

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, a little later this afternoon, we are going to have votes on the confirmation of two judges to serve on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. The vote will be on the confirmation of Amy St. Eve and Michael Scudder to fill these Illinois seats. They are two outstanding nominees, and I am proud to support both of them.

#### NOMINATION OF AMY ST. EVE

Amy St. Eve is a native of Belleville, IL. She was valedictorian of her class at Belleville West High School. She received degrees from Cornell University and Cornell Law School, where she served on the Law Review.

After law school, she worked for stints in private practice, as an in-house counsel, at the Office of Independent Counsel, and as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

In 2002, she was nominated for the Federal district court in Chicago with my support and the support of Republican Illinois Senator Peter Fitzgerald. She was confirmed by a voice vote.

During her 16 years on the Federal bench, Amy St. Eve has handled thousands of cases and has personally presided over 120 trials. Judge St. Eve has an outstanding reputation as a judge. She shows up early. She works hard. She knows the law. She runs her courtroom efficiently. She is respected by the litigants and her fellow judges as one of the best trial judges in Illinois, if not in the Nation. For years, I have heard praise for her from across the political spectrum.

Whenever someone comes before me who has practiced in the Federal courts of Chicago, I make it a practice to ask them: Who do you think are the best judges on the Federal bench? Without exception, I can tell you that Amy St. Eve's name is always mentioned—always. That is no exaggeration.

It is a little bittersweet to see her leave the district court bench, but she has the qualifications and judgment to step up and be an outstanding member of the Seventh Circuit. I am honored to support her nomination.

I congratulate her and her family—her husband, Howard, and her children, Lauren, Emily, and Brett—on this important day in the Senate.

Michael Scudder was born next door to Illinois, in Indiana. He received his undergraduate degree from St. Joseph's College. After working for several years as an accountant, he attended Northwestern Law School, where he earned his J.D. After law school, he clerked for Judge Paul Niemeyer of the Fourth Circuit and then for Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy. Mr. Scudder then worked for several years in private practice and as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York. In 2006, he began working as a counselor in the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, and in 2007, he moved to the White House, where he

became general counsel of the National Security Council. In 2009, he returned to private practice at the law firm Skadden, Arps, where he has worked until this day.

Mr. Scudder has made a name for himself in the Chicago legal community for his commitment to pro bono work and for his efforts to encourage other lawyers to make public service and pro bono a significant part of their legal career. He has won several awards for his pro bono efforts, including from Northwestern Law School and from the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Mr. Scudder is well respected across the political spectrum, and he has the experience, the integrity, and the judgment to be an outstanding Federal judge. I congratulate him, his wife, Sarah, and their children, Erin, Michael, Margaret, and Nicholas, on this occasion.

It is an honor to speak on behalf of these two Illinois nominees who have been rated unanimously well qualified by the American Bar Association.

Let me comment for a moment on the process that led us to this moment. If anyone follows the judicial nominations before the Senate, they may find it unusual that Democratic Senators like myself and, I might add, Senator DUCKWORTH, who joins me in praising these two nominees, are standing here before the Senate, before a vote, and saying that we worked with the Trump White House and the blue-slip process—and did it successfully—to come up with two outstanding nominees. I want to comment briefly on how we did it.

Both nominees received blue slips—approval slips—from the individual Senators in their State, from both Senator DUCKWORTH and me. The White House engaged in good-faith negotiations over these vacancies. They respected the tradition that we had established in Illinois of having an expert screening committee review all candidates. The process resulted in the selection of these two excellent nominees, whom all sides agreed upon. We made it clear to the White House—both Senator DUCKWORTH and I—that we were not going to drag out this process; we would have a timely review of each nominee, our committee would give its recommendation, and we would be back in touch with the White House in a timely fashion. That is how the process has worked in the past, and that is how it should work with this President when it comes to these two circuit court nominees.

When blue slips and home-State judicial screening commissions are respected, we end up with consensus, highly qualified nominees. Yet there are many in Republican circles here in Washington who have decided that they want to jettison blue slips, ignore that tradition, and basically ignore home-State screening commissions. That is the wrong step as far as Senator DUCKWORTH and I are concerned. We showed good faith—and so did the

White House—in coming up with these two fine nominees.

Recently, Senator BALDWIN of Wisconsin and her bipartisan screening commission were dealt out of the process that led to the confirmation vote last week of Seventh Circuit Wisconsin nominee Michael Brennan. And now Republicans are pushing forward with an Oregon Ninth Circuit nominee, Ryan Bounds, over the objections of both Oregon Senators after Mr. Bounds failed to disclose controversial writings to the screening committee in Oregon.

I hope my Republican colleagues in the Senate—who are now in the majority, with a President of their own party, and are now feeling their oats and deciding they want to push aside the traditions of the Senate—will stop and reflect for a moment. Isn't it better that we show mutual respect for one another when it comes to the blue-slip process?

There have been times in the past when Senators from various States did not give approval for nominees, and sometimes those vacancies went on for years. Nevertheless, Democrats in the same position respected the blue-slip process. I think the Republicans should do the same.

As Senators, we have a fundamental responsibility to the people we represent when it comes to the selection of Federal judges. Long after many of us are gone, these judges will still be serving in the Federal judiciary. We must exercise a vigorous advice-and-consent role for these members of the Federal judiciary who will sit in court-houses in our states.

It should concern all of us if any Senator is dealt out of the judicial selection process in their State. None of us want that to happen to us as individuals or to the constituents we represent.

By confirming Michael Brennan and pushing the nomination of Ryan Bounds, some in this Chamber are sending a clear signal that home-State Senators and, more importantly, the people they represent aren't going to matter anymore in the judicial selection process. That is a terrible path for the Senate to pursue.

We are at a critical moment in the Senate history when it comes to judicial nominations. Senate traditions like blue slips and home-State screening commissions have worked well for decades to build consensus and produce high-quality nominees, no matter which party is in power. Abandoning these traditions for the heady moment we might have politically will diminish the advice-and-consent role of the Senate and provide more power to the executive branch over our own U.S. Senate.

I hope there are at least a few Republicans on the Senate side who will stop their party from going down this road of abandoning blue slips and home-State screening commissions. We

should have mutual respect for one another professionally, even when we disagree politically. All it would take is for a handful of Republican Senators to stand up and say: We are going to defend these traditions. We believe the traditions are worth defending.

In closing, I will say that Amy St. Eve and Michael Scudder are outstanding nominees who were selected through a process of good-faith negotiations and timely decisions, and one that respected the Senate's traditions and home-State interests. If that process becomes an exception rather than the norm, all of our home States, the quality of our Federal judiciary, and the institution of the U.S. Senate will suffer.

Let me close by saying that these two nominees are two of the best. I knew one of them from her 16 years of service on the bench and the other from recommendations given to us by many who practiced with him over the years. I have confidence that they will do a fine job on this circuit court bench. I may not agree with all their decisions, but I will respect them as a man and a woman who have come to this professional responsibility with an understanding of their constitutional responsibilities to the United States, to the State of Illinois, and to this circuit.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, this afternoon, I wish to talk about the brave men and women in law enforcement who are protecting us every single day. I am from Ohio. We are proud of our Ohio law enforcement. We are proud of the leadership that many Ohio law enforcement have had at a national level over the years. In fact, right now, the vice president of the Fraternal Order of Police is an officer from Marion, OH.

Unfortunately, in Ohio we have had some tragic incidences over the past several years of law enforcement officials doing their job and coming into a dangerous situation—injuries, shootings, and even the loss of the lives of several officers earlier this year.

This week is called Police Week. It is the week in which we take a moment to stop and remember those officers and talk about them.

Today, I join my colleagues here in the Senate in cosponsoring legislation that is a resolution that commemorates this week as Police Week. Although every single day we should be grateful to those police officers who are out there in the Buckeye State—my home State—and others, this week

is the time to really focus on them, to focus on the sacrifices and reflect on their bravery, what they do every day in committing themselves to protecting our communities, often risking their own safety to protect others. Sometimes we talk about this as the thin blue line, which is that thin blue line between chaos and order. They are those police officers on that thin blue line—the men and women in blue—who are out there, protecting us from that chaos.

Police officers are driven by a dedication to justice and a sense of duty to protect those in need. The police officers whom I know have big hearts. They are compassionate. I sometimes tell them they are as much social workers as police officers because of the work they do. This is particularly true with the opioid crisis and the number of police officers who are engaged in that issue—in trying to get people into treatment, in trying to deal with the problem that, in my State, is out of control.

The No. 1 cause of crime in our communities is the opioid crisis. Typically, it is somebody who is committing a crime—whether it is a burglary or fraud or shoplifting—to pay for a drug habit. Police officers are often in a position in which they need to step in and provide law enforcement but also to aid in getting people the help they need.

Let me give a specific example of what I mean when I say that police officers put themselves on the line for us constantly. Over the weekend, I received a call—or an email—on Saturday about a police officer in Ohio who was injured in the line of duty. He is a Franklin County deputy. I am not going to use his name tonight because, for privacy purposes, his name is not out there, but he is a good example of what happens virtually every day in communities around the country.

He was pulling somebody over for a traffic citation, for a traffic violation. He was running the tag, and he noticed that the person was wanted for violating a protection order after a domestic assault charge. The person didn't pull over. In fact, the car led the officer on a very dangerous police chase through the streets of Franklin County, which is near Columbus, OH. Finally, the chase ended when the suspect's car crashed. Luckily, he didn't kill anybody else when he crashed that car. Then a shoot-out ensued, and in that shoot-out, the police officer was injured. He did return fire, and when he returned fire, the suspect was shot and killed. This deputy has been treated in a hospital for his injuries. He is now listed in stable condition, thank God.

This just happened last weekend. Again, it is an example of what the men and women in blue confront every single day. We are grateful for the bravery and quick action of that Franklin County deputy. I am also encouraged about what we are hearing about the deputy's condition as of this afternoon. We send him our prayers.

This was just one example. Sadly, in many cases around the country, unfortunately, these officers are making the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

In Akron, OH, just last week, the FOP Lodge No. 7 held its annual memorial service for 26 Akron police officers who have given their lives. There are a few hundred people there, as I understand it, who provide a commemoration of this event every year. I appreciate that they do that. There will be similar memorials and moments of remembrance across the country this week. Of course, there is a big one here in Washington, DC. Sadly, in my home State of Ohio, we have no shortage of police officers whose bravery deserves more than we can ever do to repay it.

Earlier this year, there were two heroic Ohioans who lost their lives in the line of duty. On Saturday, February 10, Westerville, OH, police officers Anthony "Tony" Morelli and Eric Joering were both fatally shot. They were responding to a 911 call—again, for domestic assault. They arrived and were immediately shot at. These were two amazing officers. Tony Morelli was a 29-year veteran at the Westerville Police Department. Eric Joering was a 16-year veteran. He was also a K-9 officer who partnered with his dog, Sam.

Both of these men were beloved and respected by members of the Westerville community. I had the opportunity to meet with some of their fellow officers and colleagues and to talk with them about these men and what they were like. What kept coming back was their incredible sense of public service and great senses of humor. They knew what they were doing was dangerous; yet they felt strongly about doing it and being dedicated to it.

I also had the opportunity to meet with the officers' wives and kids and families to be able to express our thanks from all of us for the service that their husbands and fathers had given. On behalf of this body, I presented both families with flags that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol in honor of their courage and their sacrifice while protecting the people of Ohio.

These families, like other police families I have gotten to know over the years, are just amazing. Their strength is inspiring. In their grief—and it is profound grief—they also told me how proud they were of the service these men performed for all of us and said that these two officers wouldn't have had it any other way. They wanted to be police officers.

The dangers law enforcement officers face have increased in the past few years with the deepening of the opioid crisis and specifically with the growing influx of synthetic opioids, like fentanyl. Let me give one quick example of this.

East Liverpool has a police officer named Chris Green. Last year, Officer Green pulled a car over. There were two people in the car. He pulled up and noticed some white, powdery substance. Fortunately for him, he had