

times—during the last three Congresses, including when our Democratic friends controlled the committee.

You might think that would be enough around here to get a bill passed. But earlier today, a number of the very same Democrats who cosponsored this very legislation, in this very Congress, flip-flopped under partisan pressure and voted against it. In fact, if all of the Senate Democrats who are currently cosponsors of this provision had voted for the bill, the cloture motion would have passed. Let me say that again. If the cosponsors of this measure in this Congress had voted for the bill, the cloture motion would have passed. If only those Democrats who had put their name on this provision would have actually followed through and voted for it, the filibuster would be over.

Look, our constituents sent us here to stand for their interests. In landlocked States like Kentucky and Missouri, thousands and thousands of jobs depend on our inland waterways. In coastal States like Delaware, Washington, and Florida, major ports enable hundreds of billions of dollars of U.S. commerce. Of course, the people of Hawaii rely on shipping for everything from groceries to gasoline.

In all of these States, and elsewhere, I know workers and job creators were excited about the prospect of reform in this area. How do I know that? Because, in several cases, they successfully persuaded their own Democratic Senators to support it—or so it had seemed, until today.

You know, Americans might be forgiven for thinking that persuading their Senator to go out of their way and cosponsor a bill would be the same thing as persuading them to actually vote for it. Apparently, where several of my Democratic colleagues are concerned, that is simply not the case because when party leaders came calling and asked my colleagues to put party-line obstruction politics ahead of their constituents' best interests, they folded. This is what people don't like about this town.

Well, my Democratic friends' political priorities may have shifted—away from the people they are elected to fight for and toward leftwing pressure groups. But the merits of the issue have not changed, so the Senate will consider this issue further and will vote on this legislation again.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to speak tonight because I did not support the Coast Guard bill as it came out of committee. We wanted to see changes to it, and the legislation that was brought up and the final language on Monday night gave our colleagues very little time to consider it.

Washington State is very proud of the rich maritime heritage the Coast Guard provides, and our fishermen, Tribes, shipbuilders, sea trade, and

thriving coastal tourism all count on us to work together for our maritime economy.

Thousands of Pacific Northwest fishermen call Washington State home, with over 35,000 Washington State jobs supported by Alaska fisheries. The ports of Tacoma and Seattle are combined to be the fourth largest container gateway in the United States.

The Coast Guard plays a pivotal role in national security, in fishing, in over-seeing and, in many ways, keeping our waterways safe. That is why we would love to see a Coast Guard bill which moves forward without the controversial pieces of language that are included.

I know many of my colleagues have thought this is a way to get our colleagues from the Midwest, and other places, to just swallow wholesale huge changes that could cost our economy billions of dollars—such as the zebra mussel, which alone would cost \$6.4 billion a year, and an ecosystem full of rampant and sometimes toxic algae growth, which would and destroy recreation. This is from a letter regarding the Coast Guard Authorization Act.

I would like to see us move forward tonight on the things we can agree on—Why? Because I know these things are important as well—and continue to work on a resolution for some of the thornier issues that still remain.

I would like to see us move forward. I would like to see a recapitalization of the Coast Guard icebreaker and Polar Star. The Polar Star is homeported in Seattle and is operational only for our heavy icebreaker capabilities.

This bill also includes language to improve the Coast Guard oversight of ships that pose an oilspill risk, which is a constant threat to us in Puget Sound and throughout the West, given the large amount of oil traffic that comes through Puget Sound out our strait.

The bill also includes language to strengthen paid family leave policies at the Coast Guard. We just had the commandant nominee before the Commerce Committee. One of the reasons I questioned him on the paid family leave strategies and moving forward is that I want to give him every tool to continue to keep the workforce of women that they have in the Coast Guard. His commitment to me is that they would love to see this strengthened paid family leave policy in the underlying Coast Guard bill. Why not give that to them tonight? Our Coast Guard families should not be forced to choose between serving their country and supporting their families, and this bill would be a good step forward.

Lastly, this bill includes bipartisan language that would help us protect shipyard jobs by making sure we fix the problem related to Dakota Creek and also making sure our permanent fishing vessel exemptions would be allowed in this legislation.

I know we face challenges on continued definitions of best technology. But

that is better than having a definition that exists in the underlying bill, which I think we should separate the good policy from, that would really make no indication or an economic analysis that would leave us with the Great Lakes, and many areas, without the kind of clean water that will allow us to continue to do good science and good fishery policy in that area of the United States.

I hope we can move forward on the policies that my colleagues know we can get agreement on. I just heard the debate between the majority leader and Senator SCHUMER, so I understand there is an objection to moving the Coast Guard bill.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

I have a bill at the desk to improve the regulation of certain vessels, and I ask unanimous consent, as in legislative session, that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me just make one correction for the record that my friend, the Democratic leader, brought up earlier and which has been alluded to by the Senator from Washington.

The issue was a matter under the jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee, and for the information of the Senate, this part of the bill has been introduced as a stand-alone bill. Senate bill 168 was referred to the Commerce Committee and not the EPW Committee, and the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee agrees with that. So this argument that somehow this is not under the committee's jurisdiction is one I would raise as an objection to the request of Senator from Washington.

Secondly, as I think the Senator from Washington knows, we have worked tirelessly with every member of our committee on both sides of the aisle and Members off the committee. Furthermore, I think we have accommodated every request the Senator from Washington has made on this bill, and we have involved her in all these discussions. My understanding was that as a result of that consultation and those discussions on the bill, she was going to vote in favor of the bill.

Now what she wants to do is take out those pieces of a very carefully negotiated bill that she doesn't like and pass just the provisions that she likes. It would be great if, here in the U.S. Senate, we could all do that. But that doesn't happen around here.

We carefully negotiated this, with great input from the Senator from Washington, and it was my understanding that the Senator from Washington was going to vote for this package. I object to picking out the pieces

that we like and not working with the collaborative process that has involved both Republicans and Democrats, both on the committee and off the committee, to bring a bill to the floor that enjoyed 65 votes in support until this afternoon. Politics is being played here—pure and simple, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

I object to the Senator's request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, who I know considers the efforts of the Commerce Committee as great, hard work, and I appreciate his hard work. As I mentioned, I did not support the bill as it came out of committee.

I know there are things we are trying to work on to keep this process moving. But I would say to my colleague, the small vessel discharge bill has been something that has been part of an exemption process related to this for a long time. It has been considered many times over. Our fishermen need the certainty of this.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

I have a bill at the desk related to the application of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and ask unanimous consent that, as in legislative session, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would simply say this is peeling out pieces of the bill that one Senator in this Chamber likes and basically telling every other Senator on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats who negotiated this, to go pound sand: We don't like the provisions that have been negotiated on both sides, very carefully, over months.

I might add, this bill has been introduced and dealt with at the committee level during five different Congresses—five different Congresses. This year, it has passed not once, but twice, out of the Senate Commerce Committee by a voice vote.

It seems to me, at least, that even after it came out of the committee, the fact that we negotiated this with the Senator from Washington and multiple Senators on the other side of the aisle, both on and off the committee, to come up with a balanced package that enjoyed broad bipartisan support—65 votes—until this afternoon, suggests to me this is purely politics being played with this legislation.

This is an important bill. This is the Coast Guard. This is VIDA. VIDA was referred to the Commerce Committee by the Parliamentarian. We have worked with the Commerce Committee; we have worked with the EPW

Committee; we have worked with the EPA. The EPA is supporting the solution. This is not the political-level EPA; these are the career folks at the EPA who support the solution we have come up with. Yet we run into these objections that are all of a sudden—all of a sudden—coming up out of thin air.

So, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I see my colleague from the Midwest is on the floor, and I am sure he has something to say about this. But I would just say to the chairman of the Commerce Committee: You are right. Years and years of discussion about ballast water has been a challenge.

The question tonight is whether we are going to hold up other legislation just to get that language or to push through a proposal that really doesn't give security for our waters not to be polluted or to be greatly impacted or to threaten the sea life and the opportunities for a vibrant waterway in many parts of the country.

All I am trying to do, as I have always tried to do, is be constructive in the process—both in the Commerce Committee with this issue and for the very issues that affect the Coast Guard and the Pacific Northwest.

I know this will not be the last time we hear about the fishing vessel issue. I am sure we will hear about it many times because it has been on the calendar. So we will continue this discussion, but I thank him for at least coming here tonight to discuss these issues. There are other issues that are being held up as hostage in this legislation, and they shouldn't be held hostage.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

#### COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank both Senator THUNE and Senator CANTWELL for their exchange back and forth. I especially appreciate Senator CANTWELL's work. I grew up an hour and a half away from Lake Erie and saw, in the 1960s, what that lake looked like. For 10 years, I lived in a home near Lake Erie, and I saw the improvements we made. This bill, unfortunately, with that amendment sets us back.

We need to keep invasive species out of Lake Erie, and we need to pass a Coast Guard bill. There is no reason we can't do both. I want to speak to that in a moment.

First, I want to speak on how vital Lake Erie is to my State. Fifty percent of the fish in all the Great Lakes consider Lake Erie their habitat. The water is critical to farming, clean energy development, industry, and regional economic competitiveness. From tourism in Catawba and Put-in-Bay, to fishing in Marblehead, to vacations and family reunions at Maumee Bay State Park, Lake Erie benefits our communities and creates jobs in Ohio.

For more than half a century—I am going back to when I was a kid in the 1960s and saw what Lake Erie looked like—keeping our lake healthy has been a constant struggle. Where I lived on Lake Erie, the lake was about 50 to 60 feet deep. Moving west toward Toledo, the lake is about 30 feet deep. Contrast that with Lake Superior, which is 600 feet deep, and you can see the challenge of keeping Lake Erie clean, and you can see the vulnerability of that lake. That is the reason for the algal blooms. That is the reason that Lake Erie has had the most difficult issues facing its aquatic life. Runoff that causes harmful algal blooms and invasive species are threats we battle every year.

That is why Senator PORTMAN and I came to this floor and fought back against the President's budget 2 years in a row when the President was going to cut close to \$300 million from the Great Lakes Initiative. Two years in a row, Senator PORTMAN and I fought back against it because we know that cleaning up Lake Erie is something we did in the sixties, but keeping Lake Erie clean is something we do in the seventies, eighties, nineties, into this century, and into this millennium.

The Great Lakes are home to more than 185 non-native species. By some estimates, invasive species cause \$5 billion in damages to the Great Lakes every single year. A provision that would make our fight against invasive species harder has been added to the bill to reauthorize our Coast Guard. That is why I voted no earlier today.

As much as I want Coast Guard reauthorization, my first responsibility, other than looking out for working families in Ohio every day, is to keep the greatest natural resource in the country clean—my part of the Great Lakes, Lake Erie, the part that borders Ohio.

This provision would make it easier for invasive species to enter our lakes, harm our drinking water, and threaten local jobs that depend on boating and fishing. Every year, I meet with the Lake Erie sea captains, boat captains. They talk about the beauty of the lake and the importance of the lake to their businesses and to all of us in Northern Ohio. This provision doesn't belong in the Coast Guard bill. The Senate did the right thing by blocking it.

Again I say I strongly support the Coast Guard reauthorization. I want to see it passed. I agree with Senator THUNE. I want it to be law. That is why it is critical that this provision be removed from the bill so Congress can move forward with supporting our Coast Guard without threatening the Great Lakes. Members of the Coast Guard surely think the same thing.

This provision would eliminate the ability of Great Lakes States, such as Ohio, to set separate water quality standards to keep out invasive species. Tankers and cargo ships carry something called ballast water with them to help with stability and smooth sailing.