

right now that have been passed by the House of Representatives, by bipartisan majorities, that would actually address the needs and challenges of the American people during this extraordinary time in our history.

They are before us right now. There is no need to write them anew. There is no need to invent the words or the purposes for these acts.

In order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 1112, the Enhanced Background Checks Act—bipartisan legislation to close the Charleston loophole, extending the initial background check review period from 3 to 10 days, and eliminating that loophole for gun purchases which enabled the Charleston shooter to get his weapon and murder people in the basement of a church and others around the country to endanger and kill innocent Americans, embodying the principle of “no check, no sale,” that must be the rule—I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Reserving the right to object.

The Senate is currently considering the qualifications of an excellent nominee to be on the Supreme Court of the United States. That is why we are here. It is very important work. This request is nothing more than another form of procedural harassment by the minority to try and stop our process of considering Amy Coney Barrett for the Supreme Court of the United States. It is certainly unfair to her. It is unbecoming of this Chamber.

If this bill was so important to the Democrats in the Senate, they wouldn't have voted four times to adjourn until after the election. So, clearly, this is just a stunt.

By the way, if that wasn't reason enough, the bill that the Senator is suggesting we get into would put onerous burdens on law-abiding Americans who just want to protect themselves at a time when Democratic mayors and Governors are overseeing all kinds of damage to life and health and property unchecked. In fact, calling off the law enforcement of their communities to protect our citizens, they now want to take away the rights of those citizens to be able to purchase arms or at least make it much more difficult.

For these reasons and several others, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, what my colleague calls procedural harassment, it is actually democracy. It is legislation. It was passed by the House. It is bipartisan. The majority was bipartisan. It will save lives. I fail to understand why my Republican colleagues will not allow this loophole—it is a fatal and defective loophole in our current laws—to be repaired.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 7

Madam President, let me move to another measure. In order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 7, Paycheck Fairness Act—again, bipartisan legislation that would empower women to challenge pay discrimination in the workplace, passing the House by a bipartisan majority and giving women the power to hold employers accountable for discriminatory practices, making a tremendous difference in their lives—I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session on the Paycheck Fairness Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

This is yet one more obstructionist move to prevent us from taking up Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court of the United States, a highly-qualified nominee who deserves her time in the Chamber. She deserves her time in debate and not these other external matters that, by the way, if they were important to the Senate minority, they would not have voted four times this week to adjourn until after the election.

For that reason and several others, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, the so-called external matters go to the heart of fairness in the workplace, equal pay for equal work, discriminatory practices, other kinds of injustices that have existed for years—women ought to have the right to challenge them and hold their employers accountable. What could be more fundamental and important?

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1423

Madam President, let me move now to H.R. 1423, in order to proceed to consideration of the Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal Act, also known as the FAIR Act, which passed the House on September 20, 2019—again, a bipartisan measure, which would increase Americans' rights to seek justice and accountability through the court system.

We are in the midst of considering a nominee who has expressed a hostility to seeking justice in the workplace and in jobs and in other areas. So this measure to eliminate forced arbitration clauses in employment and consumer and civil rights cases is especially relevant. It would allow consumers and workers to agree to arbitration after a dispute occurs, but it would not force them to do so.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

I will not allow the Senate to be diverted from the issue at hand, and that is the consideration and of Amy Coney

Barrett to be an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. She is a highly-qualified nominee and deserves this debate.

For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4443

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, in order to proceed to the consideration of the Lori Jackson Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act—because millions of women are still at risk as a consequence of this loophole in our present laws that enables dangerous, estranged spouses or partners to have access to weapons during the most perilous time in a domestic dispute right after separation, because that loophole endangers innocent women because it provides access to weapons to those dangerous people—I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

Again, if the minority was serious about passing legislation, they would not have voted four times to adjourn until after the election, so it is a little hard to take this seriously, but it is especially difficult on this one because Federal law already prohibits violent felons from owning and purchasing firearms.

Again, should I remind the Senate and the country that Democratic mayors and Governors all over this country have failed to protect their citizens. The last thing we would want to do at a time like this when citizens are left to defend themselves against violent crime is to prohibit law-abiding Americans or make it more difficult for law-abiding Americans to own firearms. For those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, just to remind my colleague, this measure doesn't pertain only to dangerous felons. It protects innocent women against dangerous people. There is already the provision for protective orders to provide that kind of safeguard after a period of time. This measure would close a loophole for the first period when, in fact, women and others are at greatest risk.

It is a public safety measure that is particularly relevant because of the hostility expressed by this nominee to commonsense steps in the name of a very extreme view under the Second Amendment.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 840

Madam President, I would like to ask that we proceed to consideration of H.R. 840, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act—what could be less controversial, a bill that provides childcare assistance to veterans receiving covered healthcare services in a VA facility?

The bill highlights the troubling fact that lack of childcare can dissuade parents from receiving essential healthcare services. It would make permanent a VA childcare pilot program—make it permanent.

It was first introduced in 2011, and it expands access to childcare assistance nationwide, allowing veterans to receive medical treatment with confidence that their children are receiving high-quality care—our veterans.

Whatever motions have been made in the past, this measure certainly needs to be considered. It was passed by a majority in the House on February 8 of 2019, more than a year ago, a bipartisan majority in the House—no action here.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

Can we just be a little more honest? This is not about childcare. What is going on here is not about childcare, for veterans, or for anybody else. This is another attempt to prevent us from talking about the outstanding qualifications of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to be on the Supreme Court of the United States.

I will stand here all day and object if that is what it takes for my other colleagues to get to the floor and talk about the merits of this outstanding judge. With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 2722

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, as more important as that health for veterans is, equally so is assistance for our election system. We are going through an election right now. Even as we consider this nominee, tens of millions of Americans are voting. The threat to our election security is well-known. We face not only foreign interference but also domestic threats, as has been documented.

I have been through those absolutely chilling briefings in a classified setting; we are sworn to secrecy. But the malign foreign interference makes 2016, in my impression, look like child's play from Russia, Iran, the Chinese.

In order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2722, Securing American Federal Elections Act, a bill that would, in fact, make critical investments to upgrade our voting systems to protect against foreign interference in our elections and democracy by requiring all voting systems to produce a verifiable paper ballot and by authorizing funding for States to bolster election security—what could be more urgent and important at this moment in our history?

It was passed by the House of Representatives on June 27, 2019—again, more than a year ago. No action here.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The only interference going on here is by Senate Democrats trying to interfere in our discussion about an outstanding nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Amy Coney Barrett. For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4894

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, in order to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4894, Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act of 2020, a bill that requires Federal agencies to make budget justification materials available to the public—it is a transparency measure. It requires disclosure, and it requires the Office of Management and Budget to make certain details regarding the materials available to the public, including a list of agencies that submit budget justification.

It also forces disclosure of the dates that materials are submitted to Congress and posted online and links to the materials—a basic disclosure measure. It was passed, again, overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives on September 14 of this year, without any action so far in this body.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

It is really time to move on and hear from other colleagues about the incredible, outstanding qualifications of President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Amy Coney Barrett. These distractions cannot prevent us from doing that.

On this bill in particular, I think people should know that most of the documents that they are talking about are—in fact, almost all of them are on-line today.

For that reason and others, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. That measure was a basic disclosure step proposed to address secrecy in government. Nothing is more fundamental than transparency in a democracy. Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

The people of the United States deserve that information, and so, too, they deserve all of the information about Amy Coney Barrett. Even on the morning of her approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee, new documents were disclosed, new statements and speeches by her, adding to the ones that hadn't been disclosed properly previously.

This process is a sham. It is rushed. It is not normal. As I said during our hearings, my great fear is not only the damage and the harm that this nominee can do, but the damage and harm to the Court itself.

The President said the quiet part out loud. He wants this nominee rushed to the bench so she can decide the election, not the voters—so she can sit on the Supreme Court when the election goes to the courts.

Well, my Republican colleagues have the majority. They may have the votes, but they don't have the American people, and they don't have history on their side. Might does not make right. They can do it because they have the votes. They are doing it because they can.

Amy Coney Barrett could stonewall our questions because she could establish a new standard—call it the “Barrett rule”—of not answering. But the damage to the Court will be great.

The Court has power because of its legitimacy. The trust and confidence of the American people are in its independence. Our Republican colleagues are whittling away and eventually devastating not only the authority of the Supreme Court, but all of our Federal courts, by politicizing and polarizing it.

She would not even commit that she would recuse herself in the event an election case went to the Supreme Court. I have tremendous respect—even reverence—for the Court, having served there as a law clerk with Justice Harry Blackmun, having argued four cases before the Court, including three with Justice Ginsburg.

This imperils the legitimacy of the U.S. Supreme Court, is a grave, lasting, potentially devastating disservice to the American people. It is a dagger at the heart of the Court and of our democracy. Therefore, I will continue to oppose this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4797

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, General Secretary Xi is a dictator and human rights violator. He is yet another Communist leader trying to be the dominant world power.

The Chinese Communist Party is stripping the people of Hong Kong of their freedoms, cracking down on dissidents, militarizing the South China Sea, supporting Maduro's genocide in Venezuela, surveilling its citizens, and imprisoning more than 1 million Uighurs in internment camps simply because of their religion.

Communist China is committing genocide against the Uighurs. It doesn't end there. Recent reports indicate that the Communist Party of China is attempting the same thing in Tibet, forcing hundreds of thousands of people in Tibet into mass labor camps. We know the Chinese Communist Party and their puppets continue to silence and intimidate those standing up