate Republicans joined with them. They have to do everything they can to whack Planned Parenthood, and that is what they do in this conference report. They restrict funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood. Can you believe that? And with this Zika problem, who does it affect? Women, and especially pregnant women. It exempts pesticide spraying from Clean Water Act prohibitions and protections, cuts veterans funding by \$500 million, cuts Ebola funding by \$107 million, and cuts ObamaCare by \$543 million.

Listen to this one. Why would they do this? They stick a provision in this that strikes a prohibition that we had placed in the legislation on displaying a Confederate flag. What they have done is just great. Any veterans facility can fly that Confederate flag. Why would they put that in this bill? Of course, it sets a terrible precedent for offsetting emergency spending, and it is missing \$800 million—what a shame.

It is like we are being dared to oppose this legislation. We have no choice.

#### UNITED KINGDOM EXIT FROM EUROPEAN UNION

Mr. REID. Madam President, last week the voters of the United Kingdom stunned the world by voting to exit the European Union. The vote was close, but ultimately the electorate decided to sever the United Kingdom from the European Union, an organization they had been a part of for 40 years. I was disappointed by that decision, but it was their decision.

In the aftermath of last week's referendum, I was pleased that President Obama reaffirmed our special relationship with the United Kingdom and our strong ties to the European Union. Regardless of what happens with the so-called Brexit, the United States will continue to maintain strong alliances with Britain and Europe.

#### SUPREME COURT DECISIONS AND FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. REID. Madam President, this morning the Supreme Court issued its final set of rulings for the year for the Court's term.

I was pleased with two of the Court's decisions especially. One pertains to women's health and one with keeping guns away from dangerous individuals. In the Court's 5-to-3 decision in *Whole Woman's Health*, the Court affirmed the constitutionally protected rights of American women. The Justices struck down a Texas law that limited women's rights and restricted access to health care.

Infringing upon the rights of Texans has become all too familiar for the gov-

ernment of Texas. It is a theme they have, and they play that theme all the time and they march to it. The State has pushed laws to restrict people's right to vote. In the last general election, 600,000 Texans couldn't vote because they didn't have the right ID. The State has pushed laws to restrict people's right to vote and limit victims' ability to recover deserved damages after accidents and medical malpractice. The law restricting women's care was just the most recent example of Texas trampling on the rights of its people. So I am pleased that the Supreme Court struck down Texas' unconstitutional attempt to deprive women of health care.

In another ruling today, the Supreme Court also whacked the National Rifle Association. By a 6-to-2 decision, the Justices upheld a Federal law that bans people convicted of domestic violence from buying guns.

While the Supreme Court did its job today, I must note the many other missed opportunities in the Court over the last 4 months. Due to the Republicans historic obstruction of Judge Merrick Garland's nomination, the United States' highest Court is often deadlocked. The Court has been unable to provide definitive rulings on some of the most important issues of our time because there are not nine Justices, but only eight, due to the Republicans' obstruction. For the first time in the history of the country in a year right before an election, the Republicans have decided they are not going to allow a vote on a Supreme Court nomination. It has never happened before. By denying President Obama the chance to fill this vacancy, the Republicans have infected the Supreme Court with the same gridlock they have perfected with the Congress for the last 7 years. Eight Supreme Court Justices are simply not enough to serve the American people and the rule of law.

One Drake University constitutional law professor wrote recently:

With just eight members, the Court cannot resolve certain controversial cases. It can split 4-4, which means there is no uniform rule of law.

All told, the Supreme Court has deadlocked on seven important cases and issues.

Because of Senate Republicans, employers can deny women who are working access to contraception coverage; because of Senate Republicans, companies can misuse the private information of consumers; and because of Senate Republicans, lenders can discriminate against married women.

There are others. The most glaring example, though, was from last Thursday when the Court was unable to reach a majority decision on an important immigration case. It issued a one-sentence ruling: "The judgment is affirmed by an equally divided Court."

As former Solicitor General Walter Dellinger wrote, "Seldom have so many hopes been crushed by so few words."

These immigration programs would take millions of people out of the shadows and allow them to work and pay taxes.

Today also happens to be the third anniversary of the Senate passing a bipartisan bill to fix our Nation's immigration system by a heavy vote of 68 to 32. It was bipartisan in nature.

Three years ago, after the bill passed in the Senate, Republicans used their obstructionist ways to prevent a vote in the House of Representatives. Today, those same Republicans are obstructing a ninth Supreme Court Justice in order to kill the President's Executive actions on immigration.

Latino and immigrant families across this Nation are watching who stands with them and who stands against them. It is very easy to see. It is appalling Republicans are willing to prevent the Court from doing its job as they wait for a Donald Trump-appointed nominee. That is startling.

Just yesterday, the Republican leader refused to say if he thinks Donald Trump is qualified to be President. His silence speaks volumes.

Republicans continue to block our justice system from functioning so this unqualified bigot can reshape the Supreme Court in his image.

It is time for Republicans to stop fomenting partisanship and gridlock, even in the Nation's highest Court. America deserves a fully functioning Supreme Court.

#### MINERS PROTECTION ACT AND FLOODING IN WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. REID. Madam President, just last month, we marked the 70th anniversary of President Truman's historic promise to mine workers. President Truman promised lifetime health and pension benefits to coal miners in exchange for their continuing the back-breaking work which built our Nation, but today tens of thousands of miners and widows are in imminent danger of losing not part of their health benefits but all of them—100 percent of them. Their modest pension benefits are also at serious risk. A promise that has been kept for 70 years is about to be violated, broken. We shouldn't let that happen.

There is a bipartisan solution that would avert this crisis. Senator MANCHIN wants the Senate to vote on his Miners Protection Act, and so do I.

If it is up to Senator MCCONNELL, we are not going to be given a chance to vote before the recess, despite the gravity of the situation.

Just 2 weeks ago, more than 3,000 miners and their supporters rallied in Lexington, KY, urging congressional action. The Senate should vote on the Miners Protection Act before we recess for the political conventions that will be held this summer.

A promise made by President Truman is a promise we should keep because a promise made should be a promise kept.

Madam President, as we work to help these families, we should not forget the many West Virginians who are fighting the devastating flooding that has ravaged that State. Twenty-five have died. Our hearts go out to the victims and the families of those affected by the devastation.

I have spoken several times to the senior Senator from West Virginia. It is hard to comprehend, in that sparsely populated State, that a storm can take 25 people—men, women, and children—and still there are people unaccounted for.

On behalf of the whole Senate, I express the care and feeling we have for West Virginia. I want to be available to do everything I can to help the people of West Virginia. Senator MANCHIN is a great advocate, and we will listen closely to follow his direction and guidance.

We also thank the many brave police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and members of the National Guard who worked hard to prevent further loss of life. Many more people came close to dying. We have seen it all on television. We have read the stories. It is very frightening that something like that could happen.

I was told by Senator MANCHIN this is a 1,000-year storm—not a 100-year storm but a 1,000-year storm. Nothing like this has ever happened before—9 inches of rain in just a matter of hours. It is devastating for the people of West Virginia but also for our country.

Will the Chair please announce the business of the day.

#### 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 until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from West Virginia.

#### FLOODING IN WEST VIRGINIA AND MINERS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, first, I thank Senator REID and all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the compassion and the outpouring of love they have given to our State. They have expressed that to me. I also thank Senator REID and my Democratic colleagues for their commitment to the Miners Protection Act. I also thank Senator CAPITO, my colleague and counterpart in the Senate. She is committed to working on that.

There is a promise that was made, and basically the miners kept their promise. By their hard work, they have kept the country supplied with energy that has been needed. These are mostly

the widows who are depending on these pensions—they are modest pensions—but basically it is their health care. They will get a 90-day notice July 15 if we do nothing, and we cannot do that. We cannot do that to any part of this great country and especially those who have worked so hard and given so much.

I thank him for that commitment. I hope my colleagues, all of my colleagues, my Republican and Democratic colleagues, will help me keep this commitment and this promise to our miners.

Madam President, I wish to tell you a little bit about what is going on in my State of West Virginia. I came back last night.

I was driving home Thursday night, and I got caught in Virginia driving on I-81. This deluge of water started. Rains I have never seen before started while I was on I-81. After getting into Lexington, VA, I cross over to I-64 to come in. Then from I-64 I go through Clifton Forge and Covington. I have traveled quite a bit that way, and I have never seen water like this.

The river started coming across the road. We were able to get through that. I was asked what my first impression was coming into West Virginia. I was driving, and we came into West Virginia on the Greenbrier County side and White Sulfur Springs. The beautiful Greenbrier is there as soon as you come into our State.

The exit where you get off where you go to the Greenbrier and go into White Sulfur Springs, I looked down, and it was totally under water—all those stores where I used to stop, see people, and the little filling stations, but the eeriest thing I ever saw in my life was all these cars were under water and their lights were on. So you know if their lights were on, someone was driving. For the water to come up that quickly that you couldn't even turn your car off, you just jumped out or tried to swim out or tried to get out the best you could, that totally gives you an idea of how fast this river rose. No one has ever seen anything like it. Then I saw a trailer, a person's home, floating down the road, the middle of the road. I am thinking, "What happened?"

Then I drove and got into Charleston, and as Senator REID said, 9 inches. We had up to 10 inches of rain in some parts, 9 inches to 10 inches in this area of southeastern West Virginia that really got hit. All of the counties got hit pretty good, but a few of them really got inundated.

If you can imagine 9 inches to 10 inches of rain happening within a 2-hour to 6-hour period, that would be almost like turning on all the hoses you have in your house, put them in the house, turn them on full force, and let them run for that period of time and see what happens. It is just unbelievable.

Of the things we saw, first, people didn't have insurance because they