

to 32 was the vote. Fourteen Senate Democrats, most of them still here—if not, they may all still be here—voted for Mike Pompeo to be the Director of the CIA. I would say he is more qualified today to be Secretary of State than he was then to be the Director of the CIA because not only has he done everything he has done up until then, but he has understood, from the unique perspective of the CIA, the foreign policy and the intelligence challenges we face every day.

He has taken the responsibilities seriously. He has briefed the President over and over again. The President knows exactly what he is getting and Director Pompeo should know exactly whom he is working for.

SENATE RULES ON NOMINATIONS

Given the numerous challenges we face here and around the globe, it is important that we swiftly confirm not just Mike Pompeo but the President's other nominees. Many of these positions still remain vacant because our colleagues across the aisle have, frankly, wasted hours and days obstructing the confirmation process. It is way beyond any normal way that this has been approached.

Right now, we are in the middle of a 30-hour debate. I don't see that many people debating. We had a big debate yesterday—at least time was reserved—at the insistence of the minority. I think the debate was about 28 minutes out of the 20 hours between the time the nominee could have been voted on, and he would have gotten the same number of votes he got almost 20 hours later, after 28 minutes of debate.

President Trump's nominees have faced 88 cloture votes. That is the time we are in now, where we have a cloture vote and then we have this long period of time for theoretical debate that doesn't occur. Those nominees have faced 28 cloture votes compared to 24 total cloture votes in the first entire 2 years of the 6 previous Presidents combined. So there was an average of four cloture votes for those Presidents in their first 2 years. President Trump has had 88 cloture votes in less than a year and a half.

Something is happening differently than has ever happened before. It takes an average of 85 days for the President's nominees to be confirmed once they get to the Senate, 20 days longer than President Obama's nominees. The other difference with President Obama's nominees is, we didn't stop all the work in the Senate during the 60 days that we were having hearings, getting the nomination ready for the floor. We didn't do exactly what we are doing right now, which is fully taking advantage of every right the minority has to insist on debate. The only thing missing in that debate is the debate. At the rate we are going, it would take more than 9 years to confirm all of the President's nominees. This would be 9 years of his 4-year term. If he didn't nominate anybody else, this would be longer than the President would have if

he were elected to two terms. It is unacceptable. It is ridiculous. It denies the President that counsel he needs of senior leaders, but it also denies the Senate the floor time it needs to deal with the issues.

If people have watched the Senate in the last several years, and particularly if you have watched it over the last several months, the quorum call that we so often have—the one I suggested we remove ourselves from—is what you see when you turn on the Senate because we are waiting for a vote to happen, the debate of which does not occur.

So, later today, the Rules Committee I chair will be considering Senator LANKFORD's legislation to address these delays in the confirmation process. All Senator LANKFORD's resolution does is to make permanent the same rules Senate Democrats agreed to in 2013, when they were in the majority. While they were in the majority, a majority of Republicans and Democrats all agreed we would confirm President Obama's nominees with debate that more nearly met the likely debate for that office.

Senator LANKFORD's resolution would simply reduce debate for most executive branch offices from 30 hours down to 8 hours and for district judges from 30 hours to 2 hours. By the way, we don't have to use those 2 hours or those 8 hours either. If there is no debate, we should always move to the vote, but at least the debate time still gives the minority the protection that traditionally they have had. When you abuse the minority protections in the Senate, that is when those protections tend to go away.

The resolution still would have 30 hours of debate for the Supreme Court, for circuit courts, the courts of appeal for all the district courts, and for Cabinet-level nominees.

We are not opposed to debating nominees and really debating them. I think the opposition here is we are opposed to not debating and using up time simply as a delay tactic, where the result would be the same, whether you voted in 30 minutes or 30 hours.

Now, remember, this is the same framework the Senate passed by a vote of 78 to 16 in 2013. Fifty-two Democrats voted in favor of this exact same resolution in 2013, including the current minority leader. Senator LANKFORD's proposal would make that framework permanent. It would allow the Senate to expedite the confirmation process for the President's well-qualified nominees. It would also allow the Senate to get to the other work that the American people expect the Senate to do and have every reason to expect the Senate to do.

So, today and tomorrow, we will continue this process of waiting for the vote on the nominee to be Secretary of State; again, a vote that, prior to recent times, would have occurred right after the report was out and Members knew what they were going to do. So,

hopefully, we will begin to look at these rules and our work more seriously.

REMEMBERING TED VAN DER MEID

Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to Ted Van Der Meid, a longtime House of Representatives leadership staff member, who died of pancreatic cancer on March 19.

For the 10 years before Ted left the Congress, I worked with him every day the Congress was in session. He was a great public servant. Ted was emblematic of the professional staff that we count on here in the Senate and across the Rotunda in the House of Representatives. His dedication to the Constitution, the Congress, and democracy guided his work.

Ted didn't seek personal glory or seek to accumulate vast wealth. Instead, he woke up every day working to make the Congress a better and safer place for the American people.

He served as a staff member for several Members, including Jan Meyers and Lynn Martin, before serving as the general counsel to House Republican Leader Bob Michel where he worked on Congressional reform initiatives.

After leaving Leader Michel's office, he served as the chief counsel for the Ethics Committee.

When Denny Hastert became Speaker of the House, Ted became his chief of floor operations and chief legal counsel. In a wide portfolio, Van Der Meid coordinated with the House majority leader on all floor activities. He also was in charge of the institutional operations for the Speaker.

That institutional responsibility became especially important in the context of the 9/11 attacks.

It was Ted who drove the completion of the Visitor's Center that not only made the Congress more accessible to the American people, but also made the Capitol a safer and more secure place for the visitors and for those who come to work here every day. Ted was also involved in the potentially critical continuity of government discussions that overshadowed other concerns in 2002.

When Ted retired from the Congress, he eventually went to work for the Pew Charitable Trust, where once again he devoted his time in seeking to make this institution work better for the American people. In particular, he helped to establish forums where staff from a diverse set of Members got to know each other in more causal settings. It was Ted's view that the better staff and Members knew one another, the better they could find common ground and make progress on behalf of the voters.

Ted was taken away from us much too early. He fought the good fight and always thought about how he could make this Congress and this country a better place for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the nomination of Mike

Pompeo to be our next Secretary of State.

By now, we have all heard about Director Pompeo's accomplishments: first in his class at West Point, U.S. Army officer, graduate of Harvard Law School, editor of the Harvard Law Review, successful businessman, and Member of Congress. It is rare that a nominee to this position has had so many diverse accomplishments.

Some of my colleagues who are opposed to Director Pompeo argue that he will not deliver tough messages to the President or outline all of the policy options. They argue that Director Pompeo is a hawk who would prefer armed conflict to diplomacy. I find these comments disappointing. That has not been my personal experience with Director Pompeo. In addition, military officers are frequently the last ones to seek a military solution to a foreign policy challenge because they know firsthand the cost of war. On the other hand, they also know that without strength, no amount of diplomacy will be able to stop an authoritarian dictator.

I believe Director Pompeo's recent trip to North Korea highlights how effective and committed he is to pursuing diplomatic opportunities. He not only defended core U.S. interests, but he also moved the United States and North Korea closer to negotiations. Maximum pressure, combined with a willingness to talk, is working right now.

I also want to address the issue of communication with Congress. I have heard claims about information not being shared with the Hill. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I have worked with Director Pompeo regularly and can personally vouch for his accessibility and candor. Having worked with a number of CIA Directors over the years on the Intelligence Committee, I can personally attest that Director Pompeo is at the top of the class for being open and straightforward.

I would also like to address the issue of bipartisanship. Since coming to the Senate a decade ago, I have had the chance to vote for three Secretaries of State. Mr. Pompeo will be my fourth. In each case, I have supported the President's nominee to serve as Secretary of State. President Obama's choices for Secretary of State would certainly not have been my choices. In the case of Secretaries Clinton and Kerry, there were numerous issues where we had substantial disagreements. I believed that as to the Secretary of State, however, the President was entitled to deference as to his choice, and that choice deserved bipartisan support because their credibility as the top diplomat is strengthened by bipartisan support.

Another important factor is that, with Secretary Pompeo, world leaders will know that he speaks directly on behalf of the President—something that has been an issue in the past. This quality is very, very important for a Secretary of State.

Director Pompeo is more than qualified to serve as Secretary of State. In fact, at this point, because of his service at the CIA, Director Pompeo is uniquely positioned to be a very successful Secretary of State. No other place in our government provides more insight into the inner workings of other countries than the work of our intelligence agencies. The CIA is certainly one of the top intelligence agencies, and Director Pompeo, in his service, has had access to and indeed directed the work of the CIA and has a very deep and profound understanding of the other nations in the world, and that applies particularly to the troubled spots in the world. He is uniquely qualified because of this experience to serve as Secretary of State.

We have often used the phrase "politics ends at the water's edge" to signal that our domestic political differences do not erode our diplomats' strength overseas. I hope that this vote does not change what has been a longstanding goal for our diplomatic efforts.

I urge my colleagues to thoughtfully consider support for Director Pompeo.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized as in morning business.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what has happened to the State Department under this administration is almost impossible to imagine. What we are seeing there is a devastation and a decimation of the resources of a great part of our government, one of the most important parts. It is a small percentage of our budget, but the work done by the State Department is critically important in maintaining the position of the United States around the world, projecting our image—our values—where we can, helping the helpless in parts of the world where many countries come to their aid.

Under this administration in the last year, we have seen things happen that are unimaginable. When it gets down to the basics, key posts are unfilled at the State Department. There are more than 30 vacancies in ambassadorial positions. Don't blame Congress for it. In many cases, they have not even sent us the names of the nominees.

Can anyone here believe that we still do not have an ambassador from the Trump administration to South Korea? South Korea? We spend time talking about the Korean Peninsula and the future of the Korean Peninsula, and this President cannot find an ambassador to represent the United States in South Korea. What is the possible explanation for this? He can't blame anyone but himself. He has not sent us a nominee to even consider.

We are faced with a nuclear-armed North Korean dictator. We have 28,000 American U.S. military personnel who are literally risking their lives in

South Korea, and we don't have a diplomat on the scene to try to make sure that the United States is well represented.

The Department is also hemorrhaging top staff. Under Secretary Tom Shannon—one of the most respected—is scheduled to leave soon. It is no surprise this is happening. President Trump has repeatedly proposed dramatic, irresponsible cuts in the budget of the Department of State. His administration has kept top diplomats out of key discussions and deliberations. How, at a time of such international unrest in this dangerous world we live in, can we be diminishing and demoralizing our topline diplomats? How can that be a smart way to keep America safe?

I have been hoping someone would come along to right the ship at the State Department—someone to draw on this amazing reservoir of American talent in the areas of diplomacy and foreign policy, someone to make sure our best diplomatic efforts are projected to prevent conflict and to further American interests, someone who could be a proud face of America around the world.

It was in this context and with this challenge that I met with Mike Pompeo. He and I have met and had serious and challenging discussions before, notably when he was nominated to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. We met again a few weeks ago. It was a good, candid conversation. He seemed to understand the desperate situation at the State Department and that the State Department's top experts should be included in key administration discussions.

This conversation left me in the same place, I believe, that Senator MENENDEZ pondered at the end of Pompeo's Foreign Relations Committee hearing: Who is the real Mike Pompeo?

You see, I find it hard to square the reasonable man I met with the other day with some of his actions and comments. For example, has Michael Pompeo completely renounced the use of torture? He said he would not obey an order from the President to use torture. Let me add it is tragic that we have a President who brags about using such illegal, abhorrent, and un-American approaches, but we still have to worry about this. Contrast that with Mr. Pompeo's previous defense of waterboarding or his jarring comments about the 2014 Senate Intelligence Committee's torture report when he said "Senator Feinstein [today] has put American lives at risk" and that the intelligence operatives whose acts were scrutinized were "heroes, not pawns in some liberal game being played by the ACLU and Senator Feinstein."

Or what about Mr. Pompeo's association with prominent anti-Muslim figures in the United States, like Frank Gaffney? The Southern Poverty Law Center calls Mr. Gaffney one of America's most notorious Islamophobes. For

example, Gaffney favors congressional hearings to unmask subversive Muslim conspiracies and was even banned from the far-right Conservative Political Action Conference events after accusing two of its organizers of being agents of the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet Mr. Pompeo appeared on Mr. Gaffney's radio show at least 24 times between 2013 and 2016.

What about when Mr. Pompeo used his position on the House Intelligence Committee to accuse then-Secretary of State Clinton of orchestrating a wide-ranging coverup of the Benghazi attacks that ended in the tragic loss of American lives in Libya? Is there anyone here who believes for a minute that was not a political witch hunt, which in part led to the further discrediting of the critical congressional committee involved—a committee that, incidentally, has lost all legitimacy in the current investigation over Russia's involvement in our election?

I face this decision on Mr. Pompeo with real concern. There are many policy issues on which Mr. Pompeo and I might disagree, notably on the Iran nuclear agreement. I asked him point-blank: What do you think is going to happen to this nuclear agreement to stop the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon?

His conjecture was that this President would walk away from it and hope that our European allies, who also signed on to this agreement, would enforce it. Does that sound like a cogent foreign policy for a leader in the world like the United States?

Our Nation desperately needs someone to bring leadership to the State Department, but torture, Islamophobia, and wild political conspiracy theories don't seem to mesh with being our Nation's top diplomat from where I am standing.

I will vote against Mr. Pompeo's nomination. I sincerely hope I am wrong about this nominee. I believe he will be approved by a very small margin. I hope he will, in the end, uphold our Nation's laws and values when it comes to torture, tolerance, and international cooperation. I hope he will make sure diplomacy is exhausted before we turn to yet another war and, in particular, that he will resist John Bolton and others who are notorious for wanting to rush into military conflict. I hope he will listen carefully to Secretary Mattis at the Defense Department—someone I supported and someone I trust. I hope he will be clear to this President, as the man who is the Secretary of State in his administration, that climate change and Russia are truly threats to our Nation and well-being. Doing this will help strengthen America's leadership abroad and help build greater trust and cooperation in Congress.

DACA

Mr. President, on September 5, the Trump administration announced its repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as

DACA. As a result, hundreds of thousands of immigrants who came to the United States as children, toddlers, and infants—known as Dreamers—face losing their right to stay here without being subject to deportation and the right to legally work in America.

DACA provides temporary legal status for Dreamers if they register with the government, pay a substantial fee, go through a criminal background check, and return every 2 years for renewal. It has been a great success. More than 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA protection.

When President Trump repealed DACA 7 months ago, he set an arbitrary March 5 deadline of this year for Congress to act and replace it. We tried. We offered to this President six different bipartisan alternatives to continue the DACA Program. He rejected every single one of them. He sent to Congress his own plan for dealing with immigration. It received 39 votes in the U.S. Senate—39. Remember, there is a Republican majority of 51. The President struggled to get his own party to support his ideas on immigration.

Luckily, a Federal court stepped in and issued an order blocking President Trump's repeal of DACA. This means those Dreamers who have DACA can continue to apply for renewed status. I certainly urge every DACA recipient to file for renewal as quickly as possible. There was a ruling yesterday, as well, in one of the DC district courts which also said that perhaps the President's actions on DACA can be questioned, and he gave the government 90 days to produce evidence of what authority the President used to reach that conclusion.

The Trump administration is doing everything in its power to fight this injunction, and it could be lifted any day. We don't know when the courts will turn and make a decision. This means there is still an urgent need for Congress to act to overcome the decision of the President of the United States of last September 5.

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security released updated statistics on DACA. It shows, as of March 31, more than 32,000 DACA renewal applications are pending. Of these pending renewal applications, more than 9,000 were from recipients whose DACA protection had already expired, and tens of thousands more Dreamers have DACA protection due to expire very soon.

The President has created chaos, not just in the White House but clearly at the Department of Homeland Security as they try to respond to his decisions. Secretary Nielsen of DHS has promised me and has said publicly that she will not be party to deporting any DACA recipient with a pending DACA application, even if their DACA status has expired. We will hold her to that commitment.

However, for DACA recipients whose status has expired, they are not going to be given any work permits while

their renewal applications are being considered. It means tens of thousands of DACA-eligible individuals could be forced to leave the jobs they have—such as teachers in our schools or even in our military—because of the chaos that has been created by President Trump's decision.

Consider the fate of Dreamers who are eligible for DACA but have never quite reached that status. Until this decision is made in the court hearing in the District of Columbia, they can no longer apply for DACA protection because of President Trump's decision to prohibit new applications after September 5 of last year.

The nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute estimates that—in addition to 800,000 DACA recipients—there are an additional 1 million Dreamers who are eligible for DACA. President Trump's cruel decision to end DACA means that some 1 million DACA-eligible people cannot even apply.

On September 5, President Trump called on Congress to legalize DACA. As I mentioned, he has refused to accept six different bipartisan approaches that would. He even rejected one approach that offered \$25 billion for his infamous wall on the Mexican border. Instead, the President has tried to put the entire hard-line immigration agenda on the backs of DACA recipients.

It is not working, for 85 percent of the American people are on the side of these young people who were brought to the United States as kids, children, infants who grew up in this country, pledging allegiance to that flag, and wanting to be part of our future. There are 85 percent of Americans, including many Trump voters, who believe that is the right and fair thing to do, but a handful of hard-liners in this administration are determined to exact a punishment on these young people and their parents. That is why we find ourselves in this situation today.

I have come to the floor more than 100 times to tell the individual stories of these Dreamers. I do that today as well.

This is Karina Macias. She is the 114th Dreamer whose story I have told on the floor.

At the age of 3, her family brought her to the United States from Mexico. She grew up in East Palo Alto in Northern California. She loved to read and spend her afterschool time and summers at the local Boys & Girls Club. Karina was an excellent student, and she received numerous awards in high school, including the Mount Holyoke Book Award, the AP Scholar Award, and a Rotary Club Academic Achievement Award. She was the co-editor of her yearbook and copresident of the Community Service Club. She volunteered as a tutor and worked as a volunteer in food distribution centers. She attended Saint Mary's College of California, where she continued to excel academically and to receive many awards. In May 2016, she was awarded a bachelor's degree in communications.