

1759, BRIDGE for Workers Act, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I guess I am not surprised about that, considering I hear my colleagues talk about how outrageous it is that we were spending \$600 a week to help unemployed workers, and this bipartisan bill that passed the House would help workers to get retrained and get jobs, and they are not willing to do that either, but we also know that this is a bill that—we have seen this act before.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3659

Mr. President, in order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3659, Danny's Law, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4029

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4029, Tribal Access to Homeless Assistance Act, I ask that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5084

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 5084, Improving Corporate Governance Through Diversity Act, legislation to require corporations to disclose—just disclose the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of their boards, which again passed the House with bipartisan support, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I will hold the floor for just another few moments.

I have watched Senator MCCONNELL—and I am sorry to call some of my colleagues spineless, Senator JOHNSON, but, you know, when the President made comments about our soldiers who had died in battle, I didn't hear hardly any Republicans speak up. I admire the courage of the Presiding Officer. I admire Senator MURKOWSKI and her courage over a number of things. But I see my colleagues—I hear what you all think. I know what Senator SASSE said during that townhall. I know many of

you, if not most of you, maybe all of you—probably not—think that about the President's lack of integrity and lack of character and dishonesty and the lies he tells. And I know, I have watched, and I sat right here and I looked across the aisle during impeachment and I saw the look of fear in my colleagues' eyes because they didn't want to cross the President; they didn't want to get the President to tweet about them or even get a primary opponent to them. That is why I use that term, but more importantly to the citizens of this country, we spent most of the last month after month after month after month, confirming very conservative, very young judges. I understand why you want to do that, but we are not doing anything for the public.

We had a high moment in March when Senator JOHNSON said we unanimously approved the CARES Act. A study shows the CARES Act kept 12 million Americans out of poverty. But then we ask to continue the CARES Act and do something similar like the Heroes Act, and instead Senator MCCONNELL—and I know the lobbyists that line up in front of his door, I know they have a lot of influence on him, but we saw Senator MCCONNELL say: no urgency, no urgency.

My favorite Abraham Lincoln quote is Lincoln wanted to—his staff wanted him to stay in the White House and win the war and abolish slavery and protect the Union, and they wanted him to stay in the White House. And he said: No, I have to go out and get my public opinion baths. Are none of my colleagues hearing the pain of laid-off workers who have lost their unemployment?

Haven't they seen schoolchildren—their parents saying: "I want to send my kids back to school, but they are not safe" because we aren't voting dollars to help?

I talked to my daughter last night. Just a few days ago, they announced that instead of school opening in person in Columbus next week, it is going to open in January, if even then, because we are not helping schools open.

We are not helping people avoid eviction. We are not helping local governments keep police and firemen on the streets and people who work in the parks and people who provide help for abused children and all the things that local governments do—we are doing none of that, but we have plenty of time to do judges. That is the frustration and why I made the comments I made.

It just breaks my heart that we all sit here. This is a group of pretty affluent and pretty privileged people. Yet we can't look out for people who are hurting like this country hasn't hurt for decades.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, this deserves a response.

The pandemic is an act of God. Maybe—maybe—and we don't know. We don't know what complicity China had in—the chance that it was developed in a lab in this. We just don't know. But we certainly know that China controlled the spread in China while they allowed their citizens to go all over the world and spread the pandemic. It is an act of God. It is certainly nobody's fault in the United States.

As chairman of Homeland Security, we have had before our committee the men and women in charge of these agencies who are trying to respond to an incredibly difficult situation.

I never criticized President Obama or Vice President Biden during H1N1. It was a contagious disease, and 60 million Americans were infected by it. I am not sure there is anything you really can do to prevent infections.

Now, I think we have actually been pretty successful in flattening the curve, people taking responsibility, becoming germophobes. We shut down our economy. Now, I never thought we should shut it down to the extent that we have because I have always tried to keep things in perspective, the human toll of the economic devastation of those shutdowns. But again, I find it galling when I know people like Pete Gaynor, General Giroir—the men and women—Dr. Birx, Dr. Hahn, the men and women in this administration who have been working 24/7 to respond as effectively as they can to an act of God, a pandemic.

Now, I have been on the conference calls. This administration has been as transparent as any I have seen. To accuse this administration of hiding the truth—I don't know where you were during the early months of this, but I was watching the hour- and 2-hour-long press conferences where the truth was being laid out in all its gory detail. Any American who watched that that wasn't concerned about COVID, I don't know what they were looking at. There was no hiding the ball here. President Trump and his administration made it very obvious what was at stake.

I am also aware of the fact that because of this act of God, because of this pandemic, there was an enormous demand for products that should have been in the national stockpile but wasn't there because the previous administration had run the stockpile down, and then we, all of us collectively, took our eye off the ball and didn't restore it. So the product just wasn't there. But I do know, in a very difficult situation, when demand outstrips supply by two or three times, the men and women in this administration, again, working tirelessly, allocated that PPE.

I am not aware that anybody ran out. Now, I know that everybody didn't get everything they wanted because some tough decisions had to be made. We had to surge PPE product to those hotspots, and where the pandemic wasn't raging, people didn't get everything they needed.

I am not aware of anybody who wanted to get placed on a ventilator who didn't get one because they used the war production act. We did extraordinary things in terms of ramping up production. Now we are supplying ventilators to the world.

You can overlook all these things, and you can say the administration wasn't honest with the American public, but I think the actual facts refute those charges.

Maybe in other people's world there is perfection, and in this pandemic you can stop it in its tracks. You can prevent further infections. But that didn't happen with H1N1, even though they tried. Sixty-million Americans got it. Fortunately, it was not as deadly as the coronavirus and COVID-19.

Again, among many things that are galling, the false allegations—to me, to politicize a pandemic, to politicize a virus that is killing Americans, to denigrate the efforts of the men and women in these agencies who have worked 24/7 is just simply wrong. This is not something that should divide us; that we should politicize. It is something that should unite us as prior crises in this country have. So, again, there are so many more other things I can say, but I see the Senator from Alaska is here, and I don't want to take any more time on the floor.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BROWN. One last comment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I just don't really understand what I just heard, when the President went straight to the American people and told them it was going to disappear. He said it was a Democratic, liberal hoax to bring down his campaign.

But look at a little history. I wear on my lapel a picture of a canary in a birdcage. It was given to me at a workers' Memorial Day rally, a rally to honor workers who had been injured or killed on the job.

This canary in the birdcage—you know, the mine workers used to take it down in the mines 120 years ago. If the canary died, the mine worker got out of the mine. He knew that he didn't have a union that was very strong or a government that cared very much. He was on his own. So I always cared a lot about public health. That is really the best prevention for the canary in the mine.

I wrote a letter to President Trump in 2018, after he had closed the Office of Global Health Security in the White House and essentially fired or transferred Dr. Ziemer, a Bush appointee who was one of the world's great malaria doctors. His job—he had 40 people on his staff. His job was to surveil the world and look at potential disease outbreaks that might turn into an epidemic which then might evolve into a pandemic. That was his job. The President eliminated the office. And I wrote a letter to the President asking him to reinstate it, and he didn't even answer the letter.

Then, the following year, 2019, he brought Dr. Linda Quick home from China. And her job was to make sure, if anything was happening in China, that we would know about it and could help them prevent the disease. Our CDC—our Centers for Disease Control, we are the best in the world. It was the United States of America leading the charge to eliminate smallpox. It was the United States of America that led the job to all but eliminate polio in this country. Some of us here are old enough—the Presiding Officer, anyway, will remember knowing people who had minor cases growing up in our schools. So we know what that meant. It was the President of the United States who pulled CDC employees out of China because of a trade or some—depending on when the President loved Xi or disliked Xi—I mean, it was back and forth with the Chinese leader, and we just unilaterally disarmed. Then the President denied that the virus meant anything.

I know he took care of ventilators, but other kinds of protective equipment, just talk to nurses and doctors and healthcare workers in our States—in Madison, in Cleveland, in Columbus, in Milwaukee, in Kenosha and Fairbanks and Salt Lake City.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NOMINATION OF AMY CONEY BARRETT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I want to start with a personal thank-you to the Presiding Officer for indulging me for an additional few moments here so I may speak this afternoon on the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to be an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

And while I intend to share with you my intention on how I will vote, I would like to start by expressing my disappointment with where we are in the Senate as a whole right now. There has been some good discussion here this morning as we are considering these unanimous consent agreements—statements being made but not action moving forward.

I had hoped that if we were going to be at this moment in time, just over a week out from our national elections, that we would be here on the floor debating the merits of a COVID relief bill. In my home State of Alaska, as in so many States around the country, we are seeing unprecedented numbers now. The news, just yesterday, Friday, was that the United States reported the highest single-day recorded positive cases—83,757—really staggering.

In Alaska, we have seen this virus spread to some of our small outlying villages, villages that are not accessible by road and villages that have limited medical facilities. We are really quite concerned about what this means for many of the Native people in these areas.

We are not able to stay on top of the contact tracing like we were some months ago because of our increasing numbers. The pressure on hospital ca-

pacity is also a growing concern. And, economically, Alaska has been hit extraordinarily hard. As most know, we have a pretty substantial tourist season, but this year, we had little to no season for us. Many small businesses have closed permanently, but many, many more are going into the winter wondering how they are going to make it through the winter and scrambling to find ways to piece it together.

Unemployment, loss of housing—in every conversation that I have with Alaskans, they are asking if and when we are going to see another round of COVID relief, and I regret that we have no deal to offer them today. Instead, we are here on a weekend, 10 days before the elections, to advance a U.S. Supreme Court nominee.

Now, I was here on the floor yesterday. I had an opportunity to listen to the majority leader as he outlined the escalation of confirmation battles over the past 30-plus years, and I think it was an important lesson in our Senate history. I am not confused about how we wound up here, but I certainly am frustrated by it. It is with a heavy heart that I just regret that we are in this place.

I think there was a worthy attempt during the 109th Congress, by the Gang of 14, to reduce tensions. There was, I think, a very genuine, good-faith effort there to try to dial things back. But, sadly, their bipartisan action was not rewarded by the voters, and perhaps that served as a warning to other Members of this body rather than an aspiration.

We heard the history lesson, and I am one who has long recognized that pointing fingers doesn't ever actually solve a problem. I personally believe that every nominee for the Supreme Court should receive an up-or-down vote after they have passed out of committee. My record has been pretty clear, pretty consistent, and some might even suggest boring in its consistency, but I made a very strong commitment after I returned to the Senate at the end of 2010 and said: I do not believe that filibustering our judges was what we should be doing.

So I might not have liked the judges that were before us, but I did not participate in a filibuster of a judge. I had an opportunity to vote up or down, and I thought that was the reasonable way to proceed. I believe that it is fair to the individual and it is fair to the institution.

But I also recognize that the timing of this confirmation that we have before us will serve to reinforce the public perception about political influence on the Court, and I would hope that we all recognize that public confidence in our courts must be an imperative. We have to believe that justice is going to be equal for all of us.

Now, I know that my colleagues are not surprised to hear me discuss my concern about the politicization of the Court. I made a similar point during the impeachment trial, when some