

move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of David Bernhardt, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Orrin G. Hatch, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, Thom Tillis, Michael B. Enzi, John Boozman, James M. Inhofe, John Cornyn, James Lankford, Mike Rounds, Cory Gardner.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the cloture motions be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF PATRICK SHANAHAN

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Mr. Patrick Shanahan to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

The Department of Defense is going through historic changes in its organizational structure. These much needed changes are thanks to the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and his unwavering commitment to strengthening our Nation's security and ensuring that American taxpayers get the best return on their investment. We should all applaud the chairman for his efforts.

But even as we make these reforms, we should also heed the lessons of the past. History shows us that the Department of Defense runs best under a Secretary who is a strong policy leader and a Deputy Secretary who is a dynamic business manager. The most obvious example of this preferred structure was when David Packard, the former CEO of the Hewlett-Packard corporation, was confirmed as Deputy Secretary of Defense. Thanks to Deputy Secretary Packard's considerable business acumen, his term in office is still regarded as the model of effective management at the Department of Defense.

That leads us to today and our once-in-a-generation opportunity to replicate this efficiency and success at the Department of Defense. The pieces are now in place. Chairman McCain has provided the statutory catalyst, and I am sorry he has had some difficulty healthwise over the last few days. We can't wait to get him back. Secretary Mattis is a brilliant thinker and a master strategist who is providing the critical leadership we need during this period of uncertainty, and today he is seeking to replicate the Packard model by choosing as his Deputy a man of proven business and management skill.

I understand that things could have gone a bit better during Mr. Shanahan's confirmation hearing, but I

believe we all should remember that Mr. Shanahan has not been nominated for a position in public affairs—far from it. He has been nominated to be a strong manager who can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department of Defense. In this role, I believe Mr. Shanahan will excel. I think everybody who knows him believes that.

Currently, Mr. Shanahan is a senior vice president at the Boeing corporation, where he has been responsible for designing and producing some of the world's most complex machines. For example, when the Boeing Company's latest aircraft, the 787, was experiencing developmental difficulties, Mr. Shanahan was one of the key leaders tasked to solve these issues, earning himself the nickname "Mr. Fix-it."

As further evidence of his leadership, I was particularly impressed with one of Mr. Shanahan's written answers to the Armed Services Committee's questions. He wrote:

In my three decades of experience, I have developed and practiced a formula to create change at scale in large, complex organizations. I believe leadership is essential to changing the status-quo—setting a compelling vision, establishing ambitious goals and realistic intermediate objectives, and converting strategy into action.

Is that not exactly the type of person we want to be managing and reforming the Department of Defense? I personally think it is.

Finally, I believe Mr. Shanahan's most important credential is that he is Secretary Mattis's choice to be the Deputy Secretary of Defense. I firmly believe Secretary Mattis will be remembered as one of our Nation's premier national security leaders. The Secretary does not fool around. He demands the best in himself and those around him. If Secretary Mattis wants Mr. Shanahan, then I believe the Senate should speed his confirmation so the good work can continue.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Mr. Shanahan, especially to ensure that the Department of Defense maintains our current statutory requirements regarding our defense logistics capabilities. I strongly believe Mr. Shanahan will play a critical role in leading the Department of Defense to a new era of effectiveness and efficiency.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

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 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 Patrick M. Shanahan, of Washington, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Mitch McConnell, Joni Ernst, Tom Cotton, Thom Tillis, Lindsey Graham, Mike Crapo, John Boozman, Roger F. Wicker, Dan Sullivan, John Cornyn, John Thune, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, David Perdue, Mike Rounds, Orrin G. Hatch, John McCain.

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 Patrick M. Shanahan, of Washington, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense, 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 Iowa (Mrs. ERNST), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) would have voted "yea".

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 161 Ex.]

YEAS—88

Alexander	Franken	Paul
Baldwin	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Peters
Bennet	Grassley	Portman
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Blunt	Hatch	Risch
Boozman	Heinrich	Roberts
Brown	Heitkamp	Rounds
Burr	Hirono	Rubio
Cantwell	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Schatz
Cardin	Isakson	Schumer
Carper	Johnson	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cochran	King	Stabenow
Collins	Klobuchar	Strange
Coons	Lankford	Sullivan
Corker	Leahy	Tester
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tillis
Cotton	McCaskill	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Udall
Cruz	Menendez	Van Hollen
Daines	Merkley	Warner
Donnelly	Moran	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murkowski	Wyden
Enzi	Murphy	Young
Feinstein	Murray	
Fischer	Nelson	

NAYS—6

Booker	Harris	Sanders
Gillibrand	Markey	Warren

NOT VOTING—6

Duckworth	Flake	McCain
Ernst	Heller	Wicker

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 88, the nays are 6.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit about what is going on here on the Senate floor. We were just considering the nomination of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, trying to move him along—a very important job—and it has taken some time. As a matter of fact, it has taken a long time, as the Presiding Officer knows, to get nominees from the White House confirmed by this body to run the government.

Running the government is a very important job. We not only need Cabinet Secretaries—which, by the way, took months for this body to confirm. They slowed down the confirmation of the choices of the White House to run the Federal agencies—no real explanation why—and now, Under Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Federal judges—delay, delay, delay.

We are supposed to be trying to put people in place to run the government, which is the job of the Senate, but it has taken a very long time to do it, and it shouldn't be this way. It shouldn't be this way.

When we look at U.S. history, typically, enabling a President to fill the key positions of government has not been a partisan issue. An election happens. Yes, there could be some debate on Cabinet officials, but you typically want to fill the government and start running the government on behalf of the American people. It has not been a partisan issue in America. Well, unfortunately, it is becoming a partisan issue due to what by any measure is historic obstruction on the nominations coming from the White House to run the Federal Government—historic obstruction.

The people did elect us, and they elected a new President, and implicit in the election was that they wanted us to get to work, to do things that, in my view, are very bipartisan. What are some of those things? Growing the economy. We haven't had 3 percent GDP growth in almost 15 years. That is a bipartisan issue—growing the economy. So are rebuilding our military, unleashing energy that we have in this great Nation in enormous abundance, investing in infrastructure, streamlining regulations that are strangling small businesses, and, yes, enacting policies to address the spiraling costs of health insurance and healthcare costs across the country.

Throughout history, the party in the minority understood this after an election and would vote to confirm new members of an administration—not just Cabinet Secretaries but Under Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and judges. In fact, the current minority leader said the fol-

lowing in 2013: “Who in America doesn't think a President, Democrat or Republican, deserves his or her picks for who should run the agencies? Nobody.”

“Nobody,” he said.

Those were wise words in 2013. I just wish he would remember them in 2017 because apparently he has forgotten those words. He has forgotten those words, because right now there is pure obstruction in terms of trying to seat the people to run the government.

Sometimes it is important to try to explain to the American people what is going on here on the Senate floor because it can be confusing. I still get confused sometimes. There are arcane rules. Let's give an example of what just happened here right now.

We had the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the No. 2 official at the Department of Defense. That is a pretty darn important job. After he came out of the Armed Services Committee, on which I sit, we voted to end debate on his nomination. The vote just happened, and I believe it was 88 to 6, so very bipartisan.

By the way, we need people at the Department of Defense. Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, regardless of whom you voted for in the November elections, most Americans want us to have good people running the Department of Defense right now. We have very few there—very few—because of this obstruction.

For the Deputy Secretary, the cloture vote just happened, 88 to 6. That is a very strong bipartisan vote. In previous times, in a Democratic or Republican administration, the Senate would normally say: Let's move him. He needs to get over there. Let's unanimously agree to moving that nomination more quickly so he can help run the Department of Defense—a pretty important job.

Well, unfortunately, we are not in that era right now. So what our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been doing for every single nomination for this administration is now we will have an additional 2-day waiting period, an additional 30 hours of debate. Those are Senate rules, but normally on someone this noncontroversial, those rules get waived. But we have a minority leader who wants to drag out every single official from being seated. He really hasn't explained why. I haven't heard an explanation why. But it is happening for every single official—three to four days on one official. Someone did an estimation that if they keep this up, if they do this for every single Senate-confirmed job, it will take 11 years. It will take 11 years to seat the officials in the Trump administration. How is that helping the American people? It is not. Yet, nobody comes to the floor to explain why they are doing it. The press doesn't report on it.

Let me provide some other facts on this issue. Normally, when we waive these rules, we can have a voice vote.

For a noncontroversial nomination like the Deputy Secretary of Defense, as we just had, normally that would be voice-voted.

At this point in President Obama's Presidency—so the first 6 months of his Presidency—the Senate had allowed more than 90 percent of his nominees to be confirmed by simple voice vote. The Senate asked for procedural votes only eight times on eight nominees—that was it—in the first 6 months of President Obama's administration. That was actually normal. Democrats or Republicans would do something along those lines.

For the Trump administration's first 6 months, the minority leader and his colleagues have demanded cloture votes for every single nominee, no matter what the position, no matter how noncontroversial, no matter how bipartisan. The courtesy extended to President Obama to get his team together so that he could run the country has not been extended here. That is just a fact.

Let me give another fact. According to the nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, at about this point in President Obama's first term, he had 183 of his nominations confirmed—183. Getting people in their positions in government to run the country—it doesn't matter what party you are in; this is to run the country. But while President Trump's administration at this point has made 178 nominations to the Senate, only 46 have been confirmed. So for President Obama at this point, 183 nominations were confirmed; for this President, 46. This is historic obstruction.

No one comes here and says: Why? Why are you doing this? What is the point? What is the point?

This isn't by accident. The head of a leading Democratic think tank told the press recently that they intended to hold up, delay, tie up floor time for every single nomination for Senate-confirmed positions. But what they don't do—they don't say: And here is why.

Why do they want to do that? It is not going to help us grow the economy. It is not going to help us with infrastructure. It is not going to help us rebuild our military when we keep the Deputy Secretary from coming in to his position.

Just last week, we had a judge who was nominated from the State of Idaho, a district court judge who was confirmed unanimously, and it took almost the entire week to get him confirmed on the Senate floor because the minority leader was delaying, delaying, delaying—even someone who got 100 percent of the Senators to vote for him. Again, it is not clear why they are doing this.

Some of the other noncontroversial nominees that are being delayed are the Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs and two nominees to review pipelines and other projects at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Do you think we

need that for our country to grow the economy? We do.

These are important positions to do the work of the Federal Government. Yet they are all delayed, and nobody in the press even asks any questions. This is historic obstruction right now, and no one is even asking: Why are you doing it?

It would be great to have the minority leader come to the Senate floor and tell us why. I want to know why. I want to grow the economy. We need these people in positions of authority to help us do the things—bipartisan things—that the American people sent us here to do, not delay, not obstruct.

Something else is happening on the Senate floor right now. It is not just the historic obstruction of nominees. The other side, for whatever reason, is now deciding they are going to shut down any movement of anything on the Senate floor. Let me give one example, which is actually quite important.

A lot of what we do here moves by what we call unanimous consent on the Senate floor. There are rules to move things. It can take a lot of time. But a lot of times the leadership of the Senate will get together and say: OK, we can have a unanimous consent agreement to move things faster. It is not just nominees. Sometimes it is actually legislation. As a matter of fact, a lot of things move on the Senate floor through unanimous consent, which is, essentially, a voice vote where everyone, all 100 Senators, say: We agree with that. It is a bill that is really important, very bipartisan. Let's move it. Let's move it fast. It came out of committee. It is not controversial, but maybe it is important, so let's move it.

For whatever reason, it still doesn't explain to the American people why the minority leader would say that we are not going to move anything by unanimous consent right now either. Not only will we hold up every nominee as long as possible—even the non-controversial ones—nothing is going to move in the Senate by unanimous consent.

Again, why? How does that help the American people? How does that help the American people when you are just blocking things?

POWER ACT

Let me give one specific. It is an issue I feel very passionate about. I had a bill introduced last year. It passed the Senate by unanimous consent, and we are trying to pass it right now by unanimous consent this Congress. Unfortunately, it didn't pass out of the House. I think it will. It has passed out of committee again. It is called the Pro bono Work to Empower and Represent Act, the POWER Act. It is very bipartisan. A number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, including Senators Heitkamp, Shaheen, Leahy, and Warren, are cosponsors.

Here is what it does: I come to the Senate floor every week to talk about what a great State I live in—Alaska.

One thing we actually aren't proud of in Alaska is that we have a real big problem with domestic violence and sexual assault in my State. One of the best ways to deal with that issue, one of the best ways to help victims and survivors break the cycle of violence that occurs with way too many families and way too many women and children in Alaska—and across the country—is to get attorneys to represent them.

Here is a startling fact. It is a little harsh when you say it, but it is true: If there is someone who commits a rape or is accused of committing a rape, that person gets a Sixth Amendment right to counsel. That is in our Bill of Rights. Guess what the victim gets in terms of legal representation: nothing. There is no right. But that is a really important way to help break the cycle of violence—to get survivors and victims an attorney and get the resources to do that. That is what the POWER Act does, and that is why it passed by unanimous consent last year.

We have a big problem in the country in terms of domestic violence and sexual assault. This would help. We are trying to move it right now by unanimous consent. It will pass. But it is not going to pass now because the minority leader is blocking every unanimous consent agreement on the Senate floor. Why? Why?

Does he think that women in America don't need the resources to represent themselves in these kind of horrendous crimes? They do. Trust me. Thousands of them—tens of thousands of them do. So why are we blocking this? Why don't we move it? We are shutting down the whole Senate, trying to shut down the Federal Government's ability to seat itself, to do the work of the American people. This is historic obstruction, and no one explains it. The press doesn't ask about it. I think the American people need to know about it.

We were elected to move this country forward. The election happened in November. Let's come together. There is a lot of bipartisan work to do. We have our differences on healthcare and other issues, but there are so many things about which we don't have differences—growing the economy, rebuilding our military, infrastructure. We need people in the Federal Government who can do that, and we need leaders in the Senate who can move things forward by unanimous consent—like the POWER Act—when they are not controversial. We don't have those leaders right now, and we need them. We need to get this country moving again. The way things are happening on the Senate floor, it is not happening that way at all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

TRIBUTE TO STEFANIE MOHLER

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Oregon, Senator MERKLEY, for allowing me a

few extra minutes of his time ahead of his speech. I appreciate his courtesy, and I will pay him back.

Ironically, I am thanking him for giving me time to make a speech I have never wanted to make. In fact, I have three times canceled the time I had asked for to make this speech in the last month because when it came time to make it and I opened those doors to come down here, I couldn't quite do it. I couldn't quite do it because, every once in a while, something happens in your career with a loved one or friend or cohort who is so close to you and so meaningful to you that to talk about it is an emotional thing to do.

Such is the occasion tonight for me to pay tribute to Stefanie Mohler, who is my scheduler and has been for years. She came to work for me when I was a Member of the Senate. She has worked for me time and again in the U.S. Senate, except for the one time she left me to go work for George Bush—and I understand that. That was a higher pay grade than mine.

Stefanie was a young lady working for a Congressman from her hometown in Florida when I came to Washington. She wasn't married. She had a wonderful family and lived at home with her folks. She applied for a job as a scheduler for me and came to work for us.

I ran a pretty large company. I had about 1,000 independent contractors and 250 employees. I know a good worker when I see one. Stefanie was the best. But she had that quality beyond just being the best. She cared about every single thing she did and every single person whom she helped and every single person whom she couldn't help. She grew in the job, and she made me a better Congressman and, later, a better Senator.

She came to me about 18 months ago and said: I have some news for you. I am pregnant. I am pregnant with identical twins.

I was so excited for her and her husband because she wanted more than anything else in the world to have a family. My wife and I had a party for her at Christmas in December, and the two babies came in the early part of this year. They are beautiful. She is a wonderful mother. But she has stayed, and she has worked. Her mom has come in and helped her do the chores at home as she continued to fulfill her commitment to me. I thank her so much on the floor of the Senate today for that.

She is married to a great guy named Chase Mohler. Let me tell you a little bit about Chase.

All of us at one time or another in our lives have fallen in love. You know what it feels like to fall in love. You also know what it looks like to see somebody who is in love. You can't describe it, but there is a glow. It is just something that is there.

I was in Jacksonville, FL, with Saxby Chambliss, waiting to come back to Washington when Stefanie was