

If we are going to give X number of dollars to the airlines, as we probably should, most of that money better end up in the pockets of the flight attendants, the pilots, the ticket agents, the mechanics, the baggage handlers, and all of the people who work for the airlines whom this body forgets about. Yeah, they serve us when we fly, and we don't even know their names. We probably know the CEOs' names, and we always help them, but we ought to be helping the workers.

Right now, we have a chance to stop this from spiraling out of control. We don't have another 2008 on our hands yet, but we have to act now. We don't go home for a week or two or three because Senator MCCONNELL has some whatever it is that would send us home. We need to act now. We need to make sure that we focus our efforts on preventing this virus from spreading and that we don't have one crisis—the healthcare crisis—stacked on top of an economic crisis, making the healthcare crisis worse.

We know that job is harder because of all the ways President Trump and Leader MCCONNELL have undone the many protections we put in place after the last crisis. They backed away from Wall Street reform safeguards. The President had a chance to get ahead of this virus and other public health threats, and he failed. He had a chance to get ahead of financial risks, and he failed.

Luckily, Senator MCCONNELL and the President haven't succeeded in getting rid of all of our Wall Street reform protections. They haven't succeeded in repealing the Affordable Care Act. Because of that, because of the work we did a decade ago with President Obama, we are in a better position now than we were in 2009. But we have to come together. We have to rise to this challenge. Corporate America needs to, too.

One way we can do that is to suspend these stock buybacks. Congress gave a huge tax cut to the wealthy in this country 2 years ago. Seventy percent of the benefits went to the wealthiest 1 percent.

I sat in the White House with the President and about 10 Senators. The President said: You know, everybody's pay is going to go up \$4,000, some as much as \$9,000. Those were the bookend numbers he used. He said that if we do this tax cut, it is going to trickle down and workers are going to get these raises.

Well, it didn't exactly happen that way. But do you know what did happen? After they got this tax cut, the executives started to do stock buybacks, taking money that should have been invested in workers, taking money that should have been invested in technology and upgrading their companies, but it went to executives—not exactly a shock to most of us. That is what happened.

Banks need to invest in their communities, not invest in their CEOs' stock

portfolio. Right now, JPMorgan is in the middle of an ongoing \$30 billion in stock buybacks. Wells Fargo is in the midst of a \$23 billion stock buyback, as if their executives, in all of their criminality and bad decisions, have earned it. That money would be better spent investing in small business, in medical research, and in relief for people who need help. The reason big banks are supposed to have that money is so that they keep lending and keep communities afloat when we have crises like this.

It is time for all of us to come together in the Senate, in the White House, in the communities across the country, and, yes, on Wall Street. That means we don't leave this building until we have done everything we need to do to get this epidemic under control, to get our communities the testing capacity and tools they need to manage this crisis, and to support the workers who are going to get hurt.

Leader MCCONNELL's responsibility—I don't care how he votes in the end—is to make the decision to put the House bill on the floor so we can vote on it, and President Trump, the day he gets it, needs to sign it.

Let's get help to the people we serve—not next week, not 2 weeks from now, not tomorrow; let's do it today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF JAMES P. DANLY

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I will be voting to confirm Mr. Danly's nomination to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. I am doing so because I believe he is well qualified for the job. He has been the Commission's general counsel for the past 2½ years. He understands the complex legal issues that come before the Commission.

I voted to report Mr. Danly's nomination, both last November and again last week, on the strength of his qualifications, not on politics. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The position to which Mr. Danly has been nominated is one of five seats on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. By law, no more than three of the five seats can be held by one party. Only three of the seats are now filled—two by Republicans and one by a Democrat. The other Democratic seat has been vacant since last August.

Traditionally, when both a Republican seat and a Democratic seat have been vacant, past Presidents have sent nominations to fill both at the same time. I am deeply disappointed that this has not happened this time. The politics involved in this town are outrageous. It is truly outrageous that even proper decorum, simple civility,

and just a little bit of procedure are not even considered anymore.

The White House has had a highly qualified candidate to fill the Democratic seat for over a year, who has been totally vetted and has gone through all the processes that we have, but the President and his staff have still not sent us her nomination. I think they are scared. I hear this because she is a very, very bright, very smart, very articulate, and very intelligent person. She knows the issues, and she is well respected in her field.

By breaking the longstanding practice of pairing nominations and not sending us a nomination for the Democratic seat, the administration undermines the bipartisan structure of the Commission. I made a commitment to Mr. Danly that I would support his nomination because he is well qualified, and I will honor that commitment and vote to confirm him. Two wrongs don't make a right here, but this has got to stop.

Both sides have to stand up and say: Mr. President, this is a tradition. This is what we do. This is customary of what has been done, and it gives us a five-member FERC, which is extremely important for energy in our country and the reliability that we depend on.

But as I told my colleagues on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, when we voted on Mr. Danly's nomination, I will not support another nominee unless we get both. This has to stop, and I am asking my colleagues on the Republican side to please help us with some kind of structure and some kind of procedure back into the operation. We need to start acting as a Senate and not be guided by the politics—the toxic politics—and this tribal mentality. I want the President to send us the nominations so we can have a fully functioning committee.

So with that, I ask all of my colleagues, please, let's vote for the qualifications of the person, not the politics of the person. Also, let's make sure we have a complete, working Commission and not just a partial Commission that is overweighted.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

Mr. MANCHIN. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), 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. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 72 Ex.]

#### YEAS—52

|           |            |            |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Alexander | Gardner    | Portman    |
| Barraso   | Graham     | Risch      |
| Blackburn | Grassley   | Roberts    |
| Blunt     | Hawley     | Romney     |
| Boozman   | Hoeben     | Rounds     |
| Braun     | Hyde-Smith | Rubio      |
| Burr      | Inhofe     | Sasse      |
| Capito    | Johnson    | Scott (SC) |
| Cassidy   | Jones      | Shelby     |
| Collins   | Kennedy    | Sinema     |
| Cornyn    | Lankford   | Sullivan   |
| Cotton    | Lee        | Thune      |
| Cramer    | Loeffler   | Tillis     |
| Crapo     | Manchin    | Toomey     |
| Daines    | McConnell  | Wicker     |
| Enzi      | McSally    | Young      |
| Ernst     | Murkowski  |            |
| Fischer   | Paul       |            |

#### NAYS—40

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

#### NOT VOTING—8

|           |         |            |
|-----------|---------|------------|
| Cantwell  | Moran   | Scott (FL) |
| Cruz      | Perdue  | Warren     |
| Klobuchar | Sanders |            |

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Dany nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week, Congress provided billions in funding to address the coronavirus outbreak. These funds will help support virus research, testing, and medical care. Congress is now looking at other

measures that may be required, including measures to address the economic impact of the virus. The House may consider an economic response measure today, but my understanding is that its bill does not yet reflect an agreement with the White House, which will be needed to move any stimulus package.

I want to echo the leader's comments from yesterday and say that this is not a time for partisanship, and it is very important that we work together on matters related to the coronavirus so that we can get needed legislation passed in a timely fashion.

More Americans are testing positive for the virus each day—including eight people in my home State of South Dakota—and it is our responsibility as Members of Congress to work together to ensure that our country has the resources it needs to combat and defeat this disease.

There is no doubt that things are stressful right now. Americans are understandably worried about their own health and the health of their loved ones. But we have a lot of dedicated people working to keep Americans safe, from nurses and doctors to public health officials. Everyone is focused on making sure we do what we need to do to limit the spread of this virus. And all of us, of course, can help in that effort by paying attention to the guidance we are given, whether it is advice about washing our hands or avoiding large gatherings or a request to stay home for a while.

It is a challenging time, but America has been through challenging times before and emerged from them stronger. I am confident that if we pull together, that is what will happen again.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this Women's History Month, we have the opportunity to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment of the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote.

We recognize the countless women who have put their own safety and comfort on the line in order to make this country more just, democratic, and inclusive. These include heroes like Margaret Brent, a daughter of Maryland who was the first to demand a vote for women in the colonial legislature, and Sojourner Truth, who advocated for a more diverse and intersectional women's suffrage movement. Thanks to their bravery and that of many other activists, our Nation wit-

nessed the largest expansion of suffrage in its history.

A century later, we ought to celebrate that monumental achievement. The ability to vote has empowered women to demand a government that represents them and their interests, and they have taken their power seriously. Women have voted in higher numbers than men in every national election for the last 55 years. In 2018, we saw the results that can happen when women raise their voices and fight for a more inclusive democracy as a record 117 women won elections to Congress across the United States.

We cannot overstate how dramatically the adoption of the 19th Amendment has changed our country for the better, but it is also incumbent upon us to take stock of the progress that still needs to be made.

Just a few years after women won the right to vote, a suffragette named Alice Paul introduced another critically important constitutional amendment, one that would go even further in guaranteeing the equal status of women. It was called the Equal Rights Amendment, or the ERA, which reads as follows: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." That is it. It is just 24 words. Yet those 24 words have the power to correct a 250-year silence in our Constitution when it comes to recognizing and protecting women's equality.

The ERA was ratified by the U.S. Congress in 1972, and with Virginia's ratification this past January, enough States have adopted the amendment to meet the threshold for it to be added to the Constitution. So what is the hold-up? Why isn't it a part of the Constitution yet? When Congress ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, it imposed a deadline for State legislatures to ratify. That deadline has passed.

There should never be a deadline on equality. The Constitution does not call for time limits for the ratification of amendments, and there is precedent for amendments being added to the Constitution as many as 200 years after having first been proposed.

Most importantly, just as Congress had the power to impose and extend the deadline by resolution, we have the power to remove it through the same means. That is why I have introduced a resolution with Senator MURKOWSKI to remove the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment. Representative JACKIE SPEIER introduced a companion resolution that has already been passed by the House of Representatives. We are closer than ever to making the Equal Rights Amendment a reality.

This measure has historically enjoyed bipartisan support. The vast majority of Americans—94 percent of them—is in favor of a constitutional equality amendment. Perhaps it is because they understand that this is an issue not of politics but of basic human