

an ardent defender of giving the executive branch even more power.

I can see why President Trump would want Mr. Ho on the court, but Mr. Ho's pattern of giving more leeway to the executive branch should be deeply concerning to everyone else.

In sum, the three nominees President Trump sent to this Senate for review fall far short of the standards this Senate should demand or that this country deserves.

I want to make clear that these nominees have a completely backward and harmful record on women's constitutionally protected reproductive rights—and would seek to undermine *Roe v. Wade*.

Stacking our courtrooms with judges who will bend to the will of one President's hateful, divisive agenda is wrong—and will not be forgotten.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take a stand. Reject President Trump's politically driven attacks on women's health and rights. Reject efforts to chip away at fundamental rights and respect for the LGBTQ community, and reject his judicial nominees who will serve only to give him the green light to expand his own power.

Vote no on circuit court nominees Leonard Graszczyk, Don Willett, and James Ho.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to vote against Leonard Graszczyk's nomination to serve as a circuit judge for the Eighth Circuit. Mr. Graszczyk is one of two Trump judicial nominees who has received an "unqualified" ranking from the nonpartisan American Bar Association, ABA. I am appalled that Republicans advanced this nominee out of the Judiciary Committee and are bringing this vote to the floor.

Republicans have made it their mission to fill our judiciary with radical ideologues. The Trump administration has outsourced judicial nominations to the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation, and their nominees have included a nominee who believed in corporal punishment, one who questioned the constitutionality of the 14th Amendment, and one equated a woman's right to an abortion to chattel slavery. Many of these nominees are simply unfit to serve and undeserving of the prestige of receiving a lifetime appointment.

No judge nominated by the Obama administration received an "unqualified" ABA rating. When asked to clarify their rating for Mr. Graszczyk, a spokesperson for the ABA said that "[t]he evaluators and the Committee found that [Mr. Graszczyk's] temperament issues, particularly bias and lack of open-mindedness, were problematic. The evaluators found that the people interviewed believed that the nominee's bias and the lens through which he viewed his role as a judge colored his ability to judge fairly." I am disappointed that, instead of insisting on qualified nominees, my colleagues have decided to instead attack the ABA's ranking system.

I sincerely hope that many of my colleagues across the aisle will vote no against this nominee and demand more from the Trump administration.

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

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

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, a number of Senators have inquired about the status of the tax legislation and, particularly, the prospect of a real conference committee. It is clear that Republicans are talking among themselves, but apparently they feel, with respect to Democrats, this is a conference in name only.

What I would like to do is spell out what we know to date and talk a bit about what would really be in the public's interest. Specifically, late last night, the public learned through the press that Republicans have made no progress—their words, not mine—with respect to the tax bill.

They said that all of the major issues were still outstanding. Then, when all of them got up and made their way through their breakfast cornflakes, we were told that, magically, everything had just been worked out—that everything was worked out and that this bill would be ready to go.

I know they have been trying to move at the speed of light. We had yet another dose of fake math yesterday when the Treasury Department reported its so-called analysis to project that this bill would generate great growth, when, in fact, it comes up \$1 trillion short. So I would like to make sure the public understands what is on offer as of right now.

My sense is, with respect to the key issue, which is the well-being of the middle class, millions and millions of middle-class people are going to get hurt by this legislation, millions of them very quickly—for example, millions are going to lose their health insurance coverage. Millions more are going to have high premiums. By 2027, half of the middle class in America will actually be paying more in taxes.

Senate Republicans seem to be talking about a variety of issues, but not one of the tax issues they are talking about involves bettering the quality of life for America's middle class. We don't hear any discussion of that. We hear plenty of discussion about multinational corporations. We hear plenty of discussion about rates. We hear discussions about pass-through businesses. But all of this is really like rearranging the chairs at the country club. Maybe one day the multinational corporations will do a little bit better; maybe the next day well-off heirs will do a little better. What I heard at my

recent town hall meetings is that the American people want to make sure that the middle class is not always getting the shaft. They want to make sure, for example, that in the tax law, the breaks for the multinational corporations aren't permanent and the breaks for the middle class aren't temporary. They want everybody to have a chance to get ahead. It is not too late to change course.

There are 17 moderate Democrats, led by our colleagues Senator MANCHIN and Senator Kaine, who have said that they are hungry for a bipartisan approach to bringing both sides together. I have introduced two comprehensive, bipartisan bills with senior conservative Republicans—close allies of MITCH MCCONNELL's. We have made it very clear that we want a bipartisan bill.

In that all of these changes are now being discussed and our fellow Americans can read about them in the press, take a look and see if you see one idea—even one—that is going to make life better for the vast majority of working Americans, the folks who work so hard day in and day out, who are walking on an economic tightrope, trying to save money and trying to educate their kids. We don't hear about one single idea—not one—that would make life better for the middle class.

We will have more to say about this tomorrow as, I gather, there may be some kind of ceremonial conference committee that is scheduled as they try to sort through all of these reports that they are getting from lobbyists on K Street because, I guess, lobbyists know lots about what the Republicans in the leadership and on the conference committee are talking about.

I want Americans to just read through all of this and look, line by line, to try to find anything that is going to make life better for the middle class, because I cannot find it. That, as much as anything, shows what is wrong with the way this legislation is being pursued.

What a difference from the way Ronald Reagan pursued tax reform. Ronald Reagan said point blank that the working person should at least get as good a deal as the investor. He said that we ought to have the same rate of taxation for workers as we have for investors. In fact, with Ronald Reagan—and I voted for his bill—the corporations, in effect, gave up some money to help the workers. Now what we are seeing is the workers getting the short end of the stick so that the multinational corporations can do even better. We will have more to say tomorrow.

I urge people to look through all of these stories and all of these press reports and see if they can find anything that involves a change to make life better for the hard-working middle class of our country.

REMEMBERING VERA KATZ

Mr. President, I also come this afternoon to talk about the passing of a vintage Oregonian and an extraordinary

woman—Vera Katz—who became Oregon's first speaker of our house of representatives in 1985. After serving three terms as speaker, Vera Katz won Portland's mayoral race in 1992. The Oregonian noted recently that she moved Portland to become a "nationally recognized destination city," with developments ranging from the Portland Streetcar to the East Bank.

I hope that all Oregonians and visitors to our city will stop by the bronze sculpture of Mayor Katz. It captures perfectly her strength and her warmth. She was an extraordinary person whom we think about today, not just because of her memorable accomplishments but because of her extraordinary spirit. It was indomitable. She could not be subdued when she took on an important cause.

I remember in 1996, when floodwaters on the Willamette River threatened to overwhelm downtown Portland, that, in the middle of this chaos, this very slight but still unbelievably powerful woman, Vera Katz, led hundreds of volunteers to mount what we came to call a sandbags-and-plywood defense against the floodwater. That was quintessential Vera Katz.

In my townhalls at home, we often speak of the "Oregon way"—just finding the best ideas, looking for solutions, not standoffs. She lived and breathed that "Oregon way" ethos every day of her life. I am going to miss her, and I am especially going to miss some moments that will never be forgotten.

When we were working in the early seventies and I had gotten involved with the elderly, back then—I think the Presiding Officer, the Senator from North Dakota, probably remembers these days—that was a time when, if a town had a lunch program for senior citizens, that was a big deal. Nobody was aware that we might have all of the services that we now have—in-home services and a variety of transportation services. Back then, if a town had a lunch program for older people, that was a big deal. Vera Katz was then in the legislature, and I had been running the legal aid office for the elderly and was codirector of the Gray Panthers. All of the senior citizens wanted to really focus on holding down the cost of medicine, and they told me one day: We are going to go to the legislature, and we are going to take all of our pill bottles and stack them up on the table and show those legislators what it is like to really be an older person in having to cut pills in half in our trying to find a way to make ends meet.

As the Presiding officer, the Senator from North Dakota, knows, I had never been involved in politics or in public service back then. All I really wanted to do was to play in the NBA. So I didn't know if you could do that. I didn't know if you could take all of the pill bottles to the legislature, so I called Vera Katz.

I said: The seniors want to come down, Representative Katz. They want

to hold up all the bottles. I really don't know what to do.

I could hear it through the phone because it just boomed out.

She said: The seniors want to bring their pill bottles to wake up the legislature?

I said: Yes, ma'am.

I could hear it through the phone when she said: Damn right. I want them to bring their pill bottles, and they are going to get a big welcome from me.

In all of those years in working with senior citizens, the very first person the seniors wanted to see was Vera Katz.

I asked them: How come we are always going to see Vera Katz?

They said: Because she always inspires us, and she always makes us laugh, and she always makes us want to get involved.

So this life force who, like my family, fled the Nazis, was an extraordinary public figure. Yes, she represented Portland, but she always stood up for all of Oregon.

In the days ahead, I will be back to the floor to talk some more about Vera Katz. She had a watermelon spitting contest with folks in rural Oregon just because she wanted to cement the bond between Portland and the rural part of the State. She was a wonderful woman. Our State grieves today as we think of her and her extraordinary contributions. In my having known her for more than 40 years, she is a role model for what public service ought to be all about.

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.

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

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

Under the previous order, there will now be 30 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, the U.S. Senate has the opportunity today to vote on a nominee to the Eighth Circuit Court who exemplifies the qualities we all seek in a judge.

Steve Grasz from Nebraska is a nominee who has earned the respect of his peers. He believes in the rule of law. He has the education and the training. He has the experience needed to prepare him for this serious responsibility. Steve has a keen intellect and the humility that allows him to show respect toward all. He has an even and calm temperament—a judicial temperament.

Steve Grasz served as the chief deputy attorney general of Nebraska for 12 years. In that role, Mr. Grasz professionally and capably defended the laws of the State of Nebraska, authoring

nine briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court. He has earned the respect of the Nebraska legal community. Timothy Engler, president of the Nebraska State Bar Association, has stated he always found Steve "to be professional, civil, and ethical in all respects." In short, Steve is an outstanding Nebraskan and a talented legal mind.

The scores of recommendation letters we have received for Steve are a testament to his temperament, his integrity, and his character. These recommendations come from a diverse group of Nebraskans, from political officials to church pastors, business and community leaders, and Steve's friends and neighbors.

Steve has bipartisan support from those who know him best. Nebraskans from across the political spectrum have pointed to Steve's thoughtfulness, fairmindedness, high ethical standards, and brilliant abilities as a jurist. This includes former Democratic Governor and U.S. Senator Ben Nelson, who wrote that Steve "was an asset to our state and Nebraskans benefited from having such a capable and thoughtful professional in public service. Today, he is unquestionably one of the foremost appellate lawyers in the state, making him an obvious choice for this seat on our federal appeals court."

Debra Gilg, the former U.S. attorney for Nebraska and a Democrat appointed by President Obama, said:

Steve has always enjoyed a reputation for honesty, impeccable integrity, and dedication to the rule of law. He possesses an even temperament well-suited for the bench and always acts with respect to all that interact with him.

This is a nominee who should receive bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate as well.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to put their lockstep partisan politics aside on these nominees and join with me and my Nebraska colleague in voting to confirm this decent man of integrity to the Eighth Circuit. I urge a "yes" vote on Steve Grasz.

Mr. President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

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

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 313 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—48

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

NOT VOTING—2

Cochran McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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 Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Cory Gardner, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake.

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 Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator

from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 314 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—48

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

NOT VOTING—2

Cochran McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 48.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Oregon.

DACA

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I think that we are going to be joined here in a few moments by our colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, who, for years and years, has been leading the fight for the Dreamers—for the young people who are affected by DACA. He may be tied up for a bit, but as we begin—because we are going to be in a colloquy on some of these issues—I want to recognize his extraordinary contributions.

Nobody has been more focused and more relentless in terms of standing up for the rights of the Dreamers—the young people and the families who are caught up in DACA—than Senator DURBIN, the senior Senator from Illinois, and I want to make sure that his role is recognized at the outset.

I and Senator MERKLEY have spent a lot of time talking to these young people at home in our State, and we have

held special forums on it. I am just stunned at what wonderful young people these folks are. Inevitably, their grades are at the top of their classes. They seem to be working two jobs, and they are sending money to relatives. They are just doing everything that we associate with hard work and thrift and ingenuity and with what has made our country so unique and so special in the world.

I want to talk a little bit about what I have heard and also set the record straight with respect to DACA, because there is an awful lot of reckless talk about this legislation, and much of it just does not resemble the truth. Misinformation is being spread to discredit DACA recipients and their contributions to the country, and those innocent lives are being damaged. Right now, Dreamers face the very real and frightening threat that they may be ripped away from the only lives that they know and the only country that they have ever known, and I want to spell out why.

The Congress is now up against an artificial deadline that was created by this President in his scrambling to come up with a solution for the 11,000 DACA recipients in Oregon and the hundreds of thousands all over the country. If nothing is done in the Congress this year, we know that these young people are going to be fearful, and they are going to go into the holidays while wondering what is ahead for them and their families. I just feel so strongly that they deserve better. They shouldn't be hanging in suspended animation—wondering what is going to happen to them, living in fear. My hope is that there will be action taken this year to help these young people. I feel so strongly that the end-of-the-year wrapup legislation has to include legislation to finally allow these young people to realize their hopes and dreams in this country.

In his statement that announced the end of the DACA Program, the Attorney General said that our country must enforce our immigration laws, and he implied that the failure to enforce the laws somehow puts our country at risk of crime, violence, and terrorism. I can just say that, based on everything I have seen in Oregon, DACA recipients have not put our country at an increased risk of crime and terrorism, because, in fact, they are vital contributors to our Nation's success, including many who serve in our military.

It is just wonderful, and it is so good to see our colleague from Nevada here, who, along with Senator DURBIN, has championed the rights and interests of these young people. I know that she is going to speak shortly because she has seen the real-life consequences—the dangers—that are being inflicted on our young friends, our neighbors, and those who are so fearful about what will happen if Congress does not act before the end of the year.

This is not an abstraction for those like Mariana Medina, whose family