

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I said repeatedly on this floor that I take no joy in discord and disagreement. I am not one who is interested in obstruction. I come from a little State like Senator COONS, where we get along pretty well. We believe in the three Cs—communicate, collaborate, compromise.

But you know what else gives me no joy? I get no joy from rising sea levels from New England to Miami that threatens our way of life. It threatens our way of life. I get no joy from fish advisories that keep us from eating fish in every State in this country. I get no joy being one of the States at the end of America's tailpipe, where we get all this pollution from other States and end up with higher costs and worse healthcare. I get no joy from the millions of kids who go to school this week with their inhalers because they have asthma. I get no joy from people who appear before us as nominees, take 1,000 questions for the RECORD, and give us answers that in too many cases are evasive, indirect, or incomplete. I get no joy from nominees who appear before us who pledge to provide information requested by us responsibly, including electronic media, and never give it to us, who fight for 2 years to make sure we never get it. I get no joy from those circumstances.

Thomas Jefferson used to say: If the people know the truth, they will not make a mistake. We are prepared to vote here with incomplete information, without the kind of wisdom we could have and vote with if we would wait 10 days—10 days. That is what it would cost. Is that a long time? Ask Gina McCarthy. She waited 132 days to get a vote. If you think 1,000 questions are too many to answer, ask Gina McCarthy. She answered a lot more. Finally, the Republicans got their answers, and we got our vote. She won and, I think, did an admirable job.

We need the truth. We are seeking the truth. I have no interest in obstruction. I want the truth.

Vote no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, for the past 8 years, the Environmental Protection Agency, through its regulatory rampage, has hurt a lot of people in my home State of Wyoming and all across the country. The EPA's over-reaching regulations have stunted job growth, hurt our economy, and failed to help the Agency meet its mission. The mission is to protect the environment and the health of all Americans. The EPA needs to be reformed and modernized.

Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt is the right person for the job. Mr. Pruitt is committed to protecting the environment, ensuring clean air, water, and land while also supporting a strong and healthy economy. He stood up to industry that polluted his State's air and water.

He has received bipartisan support from Senators in this body, from State

leaders, from small business, from farmers, from ranchers, and from many others across this country. Attorneys general from all around the country have recognized his good work. Attorney General LUTHER STRANGE of Alabama—now U.S. Senator STRANGE—and 23 of his peers wrote a letter in support of Mr. Pruitt's nomination.

Here is what they wrote:

The Administrator of the EPA plays a critical role in our Nation's government. Attorney General Pruitt has proven, over the course of his career, that he has the right character, experience, and knowledge to serve as Administrator of the EPA.

We urge the Senate to confirm his nomination.

I agree. I urge my colleagues to support the nomination.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pruitt nomination?

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 71 Ex.]

YEAS—52

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Alexander | Gardner | Perdue |
| Barrasso | Graham | Portman |
| Blunt | Grassley | Risch |
| Boozman | Hatch | Roberts |
| Burr | Heitkamp | Rounds |
| Capito | Heller | Rubio |
| Cassidy | Hoeven | Sasse |
| Cochran | Inhofe | Scott |
| Corker | Isakson | Shelby |
| Cornyn | Johnson | Strange |
| Cotton | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Lankford | Thune |
| Cruz | Lee | Tillis |
| Daines | Manchin | Toomey |
| Enzi | McConnell | Wicker |
| Ernst | Moran | Young |
| Fischer | Murkowski | |
| Flake | Paul | |

NAYS—46

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Peters |
| Bennet | Harris | Reed |
| Blumenthal | Hassan | Sanders |
| Booker | Heinrich | Schatz |
| Brown | Hirono | Schumer |
| Cantwell | Kaine | Shaheen |
| Cardin | King | Stabenow |
| Carper | Klobuchar | Tester |
| Casey | Leahy | Udall |
| Collins | Markey | Van Hollen |
| Coons | McCaskill | Warner |
| Cortez Masto | Menendez | Whitehouse |
| Duckworth | Merkley | Wyden |
| Durbin | Murphy | |
| Feinstein | Murray | |
| Franken | Nelson | |

NOT VOTING—2

Donnelly McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote on the nomination, and I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The motion was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Commerce.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Deb Fischer, John Thune, Johnny Isakson, Tom Cotton, Marco Rubio, Dan Sullivan, Mike Rounds, James M. Inhofe, Tim Scott, Lindsey Graham, Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts, John Barrasso, John Kennedy, Patrick J. Toomey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Wilber L. Ross, Jr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Commerce shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 66, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 72 Ex.]

YEAS—66

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Alexander | Fischer | Nelson |
| Barrasso | Flake | Paul |
| Bennet | Gardner | Perdue |
| Blunt | Graham | Portman |
| Boozman | Grassley | Risch |
| Burr | Hassan | Roberts |
| Capito | Hatch | Rounds |
| Carper | Heitkamp | Rubio |
| Cochran | Heller | Sasse |
| Collins | Hoeven | Schatz |
| Crapo | Inhofe | Scott |
| Cruz | Isakson | Shaheen |
| Daines | Johnson | Shelby |
| Enzi | Kaine | Strange |
| Ernst | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Fischer | Klobuchar | Thune |
| Flake | Lankford | Tillis |

NAYS—31

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| Baldwin | Fischer | Nelson |
| Booker | Flake | Paul |
| Blumenthal | Gardner | Perdue |
| Brown | Graham | Portman |
| Cantwell | Grassley | Risch |
| Cardin | Hassan | Roberts |
| Carper | Hatch | Rounds |
| Casey | Heitkamp | Rubio |
| Collins | Heller | Sasse |
| Coons | Hoeven | Schatz |
| Cortez Masto | Inhofe | Scott |
| Duckworth | Isakson | Shaheen |
| Durbin | Johnson | Shelby |
| Feinstein | Kaine | Strange |
| Franken | Klobuchar | Thune |
| | Lankford | Tillis |
| | Leahy | Toomey |
| | McCaskill | Warner |
| | Menendez | Wicker |
| | Merkley | Young |
| | Murphy | |
| | Murray | |
| | Nelson | |

| | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Casey | Markey | Schumer |
| Durbin | McCaskill | Stabenow |
| Franken | Menendez | Udall |
| Gillibrand | Merkley | Van Hollen |
| Harris | Murphy | Warren |
| Heinrich | Murray | Whitehouse |
| Hirono | Peters | |
| Leahy | Reed | Wyden |
| Manchin | Sanders | |

NOT VOTING—3

| | | |
|---------|----------|--------|
| Cassidy | Donnelly | McCain |
|---------|----------|--------|

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 66, the nays are 31.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Commerce.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, “Hidden Figures” has been lodged at the top of the box office charts for 2 months now—and with good reason. “Hidden Figures” tells the fascinating, true story of three mathematicians who worked as “human computers” at NASA in the early years of America’s manned space program.

Their job involved double-checking the accuracy of intricate calculations made by NASA’s computers. And they carried the weight of awesome responsibility. Fifty-five years ago this week, their calculations helped launch Lt. Col. John Glenn into the heavens and return him safely after he had orbited the Earth three times.

Coming in the midst of cold war tensions and the real fear that the Soviet Union was winning the space race, that historic flight was a source of intense pride and relief to Americans. It made John Glenn a national hero and an international symbol of American ingenuity and ambition.

But the brains behind that flight remained largely unknown—until now. Why? It is because those formidable mathematicians—those “human computers”—were three African-American women. They served this Nation at a time when racial segregation was the law of the land and gender-based discrimination was almost as common as air.

As America marks Black History Month, this month seems a good time to say thank you to Mary Jackson,

Dorothy Vaughn, and Katherine G. Johnson.

America’s history is filled with the stories of men and women whose contributions have been minimized or overlooked entirely for the same reason the “Hidden Figures” of NASA remained unknown for so long—because our Nation’s tortured history with race blinded us to large parts of our own national story.

Ninety years ago, an historian and scholar by the name of Carter G. Woodson suggested a way to overcome this historical myopia. Dr. Woodson and other prominent African Americans proposed that 1 week each February be designated Black History Week.

This is the first Black History Month since the opening last fall of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington, DC. This remarkable new museum represents America’s first official attempt to tell the African-American story. In the not quite 5 months since the museum opened, more than 900,000 people have visited. My wife and I toured the museum over the Thanksgiving holiday. We spent hours there—what a moving experience.

The history of African Americans is a story that stretches back 600 years. It is a story of brutal subjugation, racial violence, and discrimination. It is also a story of a resilient people who survived those horrors and created a rich and vibrant culture and who have enriched our Nation by their contributions in every walk of life.

In a speech a few months ago, then-First Lady Michelle Obama alluded to the vast and inspiring sweep of that history when she said, “I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves and I watch my daughters—two beautiful, intelligent, black young women—playing with their dogs on the White House lawn.” It was a simple but powerful image that captured how far we have come on questions of race since our founding.

As America’s 44th President, Barack Obama grappled honestly with complex challenges facing America and the world and delivered solutions that have improved the lives of millions. He and Michelle served our Nation with uncommon dignity, wisdom, and compassion. I am proud to call them both friends.

The Obamas’ story is just one of the stories told in the new African-American History Museum. Other famous African Americans are featured as well, from Crispus Attucks, the first patriot to give his life in the American Revolution; to the great abolitionists and women’s suffrage champions, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman; from Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin and singlehandedly shattered the racist myth of Aryan superiority; to the Tuskegee Airmen, who helped democracy defeat fascist tyranny in World War II.

The museum tells the stories of other prominent men and women, including Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King; Malcolm X; Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court; Congressman JOHN LEWIS, my friend, an icon of the civil rights movement; and Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman ever elected to Congress—in 1968. Some of the best advice I have ever heard about making a difference came from Shirley Chisholm. She said, “If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.” I think Shirley Chisholm would have loved to see the way the women of America are making their voices heard today and changing the debate in this country.

The new African-American History Museum and Black History Month give us a fuller, truer picture of our past. They also give us hope and guidance for today. Here are just a few quick examples of what I mean.

Ida B. Wells, born into slavery in 1862, was a journalist, activist, and feminist who led an antilynching crusade in the 1890s, speaking throughout the United States and Europe. She reminds us that brave journalists, armed with the First Amendment, can shine a light on wrongdoing and change history.

Garrett Morgan had only a sixth-grade education, but he also had a natural mechanical genius and an entrepreneurial bent. In 1914, he invented a “safety hood” that protected wearers from smoke, gases and other pollutants. It became the prototype in World War I for gas masks and for the breathing devices that firefighters wear today. His inventions have saved untold millions of lives.

While some argue that we should cut funding to public schools that serve low-income children, Garrett Morris reminds us that American genius and ingenuity isn’t limited by race, or gender, or family income. Our future prosperity depends on our willingness to invest in the potential all of America’s children.

Finally, A. Philip Randolph organized and led the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first predominantly African-American labor union. In 1941, he was part of a group that convinced President Roosevelt to ban discrimination in the defense industries during World War II. In 1948, that same group persuaded President Truman to issue an Executive order ending segregation in America’s Armed Services. And in 1963, A. Philip Randolph helped led the March on Washington. If you want to know how to raise the wages of working people and mobilize ordinary Americans to create a more perfect union, study the life of A. Philip Randolph.

Black History Month actually started as Black History Week 90 years ago. The choice of the week had special significance; it included the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and the mighty abolitionist, Frederick Douglass.