

States refuse to accept this as an example of socialism. But this is the truth. That is why socialism must be soundly rejected.

Sir Winston Churchill, who had an incredible gift for words, once said:

The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings. The inherent virtue of Socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.

Clearly, misery would be a result of a current fad celebrating socialism, and we must firmly and clearly reject it.

In a society like ours, based on the free enterprise system, business owners compete for business and make decisions based on what the customer wants and needs, and this helps keep the cost of living low while offering consumers choice.

Competition and free enterprise are the opposite of centrally planned and administered socialist economies and the only economic system compatible with individual liberty.

In a socialist country, the government owns or controls everything. If you don't like it or insist on going your own way, you will be squished like a bug. Socialism forces citizens to be submissive to the government's plan—a far cry from the freedoms and liberties promised under our Constitution.

Most Americans don't want the government to run their lives. They want less government, which is to say they want more freedom. So while things like free healthcare or free higher education or free housing sound pretty good superficially, they are a fantasy and part of the agenda to move the United States toward a socialist, government-controlled economy.

Under our free enterprise system, people work to earn their living. The harder you work, the more you benefit and the better you can provide for yourself and your family. That is something we call the American dream. But with socialism, that kind of motivation doesn't exist at all. Why would you put in the extra effort? Why would you work longer hours when you will receive the same pay and benefits as everybody else? Why would you pursue an advanced degree and pour your heart into researching new medical cures when you know, at the end of the day, the person who chooses to do nothing will receive the same benefits you do? Well, you wouldn't. That is why socialism doesn't work.

In a recent Washington Post column, George Will defined today's understanding of socialism as this:

Almost everyone will be nice to almost everyone, using money taken from a few. This means having government distribute, according to its conception of equity, the wealth produced by capitalism.

The problem is, as he said, the government will take and take until eventually there is nothing more to take. Once that happens, the economy will tank; jobs will dry up; taxes will get higher to pay for the benefits promised; and those utopian sentiments will not feel quite so good anymore.

The enemy of socialism isn't greed. It is experience. That is why there are no socialist success stories. Venezuela, the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania—time and again, we have seen socialism fail. That has been the universal experience.

As President Trump said in Miami last week:

Socialism promises prosperity, but it delivers poverty. Socialism promises unity, but it delivers hatred and it delivers division. Socialism promises a better future, but it always returns to the darkest chapters of the past.

Slapping the word "democratic" in front of the word "socialism" doesn't make it any less radical or any less terrifying. In fact, democracy and socialism are at war with each other.

This is not about lifting up the poor. It is about taking our freedom away and turning it over to our government overlords and taskmasters.

As so many seem to have forgotten the lessons of history, I plan to return to the Senate floor to discuss this disturbing trend further and remind the American people why socialism is the enemy, not a friend, of our country.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 2 minutes, please.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF ANDREW WHEELER

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I say to our colleagues that I stand before you today as a Vietnam veteran—5 years of naval service during the hot war in Southeast Asia, trying to make sure that the force of communism was stopped. I served another 18 years beyond that, right to the end of the Cold War, as a naval flight officer and retired as a Navy captain.

I am not a socialist. I am somebody who cares deeply about this planet. I am someone who believes it is possible to have clean air, clean water, better public health, and to foster economic growth.

As it turns out, there are a lot of companies in this country that believe the same thing. They believe the same thing. A lot of them build cars, trucks, and vans. They want a 50-State deal on fuel efficiency standards, CAFE standards, and tailpipe standards. They want a 50-State deal so they don't have to build a car for 13 or 14 different States and then a different kind of car or truck for the rest of the country. They don't want to do that. They want certainty and predictability so they can build one model for one car. They want to be able to be successful in competing in the world marketplace in the next 10, 20, or 30 years.

We need someone leading the Environmental Protection Agency who believes that it is possible to have cleaner air and, frankly, to foster economic growth in the auto companies. That is what the auto companies want. They are not socialists. They are free-marketers.

There is something called HFCs, or hydrofluorocarbons. It is a terrible pollutant for the environment. It is 1,000 times worse than carbon for our global warming challenges. There are a bunch of American businesses that have new technology to replace HFCs. They want to be able not just to develop it, but they want to be able to sell it all over the world. The marketplace is \$1 trillion, and we are holding it back.

Unfortunately, the person whom we are going to be voting on here today to be our EPA Administrator is part of holding us back because he will not agree to a treaty that the administration wants to put forward. It is crazy.

Those companies that developed the follow-on products to HFCs—Honeywell, Chemours, and others—are not socialists. They are business people. They want a piece of the international market, and they want to do good things for the climate at the same time.

I just want to say to my colleagues: We can do both. We can have clean air. We can have clean water. We can have strong economic growth. We need somebody running the EPA who actually believes in that too. I am sorry to say here today that right now I don't believe it is Andrew Wheeler, and I say that with no joy.

Thank you very much.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, throughout the country and in the great State of Illinois, a host of environmental issues are plaguing Americans. From air pollution, to groundwater contamination, to the increases in climate change-related harm that we are already facing, there is no more crucial time to have strong national leadership on environmental issues than right now. However, in the midst of all these issues comes the nomination of Andrew Wheeler—a former lobbyist for corporate polluters—to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

If there is one major thing we have learned from the Clean Air Act, it is that regulations save lives and money. Regulations that ensure clean air mean fewer premature deaths and health issues, as well as fewer asthma attacks in children and health-related missed work days. However, the EPA under this administration that is now led by Acting Administrator Wheeler, consistently works to roll back clean air and water rules. This exposes the most vulnerable members of our society—including children and the elderly—to toxic and deadly chemicals. The people in Illinois are no exception. We are facing several environmental issues in Illinois that require immediate action by the EPA, and so far, I am not satisfied that EPA is doing everything it can and should be doing under Mr. Wheeler's leadership.

The Sterigenics facility is causing a public health threat in Willowbrook, IL due to emissions from cancer-causing ethylene oxide. The EPA's own risk assessment from 2016, showed that ethylene oxide exposure increases the risk of cancer more than what was previously thought. However, given this

information, the EPA has still not taken sufficient actions to protect people of Willowbrook who are exposed to this gas. Concerns about ethylene oxide exposure is not limited to the people of Willowbrook—it is also of concern to the people of Gurnee and Waukegan, IL who also have plants that use ethylene oxide in the middle of their towns. Every time I have spoken with Acting Administrator Wheeler about this issue, I have been disappointed by the lack of urgency to do anything more than monitor and collect more data. When it comes to the facilities in Gurnee and Waukegan, the EPA won't even commit to monitor and collect data, even though I have joined my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH in requesting that monitoring begin immediately. The EPA is 4 years overdue to begin the process to promulgate new standards for this gas, even though they know the increased cancer risk. So I, along with my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH and my colleagues in the House, introduced legislation to require the EPA to promulgate new rules for ethylene oxide. However, the EPA's failure to act to limit toxic chemicals being emitted into neighborhoods does not end with ethylene oxide. There is manganese pollution on the Southeast side of Chicago. Manganese exposure results in serious neurological effects, such as learning difficulties, lower IQ scores in children, and manganese poisoning—a condition that resembles Parkinson's disease. There are several facilities on the Southeast side of Chicago that emit manganese, and EPA is now monitoring these facilities after my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH and I pressed EPA to do so. These facilities contaminate both the air that people breathe and the soil that children play on.

Although the EPA knows how dangerous this neurotoxin is and how high the concentrations are, they will not commit to strengthening manganese standards or take immediate action to clean up sites with soil contamination. We need someone at the EPA that will be aggressive in enforcing the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.

We also need an EPA Administrator who recognizes how urgent it is to address climate change. The Trump administration's own Department of Defense issued a report last month identifying national security threats to defense missions, operations, and installations, due to climate change. Yet Acting Administrator Wheeler continues to undermine independent science for climate change by appointing members to the EPA's Scientific Advisory Board who are biased by industry or actively deny that climate change is a problem. How can we expect the EPA to lead efforts to address climate change if its leadership doesn't believe it requires immediate action?

I would also like to mention one more thing before I close. This administration promised farmers, biorefineries, and fuels stations that they

would ensure stations could sell E15 fuels this summer. The EPA is coming close to failing to fulfil that promise. I hope the EPA will work with me to ensure stations are able to sell E15 fuels this summer.

We need someone leading the EPA who will put the health and well-being of the people of this country above the profits of corporate polluters. We need someone who is willing to protect families and communities from toxic chemicals in our air and water by fully enforcing the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. And we need someone who will lead the charge to address climate change. I am not convinced that Acting Administrator Wheeler will do these things. As a result, I cannot support his nomination. I hope he proves me wrong.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today to express my opposition to confirming Andrew Wheeler to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

His lobbying activities and tenure, first as Deputy, then as Acting Administrator, show that he should not be leading the EPA in a permanent capacity.

We are at a crossroads for action on climate change. The United Nations issued a special report in October, warning of the catastrophic consequences of allowing global warming to surpass 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The report warned that human activity has already caused about 1 degree of warming and that we need to drastically cut emissions—45 percent by 2030 and 100 percent by 2050—to stay below 1.5 degrees.

The EPA is the strongest institution we have in the United States to combat climate change in terms of technical expertise and legal authority. Unfortunately, I fear that, if the EPA remains under the leadership of Andrew Wheeler, it will continue dismantling critical regulations and rolling back previous efforts to address climate change.

Andrew Wheeler is a former coal and fossil fuel lobbyist. Despite a duty to serve the public's interest, he has instead worked to push a counterproductive agenda of deregulation at the EPA.

During Mr. Wheeler's EPA tenure, the Trump administration has aggressively moved to undermine numerous greenhouse gas emission regulations. This includes President Obama's landmark Clean Power Plan, performance standards for new power plants, and methane emission standards for the oil and gas industry.

I am most concerned that Andrew Wheeler is overseeing the Trump administration's efforts to roll back our national program for motor vehicle emission standards, an issue that I have worked on for decades.

Under the current program, fuel economy standards for new cars and SUVs are set to exceed 50 miles per gallon by 2025. To date, these standards have saved 550 million barrels of oil, \$65

billion in fuel costs for American families, and 250 million metric tons of carbon dioxide.

The success of these standards comes, in part, from the fact that they have been implemented as a single, coordinated national program under the authority of the EPA, the Department of Transportation, and the State of California.

The Department of Transportation implements the Ten-in-Ten Fuel Economy Act, which was signed into law in 2007 following a bipartisan legislative effort over the course of many years. I was proud to work together with our former colleague Olympia Snowe of Maine and many others from both parties to strengthen the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards for the first time in three decades.

This law requires fuel economy standards to increase by at least 10 miles per gallon by 2020. Beyond 2020, the law requires standards to be set at the maximum feasible level based on available technology, which the administration is trying to avoid doing for 2022–2026.

For its part, the EPA implements complementary vehicle emission standards under the Clean Air Act. That law also recognizes California's longstanding authority to regulate its own air pollution and allows other States to choose to follow California's standards in lieu of Federal requirements, as 13 States have now done.

Today these standards are collectively implemented as a single national program under a 2012 agreement between the Department of Transportation, the EPA, and the State of California that applies through model year 2025.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration is working to tear up that agreement and weaken Federal standards starting in 2022. Last week, the administration announced it would refuse to negotiate with California to salvage this program. Instead of seeking consensus, the EPA, overseen by Mr. Wheeler, is proposing to challenge California's longstanding authority. These actions are unjustified and will only create chaos and uncertainty for the automobile market.

Under Mr. Wheeler's watch, the Trump administration has also continued to roll back or undermine many other important EPA environmental health and safety regulations.

From attempts to undermine effective Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, to evading the EPA's commitments to set safe drinking water standards, to failing to fully implement the Toxic Substances Control Act, it is clear that Mr. Wheeler will only continue his efforts to dismantle the EPA from within.

I was a proud supporter of the bipartisan Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, which passed in 2016. This bill amends and updates the Toxic Substances Control Act, which is the Nation's primary

chemicals management law. Thousands of Californians rely on it to safeguard against exposure to toxic chemicals we encounter every day.

EPA is charged with protecting all Americans from undue and harmful exposure to existing and newly introduced chemicals. However, under the Trump administration, the EPA's safety reviews of toxic substances has fallen far short of the intent of this sweeping, bipartisan toxic chemical reform legislation.

One example of a chemical that I am very concerned about is asbestos. As a result of the administration's lack of action, my colleagues in the Senate and I introduced legislation in 2017 that would have amended the Toxic Substances Control Act to require the EPA to identify and assess all forms of asbestos and ultimately ban this known carcinogen.

This bill was named after Alan Reinstein, who passed away in 2006 at the age of 66 from mesothelioma, a disease caused by exposure to asbestos. Delays in banning asbestos have meant that as many as 15,000 Americans die each year from exposure.

During Wheeler's tenure, the EPA has resisted calls to eliminate exemptions for asbestos in the current Chemical Data Reporting rule, a reporting requirement under the Toxic Substances Control Act, to comply with its mandate to prevent unreasonable risks to health and the environment presented by asbestos.

Despite knowing the health risks for decades, asbestos is still used in a wide variety of construction materials that the public unwittingly comes into contact with every day.

Andrew Wheeler's tenure at the EPA, both as Deputy Administrator for the EPA and as Acting Administrator, has shown a clear disregard for the EPA's mission to protect the public and the environment. I urge all of my colleagues to oppose his confirmation.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for such time as I shall consume as the final speaker before the vote on the nomination.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President, we are going to vote in just a few minutes to confirm Andrew Wheeler to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. There is no one better to serve in this role, and I would know. Andrew worked for me for 14 years in both my personal office as well as in my capacity as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee.

He was with the committee back when President Trump nominated Andrew as Deputy Administrator. I said: There is no one more qualified. There is no one more qualified anywhere in

America to handle this job than Andrew Wheeler.

He has been Acting Administrator for the last 7 months. Let's keep in mind that he was the most qualified person 7 months ago, and now he has had 7 months on the job, and he has done a really great job. He has been the Acting Administrator.

It didn't really start when he came on board with any of the governmental Agencies. He has always been concerned about nature and the environment. The guy was an Eagle Scout.

In fact, I remember the discussions of people who were with him when he was actually climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. It was with a group of people who were interested in nature and the environment. This came early on with him. So he has the ability to lead the Agency.

I have always enjoyed following his career. After earning a law degree at Washington University in St. Louis, he joined the EPA as a special assistant in the Agency's Pollution Prevention and Toxics Office in 1991. I am talking about 30 years ago. This guy has been there for a long time. For all practical purposes, he has grown up in that particular discipline.

He was an EPA employee for 4 years, transitioning to the George H. W. Bush administration and then the Clinton administration after that, where he earned three Bronze Medals for commendable service along the way.

By the way, I doubt if there are too many people in this Chamber who know what that is. So I am going to read it to you.

The Bronze Medal is given for "significant service or achievements in support of the Agency's mission or for demonstration of outstanding accomplishments in supervision and leadership."

That is Andrew Wheeler. He received three of those.

I know you have heard a lot of people opposing him. Regrettably, there are a lot of people opposed simply for the reason that this is a nominee of the President. We went through this with Mr. Kavanaugh. We heard all of these things, and people now look back, and many of them regret that they said the things that they said.

It is awfully hard to be critical of Andrew because he is such a nice guy.

He left the Agency. He brought the sense of service and leadership with him to the U.S. Senate, where I had a front-row seat because he worked for me for 14 years.

He just did really tremendous work. There were never any complaints about him. He knew what he was doing. Again, with a 31-year background, there is nothing that he doesn't know about the mission.

Andrew started in my personal office as chief counsel and transitioned to staff director for a Senate subcommittee. I was a subcommittee chairman at the time on the subcommittee called the Clean Air, Climate Change, Wetlands, and Nuclear

Safety Subcommittee. He was the one who did all the work, and I took the credit, but it worked.

In 2003, when I became the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Andrew became our chief counsel. Over the next 6 years, he would eventually become staff director and we worked closely together on highway bills, energy bills, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, and the Clear Skies Act.

I can remember when this was taking place because someone who was a very close friend of mine and is no longer here, Barbara Boxer from California, worked together on these things. It was really kind of funny. Philosophically, we were opposed to each other as much as two people could be, but we accomplished everything. We accomplished the things that other people were not able to accomplish.

It is only natural that the President would nominate Andrew to be the Deputy Director at that time of the EPA. That was last April. He was confirmed in a bipartisan vote.

I will always remember that he gave a speech over at the EPA. It was kind of a welcome speech at that time. That was the day that he was confirmed as Deputy Director of the EPA. I think every single employee was in there, really, to kind of pay homage to him. It is a big deal. Here is a guy who started 30 years ago at the bottom. He is just a normal person in the bureaucracy, and all of a sudden—not all of a sudden, it took him almost 30 years to do it—he climbs up to become Deputy Director. So he was really a model. He was a model to those 200 or 300 people.

Andrew didn't even know this as he was making his initial speech, but I watched the looks on their faces, and the model that he was for them was that there is room at the top. Here is a guy who climbed all the way up, and he reached the top.

He knows what it takes to ensure that our environment is cared for within the laws passed by Congress. He will ensure that all stakeholders are heard, and he will provide certainty and stability for the regulated community. That is a switch.

One of the reasons I ran for Congress in the first place many years ago was the fact that I was a builder and developer and I was overregulated. I know what it is like firsthand. He will be a good steward of the environment without punishing our States, without punishing our farmers, and without punishing our job creators just for the sake of it. Those days are behind us.

Andrew has worked on these issues for his entire 28-year career, and I am honored that he chose to spend half of his 14 years working for me. So I have directly benefited from his service. The U.S. Senate has benefited from his leadership, and now America will benefit as well.

Let's vote Andrew in and put him to work.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

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

Mr. INHOFE. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 33 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Gardner	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Burr	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Perdue	

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—1

Sinema

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). 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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John L. Ryder, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2021.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 617 are printed in today's RECORD under

"Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in a few minutes, we will be voting on the President's nomination of John Ryder, of Memphis, to be a member of the Board of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

To those of us in the seven State region that the TVA serves, it is a very important institution. Its job is to provide large amounts of reliable, low-cost electricity, which is the basis for how we live and how we work. It has a lot to do with our ability to attract jobs. Its job is to provide that energy in a clean way so we can see our mountains and so we meet the emissions standards in our metropolitan areas that allow us to attract and grow more jobs.

The TVA is fulfilling its mission very well. It is heading toward a position in which it will be about 40-percent nuclear in its production of electricity, about 20 percent in natural gas, and about 20 percent in coal or a little less than that. It will have pollution control equipment on all of its coal plants. Most of the rest is hydroelectric power, and a little bit is renewable. In short, it has one of the cleanest portfolios in the country, and it is continuing to do that and is producing a lot of low-cost, reliable electricity.

We are very fortunate to be in a region in which, as we look down the road 5, 10, or 15 years, we will be able to say to people who are thinking of moving themselves to Tennessee or moving their businesses to Tennessee or growing them there that they will be able to get a lot of reliable, low-cost electricity—all that they need. In addition to that, they will be able to see the Smoky Mountains because the air is a lot cleaner now that they have such a clean portfolio.

So John Ryder's appointment is a very important appointment, and he is a well-qualified man for that position. He is one of Tennessee's best known lawyers and has been for a long time. Since the late 1980s, he has been listed as one of Tennessee's best lawyers. He is well respected by everyone who knows him.

Senator Corker and I recommended him to President Trump, and we know him well. Senator BLACKBURN, who is Senator Corker's successor, has a high regard for John Ryder. All of us appreciate his willingness to serve, and we look forward to the voice vote we are going to have in a few minutes that will place him on TVA's Board. The Board has just selected a new chief executive officer. TVA is the largest public utility in the United States, perhaps in the world. It is an important assignment, and it is one I am delighted to recommend him for.

There is one other thing, but I will not dwell on this because I spoke on this Monday night. Unfortunately, Mr. Ryder has been on the Senate's cal-

endar for 9 months. He was nominated by President Trump a year ago. The problem has not been with Mr. Ryder because, as I said, President Trump nominated him after he was thoroughly vetted by the FBI. The Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee considered him, had a hearing, and reported him unanimously to the floor. Yet, for 9 months, he waited there.

One reason is, the Democrats have consistently obstructed the ability of Senator McCONNELL and the Republican majority to help President Trump form his government. The Democrats have required 128 times that Senator McCONNELL, the majority leader, file cloture motions to cut off debate to advance a nomination like Mr. Ryder's.

Now, this is not a Cabinet position. This is not a lifetime judge. This is the part-time Board of an important institution. He is one of 1,200 Presidential nominees that any President has who is subject to confirmation by advice and consent. It is the kind of nomination by which, if a committee unanimously reports it to the Senate, we will normally approve it by voice vote. Yet, on this vote, Senator McCONNELL was forced to file cloture a week ago. Then we had to wait an intervening day. Only then could we come to this vote.

This is not the way the Senate is supposed to work, and this obstruction has to stop. Senator BLUNT and Senator LANKFORD have introduced a resolution, which has been reported to the Senate by the rules committee, that would cause us to adopt a rule very much like the one we adopted in 2013, when I worked with a large number of Democrats and Republicans for the sole purpose of making it easier for President Obama—and his successors—to promptly confirm the men and women whom he chose to form a government.

It received 78 votes. What we did at that time was simply say: You still keep the cloture motion, and you still wait an intervening day if you need it, but we reduce the postcloture time—not for Supreme Court Justices, not for circuit judges—simply for sub-Cabinet members and for district judges. We would reduce sub-Cabinet members to 8 hours and district judges to 2 hours.

On Monday night, I invited my Democratic friends to work with me in 2019 the way I worked with them in 2013. In a bipartisan way, let's make sure the Senate can do what it has historically done—to have promptly considered and voted up or down, with 51 votes, the nominees of any President of the United States for the 1,200 positions that form the government.

There have been some conversations. I hope Senator BLUNT and Senator LANKFORD will continue to have those conversations with the Democratic Members, but there are nine Democratic Senators, by my count, who are seeking to be the next President of the United States. I hope they can look 20 months down the road and realize that