

his caucus members cover instead of embracing a plan. I can see why.

The Green New Deal didn't quite receive the celebration Democrats were expecting when it was announced. Its release was greeted with a combination of bewilderment, amusement, and confusion, which gave way to anger and disbelief the more Americans learned about it.

This is understandable. People don't tend to react positively when you threaten to upheave their lives by eliminating their jobs, outlawing their vehicles, and demanding they essentially build their homes to whatever standards Democrats in Washington decide.

If you ask most Americans if government control over almost every aspect of their lives is the direction they want to see the Nation take, the answer is an overwhelming no. Yet that is exactly what the Green New Deal seeks to do under the pretense of ending climate change.

The authors of the Green New Deal and its accompanying memo suggest their plan is the cure for all of society's ills. They cast themselves as saviors who will end global warming, income equality, and depression in one fell swoop. The Green New Deal will guarantee every American free healthcare, college tuition, and a job with a "family-sustaining" wage.

That last part isn't even required to receive the benefits promised by the Green New Deal. If an able-bodied person is unwilling to look for work, the government would provide "economic security" under the plan.

What supporters can't say is how they will implement this, what impact it will have on the average American, and where the trillions of dollars it will cost will come from. These details are important when you are asking for support of a plan that is estimated to cost up to \$93 trillion and dramatically expands the Federal Government's reach into the daily lives of every American.

Single moms, seniors, and those living on fixed incomes—the very people whom the Green New Deal supporters purport to help—will be the most negatively impacted by this proposal.

Getting the majority of our Nation's energy from renewable sources is certainly a worthy goal. However, you cannot brand a \$93 trillion, all-encompassing liberal wish list as an energy plan and expect it to be embraced with no questions asked.

Only a fraction of this plan deals with climate change, but its energy mandates are entirely unworkable. The Green New Deal dictates that the Nation will rely 100 percent on renewable power within a decade. Experts say it is impossible to accomplish this by 2050, much less within a constricted 10-year timeline.

The way forward to solve our environmental challenges should be driven by positive incentives, research, and development, not heavyhanded regulation.

The uncomfortable truth for the Green New Deal proponents is that the United States is already leading the charge on reducing carbon emissions. We can continue to build on that progress and encourage change within the international community without mandating a government takeover of nearly every sector of our economy.

As a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I have long advocated for an "all of the above" approach to energy security. This strategy includes wind, renewable biomass, hydroelectric and solar power, and it absolutely needs to include the expansion of nuclear power, which the Green New Deal mysteriously leaves out.

These are the right ways to responsibly address our energy needs. The Green New Deal—which makes undeliverable promises, proposes to dramatically drive up costs for every American, and eliminates thousands of jobs in the energy sector—is not the way to go. The Green New Deal will result in a staggering loss of jobs. It redistributes wealth on a scale our Nation has never seen before. It calls for a massive government takeover of our Nation's economy and culture. Worst of all, it hides all of this in a fanciful energy modernization scheme that can't be achieved in the manner it is written.

The Green New Deal is not a serious plan. The Senate should wholeheartedly reject it when it comes before us.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

MS. STABENOW. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I am here on the floor to ultimately speak regarding Mr. Readler's nomination, but I do want to respond to my colleagues. It is hard to know where we begin because so much is said that doesn't make any sense. It is made up. It is ridiculous.

What I wanted to address as my colleague was speaking was where it said in the Green New Deal that we couldn't have ice cream. I have looked everywhere. I like ice cream, and I was shocked that we weren't going to have ice cream. Sure enough, there is nowhere where it says that they are outlawing ice cream.

For people who like cheeseburgers and milkshakes, I don't see anything in there about that either.

As the lead Democrat in the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, who works with farmers every single day and appreciates the great work they are doing to stop carbon pollution, I would just have to say that it is pretty silly, if it weren't so serious, how the Republican majority and the Republican leader are mocking what is probably the most serious issue of our time.

There are many things that I care about and the people in Michigan care about, but if we don't get a handle on what is happening on this erratic and dangerous weather, it is going to affect

every part of our economy and every part of our way of life.

So if the majority leader or others want to say that we are declaring a war to outlaw air travel or the military or ice cream, that is absurd and would be funny if the whole subject weren't so serious.

By the way, in addition to that, the Republican majority leader said that we want to end air travel and cow farts. By the way, just for the record, cows don't fart; they belch.

The fact is that this mocking the serious, serious issue of our time, where we can't get the majority to join us on a simple resolution to say that climate change is real, that it is man-made, and that we need to act and that we have a responsibility to our children and our grandchildren to act. Let's start there.

I don't want to hear that somehow the world is coming to an end if there is a proposal that passes and not have something in its place that addresses what is actually happening in terms of the threats to all of us, our families, our States, and our economy.

This is real. This subject is real. It needs a real discussion. We can have differences. We will have differences on how to address it, and that is fine—but to mock the whole subject of what is happening right before our eyes. We have to make up new names now for weather events in Michigan. Not only do we have polar vortexes where the cold is rolling down because of the warming in the Arctic, but we have cyclone bombs or bomb cyclones—I am not sure which it is—but it is weather, wind events, that come at 60, 80 miles an hour into a community like a cyclone bomb. We are having to make up new terms for what is happening right in front of us.

So I would hope that when it comes to this discussion on what happens with the weather and climate change, that we would put aside the games, stop making stuff up, and have a serious discussion about how we can come together, create new jobs, move the economy, stop carbon pollution, and make sure our kids and grandkids actually have something to be proud of.

NOMINATION OF CHAD A. READLER

Mr. President, I now want to speak about the Readler nomination. I have often said that healthcare isn't political; it is personal. Being able to take your child to the doctor when they get sick is not political; it is personal. Being able to manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure with quality medical care and prescription medicine is not political; it is personal. Being able to count on your medical insurance to cover you if you get sick is not political; that is personal.

That is why, when the Trump administration nominates people for powerful positions who waged war on healthcare—you want to talk about somebody going to war. We have someone who waged war on healthcare who

we are about to vote on, on the Senate floor. I take that very personally, and the people of Michigan take it personally too.

I will be voting no on Chad Readler, President Trump's nominee for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. I want to take a moment to explain why.

The Sixth Circuit covers Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and my own State of Michigan. In this unending parade of terrible judicial nominees, Mr. Readler stands out. It is not just that he defended restrictive voting laws in Ohio or that he voiced support for giving minors the death penalty—young people the death penalty—or that he argued that State and local governments shouldn't be allowed to pass laws to protect our LGBTQ friends and neighbors from discrimination, no, Mr. Readler's appalling views, if implemented, would touch every single family in Michigan.

At the Department of Justice, Mr. Readler has led efforts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, including protections for people with preexisting conditions. In fact, he is the architect of the argument in *Texas v. United States*; that if the requirement that people have health insurance is found unconstitutional, then protecting people with preexisting conditions is also unconstitutional. Perhaps “architect” is the wrong word, given that architects build things, and Mr. Readler is solely devoted to tearing them down.

His argument is, of course, nonsense. It is also terrifying for Michigan families. Just imagine what Mr. Readler's goal could mean for the family of a child with diabetes, asthma, or cancer. Parents could find themselves with no insurance coverage for a child who needs chemotherapy to survive. Families could once again run up against lifetime limits that mean a child with complex medical issues could reach her lifetime limit by age 2 or 3. Parents could spend a lifetime worrying about a child who would never be able to qualify for health insurance as an adult.

Of course, moms and their daughters would be charged more if being a woman was once again treated as a pre-existing condition. All of these things routinely happened to Michigan families during the bad old days when insurance companies were in charge of our healthcare prior to the Affordable Care Act. Now Mr. Readler wants to bring those bad old days back.

However, that is not the end of Mr. Readler's noxious views. He is just as toxic when it comes to education.

In my State, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos made a name for herself undermining our public education system. Well, you can call Chad Readler the Betsy DeVos of Ohio. Mr. Readler, as chair of the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools, pushed school privatization and fought oversight over Ohio's troubled charter schools. He fought oversight of the troubled charter schools.

He fought to eliminate the part of Ohio's Constitution that guarantees Ohio students will receive “a thorough and efficient” education. In short, he would eliminate the right to public education in Ohio.

He proposed language that would exclude LGBTQ students from discrimination protections in Ohio schools, and while at the Department of Justice, he defended Betsy DeVos when she delayed implementation of rules aimed at helping students who are victims of illegal or deceptive tactics by colleges. They were victims of illegal or deceptive practices by colleges, and he supported stopping that relief.

Michigan families who have children with preexisting conditions deserve better than Chad Readler. Michigan students who have been targeted by unscrupulous colleges deserve better than Chad Readler. Michigan folks who have business before the U.S. court of appeals certainly deserve better than Chad Readler.

In my judgment, he has no business being a judge with a lifetime appointment, and I know a whole lot of Michigan families who agree. I am voting no, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

MR. LEAHY. Mr. President, as the longest serving Member of the Senate and also the former chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I feel compelled—and I normally don't come down and speak about these things—but I want to warn about the destruction of long-held norms and traditions that have protected the Senate's unique constitutional role with respect to lifetime judicial appointments.

This is an extraordinary responsibility on the part of the U.S. Senate. The Constitution quite properly allows any President to nominate whomever they want for a lifetime position on our Federal courts, but as our Founders said, the Senate has to give advice and consent because of the effect of this person's lifetime position. They go way beyond the term of the Senators who vote for them and the term of the President who nominates the person.

In fact, until recently, and certainly during the years I have served here, Members of this body knew well they had a say when it came to who serves in the Federal courts in their States. It didn't matter whether you had a Republican or Democratic President or a Republican or Democratic majority in the Senate; blue slips protected the prerogative of home State Senators and gave meaning to the constitutional requirement of advice and consent. It ensures fairness but, more importantly, I think it also ensured comity in the Senate. That now is fast becoming history, and I fear it is going to do lasting damage to the Senate.

What is happening is a disingenuous double standard. When I was chairman

of the Judiciary Committee at the beginning of the Obama administration, every single Senate Republican, including many serving today, signed a letter. They made the case for the importance of the blue-slip tradition. They said it was absolutely imperative that it be respected during the new administration, the Obama administration. The Republicans said: We must do this. Well, I didn't need any reminder because under my chairmanship during both the Bush Republican administration and the Obama Democratic administration, I respected the blue-slip tradition without exception, even when it was not politically expedient to do so. I respected Republicans and Democrats alike. Regardless of who was in the Oval Office, under my chairmanship, not a single judicial nominee received a hearing without first receiving both home State Senators' positive blue slips.

I defended the blue slips, and that was unpopular in my own party on occasion, but I believed in both their constitutional and institutional importance. I also believed in the prerogatives of home State Senators and the need to ensure that the White House works in good faith with those Senators. I believed then, and I still believe now, that certain principles matter more than party. Something that, unfortunately, some, probably because they are new here, don't understand.

All of us, whether Democratic or Republican, should care about good-faith consultation when it comes to nominees from our home States. The reasons are principled and pragmatic. We know our State better than anybody else. We know who is qualified to fill lifetime judicial seats. They are going to have a tremendous impact on our communities. We know the men and women who are qualified. Without blue slips, nothing prevents our State selection committees from being completely ignored by the White House. Nothing would even prevent a New York or California lawyer from being nominated to a Texas court or vice versa.

Yet the Senate is abandoning this protection. Senators of the Republican Party who promised they would uphold it, gave their word they would uphold it, asked me to uphold it, have suddenly broken their word. That bothers me.

Last week, for example, for the first time in the history of this body, a nominee was confirmed to a seat on the circuit court over the objections of both home State Senators. That is the first time in our history that has happened. That meant my friends on the other side of the aisle had to break their word from what they agreed to before.

This week, we are voting on two additional nominees, Chad Readler and Eric Murphy, who are opposed by another home State Senator, Mr. BROWN. Senator BROWN made extensive efforts to reach a compromise with the White

House on these two Sixth Circuit vacancies, but the White House was not interested.

The White House knew the Republicans would not keep to the position they expected Democrats to keep when we were in the majority, and because they knew they could rely on Members of their own party not to follow tradition for the first time, they didn't even try. The White House didn't even try to consult. Even superficial consultation is an afterthought.

Senator BROWN then attended the confirmation hearings. He spoke against these nominations. He cited, among other things, Mr. Readler's unprecedented actions attacking healthcare protections while serving in the Trump Justice Department.

Mr. Readler was willing to reverse Justice Department policy and sign a brief undermining protections for pre-existing conditions when career Justice Department officials—career officials who have been there in both Republican and Democratic administrations—refused. They refused to reverse their well-established Justice Department policy. He, however, was perfectly willing to throw it away in court. Is this somebody we expect to be fair on the court?

Senator BROWN cited Mr. Murphy's longstanding support and advocacy for restrictive voting laws in Ohio. He knows that his constituents will have to live with the ramifications if these nominees are confirmed. It will directly affect the State. He expressed his concerns about their records, and his voice, in this process as a U.S. Senator, was ignored.

These votes come on the heels of the Senate's confirming a 37-year-old nominee for the Fourth Circuit who has practiced law for less than 10 years—a grand total of 9 years. She now holds a lifetime judgeship on an appellate court, just one step below the Supreme Court. Her confirmation hearing made a mockery of the Senate's duty of advice and consent.

It marked the first time in the Judiciary Committee's history—the first time ever that a nomination hearing was held during the October recess over the objections of the other party. We found out why.

Only two Republican Senators attended the hearing, and the questioning lasted only 20 minutes for someone who demonstrated no abilities to serve on the Fourth Circuit. They knew it didn't make any difference whether she had the abilities or knew what she was doing. All they knew is that this White House had nominated her, so let's rubberstamp this.

Frankly, the Senate should never function as a mere rubberstamp for nominees seeking lifetime appointments to our Federal judiciary. We shouldn't do it whether there is a Republican or a Democrat in the White House. That is exactly what we are doing with a Republican President and a Republican majority. No matter

whether the person is qualified, if the name comes up, rubberstamp it.

When I chaired the Judiciary Committee, many Senators—Republican Senators—expressed both publicly and privately their appreciation for the fact that my respect for blue slips protected their rights and gave meaning to advice and consent. Many told me this is the way it must always be, whether Republicans or Democrats are in the majority.

Well, their about-face, now that they control the Senate, is unbecoming, and it basically says that the Senate will just bow down to the executive branch. We will give up our responsibility, we will give up our authority, and we will just be rubberstamps. We might as well not even bother to show up; just do whatever we are told. It is deeply disappointing.

I know the pressure because many of my Republican friends have told me to rubberstamp President Trump's nominees. I know my warnings will fall on many deaf ears, even for those who promised me they would not do this.

I have served in the Senate long enough to know that political winds tend to change direction. Inevitably, the majority becomes the minority, and the White House changes hands. I suspect that many of my Republican colleagues who care about this institution, as do I—and there are many—are going to live to regret many of these actions.

The further down this path the Senate goes, the harder it is going to be to unring this bell. A vote for Mr. Readler or Mr. Murphy is a vote to say that we abandon our abilities as home State Senators to serve as a check not just on this President but any future President, Republican or Democrat. Basically, we are saying that we don't believe in advice and consent. Basically, we are saying that we don't believe in the Senate being the conscience of the Nation. Basically, we are saying that we don't believe the Founders of this country knew what they were doing when they said the U.S. Senate—this body of 100 people—has to represent 325 million Americans and that we don't believe they should have any responsibility, have any say in lifetime appointments.

If we abandon longstanding traditions and chase partisan expediency, I remind everybody that provides only fleeting advantage. It inflicts lasting harm on this body. It is within our power to stop it right here and right now.

I urge all Senators to ensure that home State Senators are provided the same courtesies during the Trump administration that they received from both Republican and Democratic judiciary chairmen during the Obama administration. I believe we can do that. I ask my fellow Senators to oppose Mr. Readler's and Mr. Murphy's nominations because they were done so out of the way that they should be done. Let the U.S. Senate, all of us, Republicans

and Democrats, say that we are not a rubberstamp to any President. We don't take our orders from any President. We don't bow and scrape for any President. Let's act like Senators, not like a rubberstamp.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO FRANZ WUERFMANNSDOBLER

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to recognize a true public servant, an individual who has been by my side since my first year as a Senator, someone who will be dearly missed, not only in my office but by this institution as a whole as he moves on to his next chapter this week: my deputy chief of staff and senior policy advisor, Franz Wuerfmannsdobler.

Franz has had a great impact on this institution, on the staff members who served here over the last two decades, and on me. His sage advice, his patience, his incredibly calm demeanor, his willingness to mentor and guide others, his respect for this institution, and his knowledge borne out of 20 years of experience in the Senate have contributed in countless ways to the meaningful work we have been able to do here for the people of Delaware and our country.

Today, I want to recognize and thank Franz for his remarkable and his selfless career. I want to thank him for what he has done for me, for my office, for the people of Delaware, and pay tribute to the legacy he leaves.

It is a remarkable legacy. He has been on the frontlines of events and policy battles that have quite literally shaped the history of our country over the last two decades—from 9/11 to the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, from energy and appropriations efforts to sustained concerns and engagement around bipartisanship.

Franz's career in the Senate began in 1998 when he served as a legislative assistant for the late, great Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, who was himself a giant of this body. For 8 years, Franz handled issues from energy to environment, to climate change and natural resources. It was also in Senator Byrd's office that Franz cut his teeth on the complex appropriations process, learning from the master appropriator himself.

Franz's career then took him to the office of former Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, where he was a trusted senior energy policy advisor, and then on the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee before finally joining my own office in March of 2011.