

For anyone who needs a refresher on an idea that most thought had been consigned to the dustbin of history decades ago, the theory of court-packing is as follows: If the Supreme Court is not deciding cases to your liking, add more Justices to the Court until you start getting the decisions that you want.

Listen to Democrats question judicial nominees, and it soon becomes apparent that their biggest concern is not finding judges who will uphold the law and the Constitution, but judges who will uphold Democrats' political opinions and preferred policy outcomes. It is a disturbing trend. It is natural to want your party to prevail and to believe that your ideas are the best ones for the country. It is another thing entirely to start acting like your opinions are the only ones that should ever prevail, regardless of election outcomes or the wishes of the American people.

I am proud that we are putting judges on the bench who will rule according to the law and to the Constitution, not their personal opinions, their political beliefs, or the political party of the individuals before their court. I am proud that we are putting judges on the bench who will help ensure that the rule of law is maintained and that everyone in their courtroom receives the equal protection of the law.

I look forward to confirming more excellent judges in the near future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Montanans are growing restless, as Speaker PELOSI and the House Democrats continue to slow-walk a very important trade agreement for Montana and for our country. That is the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

In fact, just last week, I was in Billings to celebrate the Montana Farm Bureau Federation's 100 year anniversary—and, again, another big congratulations to the Montana Farm Bureau. As I was talking with folks at the farm bureau event, there were a lot of cowboy boots and hats. These are the farmers and ranchers of Montana, the salt of the earth folks. They are all asking the same question: Why is it taking so long? What is going on?

Frankly, there is one answer: Speaker NANCY PELOSI and House Democrats are playing political games and holding up this trade deal. They are holding this trade deal hostage. It has been a year since the USMCA was signed by President Trump and leaders of Canada and Mexico—a year. NANCY PELOSI has had this signed trade agreement in her hands for about a year, and rather than deliver this win for our farmers and ranchers in Montana and across the United States, she is focused on one thing: impeachment—because, at the end of the day, this is about our farmers and ranchers. It is time we get the job done because, in Montana, agri-

culture is the No. 1 driver of our economy, and it is a large part of our Montana way of life.

This trade agreement is expected to create over 180,000 new American jobs and to boost our GDP by over \$70 billion. Canada and Mexico both are in high demand for our products like wheat, barley, beef. In fact, in 2018 alone, Montana had \$731 million in total exports to Canada and to Mexico. For our producers and our ag-related industries in Montana, passing this trade agreement would help provide certainty and alleviate the challenges and obstacles they have faced over a very tough season.

Mexico is ready. Canada is ready. The United States is ready. I can tell you, Montana is ready. Unfortunately, NANCY PELOSI is not. While the Democrats continue to obsess over impeaching our President, they continue to ignore the voices of our rural communities. This unnecessary reality TV show is nothing but a waste of time to stall the important work like the USMCA. Montanans are sick and tired of the politics and the partisan games being played here in Washington, DC, and frankly, I am, too.

I am grateful for the leadership of my good friend and colleague, GREG GIANFORTE, who is standing up to House Democrats and fighting boldly for the USMCA. Realize, Montana has but one Member in the U.S. House of Representatives, and he is fighting a good fight over there.

We are both fighting to ensure that the votes of Montana farmers and ranchers are heard loud and clear in both Chambers of Congress. The longer the House Democrats stall on this deal, the further we stall opportunity and economic growth in Montana and across our Nation.

To Speaker PELOSI, to my colleagues in the House, enough is enough. Let's deliver the USMCA for the American people and for Montana farmers and ranchers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, first of all, let me say that I totally agree with my friend from Montana on the importance of, after a year of deliberation—or maybe “deliberation” is too strong a word—more than a year since all three countries agreed on an agreement, that we still have not gotten a chance to vote on this agreement on the Senate floor; we have to wait for the House to do that. I want to do everything that I can to encourage the House to move forward with this. I think better trade policy can turn a good economy into a great economy, and we need to be working on that great economy.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. President, I am here today to talk about another topic. I want to talk for a few minutes about the importance of November as National Adoption Month and to recognize the celebration of National Adoption Day,

which will take place on Saturday, November 23. I am pleased to work with my colleague and Senate cochair of the Congressional Coalition For Adoption, Senator KLOBUCHAR, again, to introduce this resolution supporting National Adoption Month and National Adoption Day. This is the 5th year Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have worked together on this legislation and the 5th year where I hope our colleagues will unanimously support it and do that this week.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption is the largest bipartisan, bicameral caucus in all of Congress, and there is a good reason for that. In the Senate Subcommittee, where agreement is really too often hard to find, the idea that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable home with a loving family is something that not only everybody should be able to agree with, but in the Congress, we have been able to agree with that in a broad-based sort of way.

Right now, there are more than 437,000 children in the foster care system in our country. More than 125,000 of those are children who are ready and waiting for families who want to get this adoption completed; yet the average length of time it takes a child from foster care to adoption, once the adoption decision has been made by the adopting family, is 19 months. I was in a meeting just last week with the administrator of this program in the administration who is doing everything I believe they can for the first time in a while to do what they can to reduce this wait.

I would also like to see the State Department, frankly, become for vigorous in encouraging foreign adoptions for those kids all over the world who are in need of families.

I don't disagree with the idea that if someone in Ethiopia wants to adopt an Ethiopian child or someone in Guatemala wants to adopt a Guatemalan child or someone in Russia wants to adopt a Russian child, that is all fine. But if they don't have adoptive families in the country they were born in, let's open the door in a more effective way for American families who want to be part of that.

There is some good news. For the fourth year in a row, the number of children who were adopted increased. Four years in a row, more kids were adopted than in the previous year. For the second year in a row, the number of children who entered foster families decreased. I don't want to say that in a way that takes anything away from people who are willing to be foster families, to give that security, that emotional embrace to kids who don't have that at home. Foster families serve a great purpose, but even foster families often become adoptive families, and they do this because they know that is a situation that becomes permanent. Knowing that you have a family forever makes a difference.

In my home State of Missouri, there are almost 13,000 kids in the foster system right now. I want to share a few of their stories.

Gabe, who is a 10th grader in Missouri, is a big fan of reading and big fan of watching movies. He hopes to join the military when he is older.

Natalie is 14. Natalie loves to read. She loves to draw. She loves to write. She loves to be outside. If she had a superpower, she says she would choose invisibility. This second grader really would like a permanent home. She wants to be a veterinarian someday. She is doing well in school. The thing she really needs is a home she can always go back to.

Ragan and Haylee are sisters who hope to have pets in their home. They don't have pets in their home right now. Ragan is a sixth grader who likes to laugh and draw and learn. Haylee is a fifth grader who likes to play soccer and spend time with her soccer teammates. Even sisters have different ways they look at the world. They would all like a family.

Last week, I had the privilege to meet with three families from Missouri who were here to be celebrated at the Angels in Adoption activity that occurred last week. This is something we do annually to recognize families who have gone above and beyond what you could expect in the adoption community. This was the first year there were Angels in Adoption being recognized from all 50 States and from Washington, DC. Of the three Missouri families I had a chance to spend some time with, one included Justin and Kristin Akin from Chesterfield. I actually first met Kristin when she came to my office to be an advocate for Be The Match. Be The Match is a Federally authorized and funded registry program that matches unrelated bone marrow donors with patients suffering from leukemia and from 70 other fatal blood cancers.

Kristin was here advocating for that because she and Justin had lost two sons, Andrew and Matthew, who were diagnosed with a rare disease and were unable to find matched donors. Kristin and Justin, after losing those two sons, adopted William and Christopher.

Kristin continues to be a volunteer to help other families trying to find that match. We are doing better with that program. In fact, we increased that program in our proposed budget for this year by \$5.4 million, as we increased the National Cord Blood Inventory Program also.

As important as that constant effort to do what they can so that other families didn't have happen to them what happened when they lost their two children was their decision to bring two more sons into their house and to do that by adopting.

I also had a chance to meet Zach and Joanna Holden. The Holdens began fostering in May of 2010. They were already parents of three young girls of their own, but they became foster par-

ents to make an impact on the lives of children, knowing it wouldn't be easy for their family but it would be an important thing to do for the kids they brought into their family. Through their 9 years as foster parents, the Holdens have had 30 different foster kids in their house and adopted 2 of those 30 kids through the foster care relationships they had.

In early 2012, they began a small ministry out of their garage called The Caring Closet, which later merged with Fostering Hope, another local foster care ministry. Joanna and that ministry—and the partnership now with Fostering Hope—gathered and sorted donations, put together packs of clothes, distributed them to local foster families wherever there was a need. Fostering Hope now supports children in foster care. They help foster families as they help foster kids, and they help foster care agencies across several communities in Southwest Missouri.

Jody and Mary Ann Allen-Parker also shared their incredible story with me. Nearly two decades ago, Mary Ann witnessed a tragic circumstance involving the friends of one of her sons. He explained a challenging situation he and his family were in, and he asked Mary Ann if he could move in with them. She took this child and, shortly after that, his two siblings under her care along with her own two children.

After going to court, Mary Ann was able to establish custody over those three kids as well. The oldest of them has joined the Marines and the other two are still at home with Mary Ann. She has given them the structure and focus they didn't have in their original home but they have through her, and they also have reconnected with their parents on a much different level than they ever had before.

There are lots of stories to be shared. There are lots of families who are waiting to adopt. There are lots of families who haven't thought about it yet who would be willing to adopt.

According to one survey, nearly one-quarter of the people in the United States who haven't adopted have considered being an adoptive parent. There are many concerns about adoption that aren't there once you get in, open that door, and look at what can happen when you create a forever family for somebody who needs one.

The same survey showed that over one-third of the participants believe that foster care adoption is expensive, and a majority of those considering foster care adoption indicated that receiving financial and emotional support would make a difference in deciding whether to adopt.

I will be sponsoring again this year the refundable tax credit for adoptive parents. About 50 percent of all the parents who adopt don't make enough money to pay income tax, which says a lot about them. It also says a lot about the fact that the system we have now—in which you get a tax credit, but you get a tax credit only if you pay taxes—

serves to encourage only about 50 percent of the families who are willing to stretch in unique ways and adopt kids.

Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have introduced the Supporting Adoptive Families Act to ensure adoptive families have access to pre- and post-adoption services, including mental and physical and behavioral health screenings and assistance. In February, we also introduced the Inter-country Adoption Advisory Committee Act to improve the inter-country adoption process.

Since National Adoption Day started in 2000, tens of thousands of children have been adopted. If only a few of them are adopted because this month and this day draw attention to that, that is certainly worth the effort we will make on the Senate floor this week to recognize this important month and to recognize next Saturday as National Adoption Day.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lagoa nomination?

Ms. HASSAN. 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 New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 80, nays 15, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 360 Ex.]

YEAS—80

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Baldwin	Gardner	Peters
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Reed
Blumenthal	Hassan	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Heinrich	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cardin	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Carper	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Casey	Jones	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Sinema
Coons	King	Smith
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Leahy	Tester
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	McSally	Udall
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Young
Feinstein	Paul	

NAYS—15

Bennet	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Markey	Schumer
Cantwell	Merkley	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Murray	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Rosen	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Harris	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pat Roberts, James M. Inhofe, Chuck Grassley, Richard C. Shelby, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Cory Gardner, James Lankford, Mike Braun, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, John Thune.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 361 Ex.]

YEAS—65

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

NAYS—30

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Cantwell
Bennet	Brown	Cardin

Casey	Kaine	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Smith
Duckworth	Markey	Stabenow
Durbin	Merkeley	Tester
Feinstein	Murray	Udall
Gillibrand	Peters	Van Hollen
Heinrich	Reed	Whitehouse
Hirono	Schatz	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Harris	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 65, the nays are 30.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, with respect to the Lagoa nomination, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, I can tell the Senate this morning that there is no higher priority for Senate Finance Democrats than the well-being of healthcare patients in this country and how strongly we feel about their having a right to good quality, affordable healthcare coverage.

Right now, too many of those folks are getting ripped off by an insurance lobbyist's dream—taxpayer-funded junk insurance—or by Big Pharma, which is always, always looking to engage in price gouging for one reason: They can get away with it. Take insulin. Insulin prices are up thirteenfold in recent years. The drug is not 13 times better. It is the same insulin that has been around for decades. But the reason the pharmaceutical companies do it is because they can get away with it.

This morning, I am going to take a few minutes and talk about what this really means for patients because I can tell you, this fall, there are a lot of families across this country who would rather be prepping for holidays than worrying about their healthcare. Unfortunately, the Trump administration is refusing to provide that kind of security for our patients.

To begin, let me tell you about a youngster in Oregon named Jasper. Jasper is 3, full of energy and love, and a big fan of playtime with cars and trucks and trains. He was born, however, with huge medical challenges—cystic fibrosis, cardiac and pancreatic problems, hearing loss. He needs a variety of treatments multiple times a day. It is so hard on Jasper's family. It is so

hard on Jasper. And, of course, the costs of Jasper's care are in the stratosphere. The family is fortunate to have health insurance through a parent's employer. They know how absolutely vital it is to have what they consider to be a lifeline—the protection of the Affordable Care Act.

At the heart of the Affordable Care Act are bedrock, ironclad protections for people like them—no discrimination by insurance companies against preexisting conditions. That was something we used to have some support for from the other side of the aisle. I know about that because I wrote a bipartisan bill that had airtight, loophole-free protection against what essentially was discrimination against those with preexisting conditions, and we got it into the Affordable Care Act.

Yet now we see the other side of the aisle trying to unravel those protections. They are trying to unravel the protection that we see for patients with respect to big expenses. Our approach has no annual or lifetime limits on coverage, no coverage denials that dragged people into bureaucratic nightmares, has young people covered on their parents' plan until age 26, and lots more. Those protections saved people's lives and made healthcare affordable for millions of Americans.

Unfortunately, with the support of my colleagues here on the other side in the Senate, the Trump administration wants to eliminate those protections that are so important to Jasper and families like his. My colleagues on the other side are standing by and basically doing nothing while the administration and Republican-led States are out there maneuvering in the courts to get the entire Affordable Care Act wiped out.

The so-called Texas case, which is an absurd lawsuit based on an absurd argument—an argument that wouldn't pass the smell test in a middle class school mock trial—somehow rightwing, ideological judges have kept it alive. Because this lawsuit keeps hanging around, tens of millions of Americans might lose their healthcare with hardly any warning and no fallback options to protect them.

Now Republicans have claimed they have fix-it bills they could pass in the event their allies took down the Affordable Care Act. They do read like they were written by the lawyers and the lobbyists on the payroll of the big insurance companies. If insurance companies can hike up the cost of treating a preexisting condition so high that it becomes unaffordable, it is no different from being denied coverage at the outset.

While the Texas case moves forward, the Trump administration is continuing to allow junk insurance scam artists to defraud Americans into buying worthless plans that aren't worth really the paper they are written on and certainly don't cover the healthcare Americans need.

I want to be very specific about it. This is an insurance lobbyist's dream.