

from a system that allows for favors like these to be handed out. I remember the immense respect I had for this man whom I did not yet know and wouldn't come to know for another decade or so, but who was willing to call out something that he believed was contrary to public policy, contrary to any system that would result in a good consequence, a good outcome for the American people.

I also appreciate the comment he made a moment ago about a familiar refrain by defenders of earmarks. Senator FLAKE mentioned that over time people would point out that earmarks were, even during their heyday, maybe representing a couple of percentage points of total Federal spending. Well, that may be true, if you want to put it that way, in those terms, as they inevitably did at the time, quite persistently. But it overlooks a few things. It is a much larger percentage, of course, of discretionary spending, and of domestic nondefense discretionary spending could even be a larger percentage. But more to the point, something that is only 2 percent doesn't necessarily mean that it is having a favorable impact and that it is not having an impact that is itself very significant.

When you look at a mile-long train, the engine car might represent only about 2 percent of the total length of the train, but it is what is driving the train. It is what is determining where the train goes, and if that train is going in a wrong direction, that can be very bad. So I have always found unpersuasive the initially persuasive argument that this is just a tiny segment of Federal spending.

At the end of the day, earmarks represent everything that we are uncomfortable with about Washington. Moving back to them would represent a departure from a very favorable reform that we had in this body 7 years ago.

So I would ask Senator FLAKE, who has served in Congress longer than I have and who has seen this, to tell us what he fears most about bringing back earmarks.

Mr. FLAKE. Well, I thank the Senator from Utah. One of the things I fear most is that we are having a tough enough time controlling spending.

Dr. Coburn, who served in the House—I admired his time there. He went after earmarks and after a lot of these appropriations, and he did the same thing when he came to the Senate until the last day he was here. He had a saying. He said: "Earmarks are the gateway drug to . . . spending addiction."

What he meant by that is if you give an earmark in an appropriations bill, some people will say "Well, it is just an earmark for a couple of million dollars for a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame"—that was actually one. The problem is, once you get your earmark there, you are obligated to support that entire bill, no matter how ballooned it becomes.

During the period, particularly in 2001 to 2006, boy, we bloated up a lot of

appropriations bills. We were running basically at almost a surplus in 2001, and by the time we got to 2006, it was anything but, and nondefense discretionary spending and defense spending related to earmarks increased significantly. It just was not a good trend.

So what I fear most is that we have been able to have some control on non-defense discretionary spending, and the growth of that has been slower than other things, but once you start getting earmarks in these bills, then you will be obligated to support them no matter what. Then you support bloated appropriations bills just to protect your earmark. The process of log-rolling takes effect—I protect yours if you protect mine.

That is one thing I fear.

I turn it back to the Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Senator Coburn said this is the "gateway drug" for big government. That is such an appropriate analogy. It reminds me of a news clip that I saw a couple of years before I ran for the U.S. Senate, when there was coverage of a very large spending bill that came up short—and those on the news commented at the time: Well, it is well understood in Washington that what is now going to have to happen is they are going to have to add probably tens of billions of dollars to this bill, which they will do, and they will end up getting it passed by adding these "sweeteners" as they call them—earmarks, essentially—in order to get people to vote for them for the same reason that Senator FLAKE just mentioned.

The dangers of bringing back earmarks are numerous, and it is my strong view that we should not do that. We should avoid this like the plague.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

SENATE REFORM

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, the Senate voted yesterday to reopen the government. I am glad that cooler heads and bipartisan good will prevailed before too much damage was done, but where do we go from here?

The leadership of both Houses needs to negotiate appropriations caps for the rest of this year and all of next year. We all need to do our part to make sure this is done immediately. As a matter of fact, half of that job is practically done. Our colleagues in the House have a promise from the Speaker of the House to consider a Defense appropriations bill at the spending level set by the most recent National Defense Authorization Act. That amount is \$700 billion and represents an increase of \$88.6 billion over last year's enacted spending level—a welcome development. It would seem to make

sense for this body to adopt that figure in the Senate bill, and the job would be halfway done. I hope our leaders will not wait until the week after next to get us an agreement on domestic spending.

Let's not approach the next few days as if the battle lines are again drawn. Rather than using the coming days to suit up for the next showdown, perhaps we can work to strengthen the Senate so that it does the governing that our Founders envisioned, the governing that the statesmen who preceded us have protected. Americans do their jobs day in and day out, and they expect the same hard work from their elected representatives in Washington.

In this regard, I would like to call attention to an op-ed by radio host Hugh Hewitt that was published online yesterday by the Washington Post. It is titled "How to end the Senate's astonishing dysfunction"—a pretty graphic title for an op-ed. Mr. Hewitt warns that the institution of the Senate is "careening toward widespread contempt, as happened to its Roman predecessor even before the emperors turned it into a fancy advisory council." One might be inclined to agree given the events of the past few days. Indeed, we have reached an embarrassing low point where a government shutdown is wrongly used as a bargaining chip for merely political gain. Mr. Hewitt concludes, "It would be best for both parties to head off change imposed from pressure from the outside with change organically orchestrated from within by those with care for the body and its original design."

There are plenty of experts with ideas on how to create a more efficient and more effective Senate. Those ideas should be welcomed now. But those of us who took an oath in this Chamber and serve with the great legacy of this institution cannot stay on the sidelines. We occupy a unique position to drive reforms and to make the Senate better, ensuring its existence and its success for the next generation.

There is real hope that these reforms have already begun. For example, there has been support by both Democrats and Republicans to change the procedural rules on executive and judicial nominations, shortening postcloture debate from 30 hours to 8 hours. The Democratic-led Senate passed this rule on a temporary basis in 2013, with bipartisan support. Our colleague from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD, has a thoughtful proposal. He suggests that we permanently shorten postcloture debate on executive and judicial nominations. I agree with this proposal. The practice of confirming noncontroversial nominees is a courtesy historically given without needless delay to whoever occupies the Oval Office, to whom ever the public has installed as President, Democrat and Republican alike.

Delays are not only inconvenient as the new administration tries to put its team in place, but more importantly,

delays keep highly qualified individuals from serving the American people—sometimes in positions affecting our national security or delivering disaster response.

Like Mr. Hewitt, I believe we can do more to make the Senate work for the American people with “an overhaul of its rules” that “preserves the rights of the minority in some cases . . . while also reflecting the speed at which the world moves today.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the op-ed by Mr. Hewitt be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 22, 2018]

HOW TO END THE SENATE'S ASTONISHING
DYSFUNCTION

(By Hugh Hewitt)

Remember Roscoe Conkling? Few people do even though for many years the New Yorker was the “first man” in the Senate and king of patronage.

How about Henry Cabot Lodge? “Something about the League of Nations?” you ask, if you are going off your college days or AP history prep. “No, wait, Nixon’s running mate!” you say, and head to Wikipedia to discover both fragments of memory are right. The Lodges were a father-and-son team of senators.

How about Robert Taft and Mike Mansfield? Lyndon Johnson was preceded as Senate majority leader by the man known as “Mr. Republican” and followed by the good and decent Mansfield, who went on to be a good and decent ambassador to Japan under Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. (When was the last time anyone thought of a senator as such a statesman that he or she could serve as ambassador to a key ally for more than a decade under presidents from both parties?)

The point is that the Senate as an institution is—or was—quite the work of genius, but its individual members, no matter how famous in their day, fade into background characters in presidential biographies. (And most presidential biographies don’t really get read all that much.) Now the Senate itself is careening toward widespread contempt, as happened to its Roman predecessor even before the emperors turned it into a fancy advisory council.

Whether the decline began with the sliming of Robert Bork or the segregationist filibusters of civil rights legislation, the modern Senate has been on a downward spiral for some time, and even current Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), the Senate’s most able leader of my lifetime, isn’t shrewd enough to reverse the trajectory in the public’s eyes. After another government shutdown, President Trump and others are pushing hard to make the apparently dysfunctional upper chamber a purely majoritarian place. McConnell resists this, knowing that the rights of the minority party are (or at least used to be) key impediments on the country rushing into dangerous waters.

What the Senate needs is an overhaul of its rules, one that preserves the rights of the minority in some cases—key legislation, for example, and perhaps appointments to the Supreme Court—while also reflecting the speed at which the world moves today. Simple majorities on appropriations and time limits on debate over minor nominees are two obvious reforms. They could be traded for agreement on the high court vacancies,

formalizing the modern precedent established by McConnell of no nominations in an election year but consideration and votes on nominees from the year prior such as Anthony M. Kennedy. The same deal could also include changes to the “Byrd Rule,” which gives the Senate parliamentarian broad sway over what is allowed under budget reconciliation—an extraconstitutional expansion of the parliamentarian’s powers that makes sense only under a Cubist understanding of how the Senate is supposed to operate.

Now, with the shock of the shutdown very palpable, McConnell and his minority counterpart, Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), should empower a small group of widely liked and respected members to fashion a package of reforms with the only guarantee being that their work product receive an up-or-down vote made effective by a simple majority.

The Senate’s dysfunction is astonishing to Americans who have to make things actually run and who have to do their jobs to keep their jobs. Trump has shrewdly taken aim at the Senate’s vulnerability as an issue. It would be best for both parties to head off change imposed from pressure from the outside with change organically orchestrated from within by those with care for the body and its original design.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, we can do more to streamline nominations, and we can do more to prevent the next budget stand-off.

I want to remind my colleagues of the bipartisan work that has been done by Senate Appropriations members—Republican and Democratic—in just the past year. Eight of the twelve annual appropriations bills passed out of committee last year. Most passed unanimously, with unanimous votes from Republicans and Democrats in the full Appropriations Committee. The remaining four were released as chairman’s marks.

Let me recount the work that was done last year.

On July 13, 2017, the full Appropriations Committee, on a bipartisan basis, unanimously approved the fiscal year 2018 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The vote was 31 to 0.

On July 20, 2017, the committee unanimously—again by a vote of 31 to 0—approved the fiscal year 2018 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Also on July 20, the committee approved the fiscal year 2018 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill by a vote of 30 to 1—still an overwhelming bipartisan vote on the part of the Appropriations Committee.

On July 27, 2017, the Appropriations Committee unanimously, by a vote of 31 to 0, approved the fiscal year 2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

Also on July 27, the Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. That was by a vote of 30 to 1—overwhelmingly bipartisan.

On the same day, July 27, the committee unanimously approved the fiscal year 2018 Legislative Branch appropriations bill.

I could go on and on. Two more:

In 2017, the full Appropriations Committee approved the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations Bill. The vote then was a little closer—29 to 2—but still overwhelmingly bipartisan by a pretty evenly divided Appropriations Committee.

On September 7—well before the end of the fiscal year—the Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously approved the 2018 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill.

All of these bills and then four chairman’s marks have been available to this Senate for consideration, and not a single one of them has been brought to the floor. What would be the reason for that? I think Members of the majority would say it is because we couldn’t get 60 votes for cloture on a motion to proceed, and realizing that we couldn’t get the 60 votes, we decided not to burn the time that we needed for other considerations, such as nominations or tax reform or other legislation that had a chance. Members of the minority party would probably say we couldn’t get to a realistic caps agreement for domestic spending and for defense spending, and so there was no point in doing that, so we wouldn’t agree to the 60 votes. But for whatever reason, citizens should know and Members should know that the Appropriations Committee did its work, and they had bills within the caps available to them, that were available for consideration. Yet, for whatever reason, they were not allowed to come to the floor for a vote.

Shouldn’t we make a commitment to at least bring one bill or at least a minibus, combining three bills, to the floor and see if Members can work their will during this calendar year of 2018?

Annual appropriations bills should be passed in committee and then should come to the floor for a vote. This is how the spending process ought to work. We can do that more easily with a budget deal. We can do it with a bipartisan agreement on spending caps, which is the next big item to be negotiated. We need to eliminate sequestration, and we need to agree to defense and domestic spending levels. As I say, the work is already halfway done for us. A parade of weeks- or months-long continuing resolutions is not how we should be funding the government, and we have a resounding agreement to that statement from Members on both sides of the aisle.

The government shutdown this week was unfortunate, but it does not mean we have to continue the Senate’s “downward spiral,” as Mr. Hewitt describes. We now have an opportunity for reform and for reflection about how we want to shape the future of this institution. I hope my colleagues, with the support of majority and minority Members, will seize this opportunity to enact positive change.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Oklahoma.

PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am going to talk about something different than anyone else has talked about here, and there is a very good reason for it.

First of all, to try to establish some credibility here, I have had occasion to spend quite a bit of time working on issues in Africa. In fact, I have had occasion over the last 23 years to make 156 African country visits. That is a lot of African country visits. We have friends there. I personally have friends there, intimate friends. We have worked on a lot of the military concerns they have, but this is an area where we have very close friends. So I am going to be singling out one close friend—but not to the detriment of the rest of them because we have many close friends, certainly as many as 32 country Presidents and Prime Ministers to whom we have been very close. But there is a reason for singling out one particular individual, who is Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda—two reasons. First, he is going to be coming in as the Chairman or President of the African Union in the next few months. He has already been elected. Second, he survived the Rwanda genocide, which arguably could be the greatest genocide of all time. On January 28, he will become the President or Chairman of the African Union. This is really nothing short of a miracle. Rwanda is a miracle, and we have Paul Kagame and the people of Rwanda to thank for it.

In 1994, one of the most atrocious genocides ever perpetrated occurred in this small East African country. In a period of about 100 days, nearly 1 million Rwandans were slaughtered. As is always the case, the seeds of genocide were planted many decades before, but when it finally started in April of 1994, many thousands of Hutus used machetes and clubs to slaughter Tutsis. Those are two tribes people are very familiar with. In most cases, it was neighbors killing neighbors, even some family members.

The horror was unimaginable. Fathers and mothers were forced to watch their children being hacked to death. One man was forced to beat his wife to death in order to spare their seven children from being tortured to death.

Many Rwandans were lucky to survive and remember watching their parents and siblings being murdered. One individual whose name is Immaculee wrote a book, "Left to Tell," which gives you an idea of what happened, the fact that there were people in her own community trying to kill her. They killed 70 percent—70 percent—of the entire tribe at that time.

The world just watched as this slaughter took place. They did nothing. The United Nations had peacekeepers stationed in Rwanda, and they were ordered to withdraw and leave all the genocide to take place.

The President of the United States was Bill Clinton. He did nothing. The world just stood by and watched. The horror was stopped only because of one man. That one man was Paul Kagame. In October 1990, Paul Kagame led a group of young Rwandan refugees from Uganda whose parents had fled the country's mass violence three decades before.

You have to keep in mind that the President of Uganda is President Museveni. President Museveni and President Paul Kagame, both, came from the bush. They were good friends. He went there to try to save Rwandans at that time because he saw the genocide coming.

What is even more amazing about Rwanda is their leader and what happened after that. Rwanda had two very different paths it could have taken. They could have taken revenge. Paul Kagame could have taken the strength he had—the new power that he had—and he could have gone after the other tribe that was there, the Hutus, and he could have started another genocide of his own. That could have happened. The other thing he could have done was the path of forgiveness and reconciliation. This is the path of hard work, where the Tutsis who survived the genocide would have to learn how to forgive and live alongside the same Hutus who killed their family members. This is the path of rebuilding a nation from the ground up so that together they could have a common future.

We now know which path Rwanda chose. President Kagame led them down the path of reconciliation. There are a lot of people who helped to make this happen. One of the individuals, who I happen to be personally fond of, who is deceased now, was Chuck Colson. Do you remember him? He spent time in prison. He started a fellowship and was very actively involved in the reconciliation process. In many cases, the Hutus who committed genocide against the Tutsi families would seek forgiveness from that family and then achieve reconciliation by building a home together for the Tutsi survivors who lived through this. It may seem like a small gesture, but it allowed the healing and forgiveness process to work. Together, the Hutus and the Tutsis are rebuilding their nation as Rwandans working together.

I had one experience that I watched after this happened. My wife called this to my attention. In Rwanda, they build a certain kind of basket that is different from that in any other country. After the reconciliation, there they were—the Hutu and the Tutsi young women—making these baskets. Then, Paul Kagame worked out a deal with several department store marketing areas in the United States. Macy's was one of them. They started selling the baskets. It was a great boon for them. But, anyway, Paul Kagame should be credited for this amazing transformation of the nation to a thriving,

successful country. This is paying great dividends.

I was in Rwanda most recently in October. I have been there eight times. Each time I go, I am surprised by what I see. Let me mention five things that are unique to Rwanda. First, there is not a piece of litter anywhere in Rwanda. There is nothing. You can't find any litter. In fact, the last Saturday of every month, they have a program where everybody joins together and they pick up every bit of trash and everything else. That doesn't sound like very much, but you notice the difference when you are there.

The second thing that is different about them is their infrastructure. Rwanda is known as the Land of a Thousand Hills. They don't have any level areas in Rwanda. Not long ago, I remember going for an hour and a half, between the hill area and the mountain area, on a road that was perfectly paved. That is one thing you would expect to see in the United States. There are no potholes—nothing. It was a highway that you would expect to find anywhere except in Africa. They are known for this.

Third, the people are hard workers. I mentioned that there aren't any flat areas there. Every square foot in Rwanda is used to grow something, from the bottom of the peaks. Everything is there. They are hard workers. They grow tea, coffee, potatoes, and other crops. They are all being cultivated across the entire country, and it is all hilly country. There is no place else where that is actually taking place. It is hard work. You do it mostly by hand. They are able to feed themselves and export more valuable crops abroad.

Fourth, it is safe. You wouldn't expect a country that has gone through the most devastating genocide—maybe in history—to be a safe place to walk around. Yet it is. You can walk there at nighttime. It is safer than Washington, DC.

The fifth thing that is unusual about this is that the economy is booming. Everywhere you look in Rwanda, construction is happening. In just the last few years, they built new hotels and a convention center, and they are now working on a new airport to facilitate all the growth and tourism that is coming there.

These are my observations, but President Kagame's leadership is not just resulting in visible changes. Numbers back up what I have seen. Since he became President in 2000, Rwanda has experienced a GDP growth of 8 percent.

This is interesting because we are, through our tax bill, going to be increasing our GDP in this country. There is a formula that no one disagrees with, and that is that for each 1 percent increase in growth in the GDP, that develops into \$1 trillion over a period of 10 years of increased revenue. That is some of the revenue we are going to be using as a result of that.

This is not the United States. This is in Africa. It is an 8-percent GDP