

Since January 2017, President Trump has nominated, and this Republican Senate has confirmed, 211 article III judges, including 53 circuit judges. That is the second most appellate confirmations of any President in American history at this point in their term.

This isn't a partisan victory. The President has sent us impressive, qualified men and women who understand the radical notion that the job of judge is to actually follow the law—follow the law. It is a victory for our Constitution itself, but, believe me, this progress has not come easy.

Throughout the last 4 years, our Senate Democratic colleagues have visited a historic degree of obstruction upon this President and his efforts to stand up the administration that the American people actually elected.

Senate Democrats have forced us to break more filibusters on nominations since 2017—now listen to this—than had occurred cumulatively in all of Senate history—all of Senate history—before President Trump was sworn in. I am going to say that again.

Senate Democrats have forced us to break more filibusters on nominations since 2017 than had occurred cumulatively in all of Senate history before President Trump was sworn in. They have attempted to filibuster more nominations in the last 3 years than the sum total of all prior Senates—from 1789 through 2016 added together.

What was once a rare roadblock for the most controversial people has now become a daily norm. Before 2017, before this Senate Democratic minority got to work, only 5 percent of all nominations to district courts and circuit courts had been subjected to filibusters. I will say it again.

Before 2017, before this Senate Democratic minority got to work, only 5 percent of all nominations to district courts and circuit courts had been subjected to filibusters. Under President Trump, the number has been 80 percent—80 percent. Our Democratic colleagues even obstruct nominees they don't even oppose. We have taken more than 100 cloture votes on district judges, even though district court nominees from any State with a Democratic Senator could not have even gotten out of committee without Democratic support.

So, to summarize, here is what we are doing this week. We are breaking Democratic filibusters on nominations because Democrats are filibustering coronavirus relief. And let us not forget the cherry on top. Because self-awareness apparently no longer exists, our Democratic colleagues have chosen this very moment to argue that they shouldn't have to play by any of these rules if they ever get power themselves.

President Obama calls the filibuster “a relic of Jim Crow,” even as Senate Democrats use it over and over and over again. Democrats filibustered police reform and filibustered pandemic relief for working families. Some years back, the Democratic leader told the newspaper: “I am the leader of the fili-

buster movement [and] I am proud of it.” That was the Democratic leader.

But now—now—they are saying that if they ever get power, they intend to tear up the rule book to force radicalism on our country. They want to break the rules to pass the kinds of radical, far-left policies that former Vice President Biden has rushed—rushed—to embrace, from abortion to socialism, to cracking down on the Second Amendment.

And that is not all. It is not just about bad policies. They want to go even deeper and hot-wire—hot-wire—our democracy itself. The far left is salivating over the prospect of killing the filibuster in order to pack the Supreme Court, pack the Senate with new States, and tilt the playing field permanently so they can never lose power again.

This is not some rightwing conspiracy theory. These are the signals they are sending publicly right now. This is what the left is saying out there. Maybe this hard-left hypocrisy plays well in a few big coastal cities. Maybe the angry crowds that are pulling down statues of our Founding Fathers want Senators who will pull down government institutions as well. Most Americans see things differently.

E-CIGARETTES

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now, on another matter entirely, a few days ago, the country got something that has been in too short supply in 2020: some really great news—specifically, great news on the subject of public health.

According to the 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey, administered by the FDA and the CDC, the number of American youth using e-cigarettes has dropped by 1.8 million since just last year—1.8 million in 1 year. That means, of course, that 1.8 million fewer young Americans are using e-cigarettes and vaping devices than 1 year ago.

This victory for young Americans' health is no accident. The experts say a number of factors are at play, but one major contributing factor unfolded right here in the Senate a little under a year ago.

Last December, the President signed the Tobacco-Free Youth Act into law. It was a bill I wrote and introduced to stem the tide of what was a rapidly growing health crisis among our Nation's young people. The bipartisan bill I wrote with my good friend TIM KAINE from Virginia and with the help of other colleagues, including Senator TODD YOUNG, raised the minimum age to purchase tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices, from 18 to 21.

This is based on clear-cut science. Public health experts tell us the harmful effects of nicotine are most potent on bodies and brains that are still developing. Nearly 9 out of 10 adult smokers started by the age of 18. So we knew it was time to take action.

I am proud to have led the legislation that took another leap forward in get-

ting nicotine addiction away from our Nation's youth, and by the looks of these data, it has not taken long for our legislation to begin to pay major dividends.

Nearly 2 million fewer teens in Kentucky, Virginia, Indiana, and across the country are having their future put in jeopardy by these products. That is a win, and it has happened largely because the Senate stepped up.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 4582

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4582) to extend, temporarily, daylight saving time, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Todd Wallace Robinson, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in only 48 days, the American people will

head to the polls to cast their ballots in an election that, by necessity, will be conducted in a much different fashion than in nearly any election in our Nation's history. Because of COVID-19, there will likely be a historic increase in mail-in ballots.

Mail-in voting is a process that is well established in our country. Several States have conducted elections this way for years without any issue at all. Because of COVID-19, there may also be some delays in determining the results of the election while every ballot is counted. This, too, has happened before, but there is no doubt that this election will be unique, and it means that leaders from both sides of the aisle should be joining together now to ensure the integrity of the election and the public's confidence in the result.

Sadly, there are some who are systematically undermining public confidence in the voting process and irresponsibly fanning suspicions and conspiracy theories about the legitimacy of election results. At the top of the list here is, unfortunately, once again, the President of the United States, who has exploited and capitalized on fears about holding an election in the middle of COVID-19 to attack mail-in voting and to advance comically false claims of widespread voter fraud. The President has done both of those. He has attacked mail-in voting and made these false claims of fraud.

We are talking about the integrity of our elections here. This is the wellspring of our democracy. It is fundamental for our country, something that American soldiers have fought and died for—and the President trifles with it, and, of course, our Senate Republican colleagues go along.

So, today, we are doing two things in this regard because we have a responsibility to do everything we can to see that this election does not mark the beginning of a new age when our election results are doubted, conspiracy theories flourish, and our grand democracy is tarnished around the world. If we allow this kind of malicious tampering with the wellspring of our democracy in terms of people's trust in it, it is the beginning of the end.

Donald Trump doesn't care. We know he only cares about himself. The Senate Republicans don't say a peep. We know they are afraid of Donald Trump. Even when they disagree with him, they remain quiet, and too often they agree with him.

We cannot allow our people to lose faith in elections, and we must do everything to ensure that they are conducted in a fair way that the American people will accept, despite COVID and all the problems it creates.

So, this morning, Senator SANDERS and I have written a letter to the Republican leader asking him to work with us to establish a special bipartisan committee with equal representation from both parties to guarantee the integrity of our election process.

The committee should focus on three issues: one, confirm the security of and

confidence in our mail-in systems, our vote-by-mail systems; two, measures to ensure that every vote is counted; and three, discuss and prepare for possible postelection scenarios.

The function of the committee would be to hold hearings about what is being done around the country to make certain that our public institutions are prepared to conduct a smooth and reliable election, free from voter suppression and intimidation, that every vote will be counted and there will be confidence in the outcome.

Senator SANDERS and I and many in our caucus—including Senator KLOBUCHAR, whom I will mention in a minute—feel very, very strongly that we have to do something, and this bipartisan committee can ensure the American people that the Senate is on top of this.

We hope the Republican leader will accept our request. We hope he will not run away from his responsibility to ensure there are fair elections. We hope that he will not go along with Donald Trump's dangerous rhetoric about the fairness of our elections.

Later today, the Senator from Minnesota and ranking member of the Rules Committee, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and I will be speaking with a bipartisan group of secretaries of state. We will be getting a briefing on the state of our election preparedness around the country. I expect they will reiterate their call for another major priority being blocked by Senate Republicans: election assistance funding.

I am hopeful we can still find agreement on a bipartisan basis to help our States with critical funding to prepare for this historic election. This issue is above partisan politics. It is the essence of our democracy. It is disgraceful that Republicans are playing games with this—perhaps for electoral advantage, perhaps for fear of President Trump—but we will not let it happen.

We, as a caucus, repeat to the American people: The best way to prevent an election from being manipulated or stolen is to vote. The more people who vote and the earlier they vote, when they can vote early, the better off our democracy will be.

RUSSIA

Madam President, now, on Russian disinformation, another matter, the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs continues to further his probe into the family of the former Vice President and plans to release a report next week that appears designed to influence the upcoming Presidential election.

While the rest of the country has been focused on fighting the global pandemic, for the last few months, the chairman and Republicans of the committee have wasted taxpayer resources to run a hit job on President Trump's political rival. Even worse, it seems that several lines of investigation have echoed materials pushed by the Kremlin.

In fact, some of the allegations that the Homeland Security chairman pursues are the same ones propagated by Andriy Derkach, a known Russian agent who was recently sanctioned by President Trump's own Department of the Treasury for interfering in our election. So here President Trump's Department of the Treasury sanctions Derkach, and the chairman of the committee repeats the same kind of discredited allegations that Derkach propagates. It is outrageous. It is a disgrace.

The hearings and subpoenas that have come out of the Homeland Security Committee are also a disgrace by any standard. The more we learn about Russian agents like Mr. Derkach, the more it looks like the Kremlin is trying to launder anti-American information through the U.S. Senate, and because Moscow prefers to support Donald Trump, as it did in the last election, it seems that some of this disinformation finds a sympathetic audience among Republican Senators.

So today, alongside Senators WYDEN, PETERS, REED, and FEINSTEIN, I will be introducing a resolution calling for a cessation of any Senate investigation or activity that allows Congress to act as a conduit for Russian information. There should not be a single aspect of this Chamber that, wittingly or unwittingly, furthers the propaganda machine of Vladimir Putin's intelligence services.

I will have more to say on this matter later, but for one of the most important committees to be echoing a Kremlin-backed conspiracy theory is beyond the pale. As we are about to hold a national election, it must stop immediately.

VENEZUELA

Madam President, finally, later today my friends Senators DURBIN, MENENDEZ, and VAN HOLLEN will come to the floor to try again to secure temporary protected status for Venezuelans seeking refuge here in the United States. There are roughly 200,000 eligible Venezuelans in the United States who are now at risk of being sent back to a failed and dangerous nation, rife with political repression and human suffering—a nation that, under Maduro's regime, constitutes the single biggest humanitarian crisis in our hemisphere today.

Despite having all the authority that he needs to solve this problem on his own, President Trump will not grant temporary protected status, and his enablers in the Senate have repeatedly blocked passage of House legislation that would provide it. So we are going to try once again to get this passed.

Democrats stand with the people of Venezuela. Later today, my Republican colleagues will need to decide if they want to restore the moral leadership of the United States and support the protection of Venezuelans fleeing violence and despair or leave them all in limbo, facing deportation to a humanitarian disaster.