

It shouldn't have taken this long to confirm someone as obviously qualified as Shalanda Young. She has been leading the OMB for nearly a year. She knows the budget and appropriations processes like the back of her hand. She has proven capable of working with Republicans and Democrats alike, and it was through her guidance that the administration notched some of its biggest victories, including the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law.

Shalanda Young is one of the most effective Cabinet leaders to have the label of "Acting" in a very long time, but it is long past time for that word to drop from her job title. I look forward to the Senate officially confirming Ms. Young as OMB Director later today.

CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Mr. President, now on the omni, later this afternoon, I will join with a number of my Senate colleagues in attending a signing ceremony at the White House for the 2022 omnibus funding bill, one of many significant and bipartisan accomplishments of the Senate in recent weeks.

In a 50-50 Senate, it is no small feat for this Chamber to pass the boldest and most significant funding package that Congress has seen in a long, long time. Under this new package, students, parents, working families, small businesses, and veterans will see costs go down and greater investments go their way. Our troops are going to get a much needed raise. Student loan borrowers will see their maximum Pell grant awards increase by the largest amount in over a decade, impacting 7 million students, not to mention their families.

We are giving parents more help for affording childcare and seniors more help to receive care at home.

For the first time in years, the Violence Against Women Act, one of the most important pieces of legislation in the last 30 years, will finally be renewed, offering lifesaving resources for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

And, of course, we are keeping our promise to Ukraine by providing nearly \$14 billion in humanitarian and military aid. This means food and shelter for the millions trapped in war, relief for the now-3 million refugees fleeing the country, and funding to transfer Javelins, Stingers, and other anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons to the Ukrainian fighting forces.

The Ukrainian people are not alone in their struggle against Vladimir Putin's savage war. I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who accelerated the passage of this emergency funding, and I again commend President Biden for his handling of the crisis to date. As I said weeks ago, the President deserves immense credit for keeping the allies together against Putin, imposing crippling sanctions on Russia, and responding to a turbulent conflict with clarity and with strength.

Some were pushing the President to do too much too soon, risking an esca-

lation of the crisis and risking that our allies would not join us, but so far, the President's approach has been right on target. Thanks to the President's approach, Putin is now one of the most reviled and isolated leaders that the world has seen in a very long time.

For this reason alone, signing the omnibus into law is a major accomplishment, and I thank the President, Senators LEAHY and DURBIN, and all our appropriators and Members on both sides of the aisle for getting it done.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. President, now on SCOTUS, what do retired conservative judges, a group of 80 current and retired State attorneys general, the U.S. Black Chambers, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police all share in common? You might ask yourself that question. Well, they are just a few—just a few—of the many, many groups and individuals who have endorsed Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson for the Supreme Court.

When I met with Judge Jackson a few weeks ago, it was immediately clear why so many different groups have sung her praises. On top of her brilliance, on top of her experience, she is unusually gifted at seeing and appreciating both sides of an argument. It is little surprise, then, that in the course of rendering nearly 550 decisions as a Federal district judge, she was rarely reversed by higher courts. In fact, she has been reversed perhaps around a dozen times out of 550 decisions. That is about 2 percent—2 percent—of the time.

This week, Members from both sides of the aisle will continue meeting with the judge. I believe, under Senator DURBIN's leadership, every member of the Judiciary Committee has had the chance to meet with her. I am confident that any new conclusions my colleagues make about her will keep pointing in one direction: Judge Jackson is brilliant. She is beloved. She belongs on the Supreme Court. It is worth repeating the three b's over and over again—brilliant, beloved, belongs—because those three words are undoubtedly true as applied to Judge Jackson.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, American strength is not a provocation. American strength secures deterrence and peace. It is American hesitancy and weakness which our adversaries see as an invitation. It is a simple fact. We relearned it the hard way many times in our history. It should form the cornerstone of any administration's foreign policy, but every day brings new distressing signs that the Biden administration forgets this lesson.

President Biden hesitated and waited to reinforce our NATO allies with more

American troops out of fear that it might provoke Putin. President Biden hesitated and waited to send Stingers to the Ukrainians out of fears that it might provoke Putin. President Biden declined to send support and training to Ukraine in December because he feared it might provoke Putin.

Here is a headline from earlier this week:

Pentagon push to send more trainers to Ukraine was scrapped in December amid White House fears of provoking Russia.

Last week, President Biden publicly split from our ally Poland and scrapped a plan to get airplanes to Ukraine because our administration feared it might—you guessed it—provoke Putin. Predictably, Putin has not pulled his punches as a thank-you to President Biden for pulling his punches.

American strength is not the provocation; American weakness is. We need to help get air defense systems to Ukraine without wasting another second.

But, meanwhile, the Biden administration is already replaying this mistaken philosophy with another adversary. Iran watched our humiliating, botched retreat in Afghanistan. They have watched the Biden administration squabble with our Middle Eastern partners while removing sanctions from Iran's own terrorist proxies in Yemen.

The Iranians have taken the measure of this administration. This weekend, even as the Biden administration is reportedly putting the finishing touches on an agreement deal that would massively favor Iran over America, they unleashed an audacious—audacious—missile strike into the Kurdistan region of Iraq that came very close to hitting our U.S. consulate.

How will our Commander in Chief respond? The record is not encouraging. Deterrence of Iran has steadily eroded under his tenure. The worse the Iranians behave, the more desperate the Biden administration seems to be to give them concessions.

Judging by public reports, the deal that President Biden is preparing would impose fewer, weaker, and shorter restrictions on Iran than even the deeply flawed 2015 deal, while giving them major and lasting relief from sanctions.

The deal would reportedly not even touch Iran's ballistic missile program. So Iran lobbs missiles toward our facilities, and we give Iran a huge influx of cash and a relaxation of pressure.

Iran clearly does not fear that they will pay a price for threatening American interests. They must be made to think again.

Yesterday, Senate Republicans sent the administration a letter expressing our grave concerns that they are preparing once again to give away the store. Republicans stand ready to work together on a real, tough agreement that blocks Iran's path to nuclear weapons, constrains its missile programs, and confronts its support for terrorism. But if the administration

continues down the path they are on, they will find the stiff opposition that that path deserves.

NOMINATION OF SARAH BLOOM RASKIN

Now, on another matter, there is bipartisan Senate opposition to Sarah Bloom Raskin, President Biden's radical and unacceptable nominee for the powerful Federal Reserve Board position of Vice Chair for Supervision.

Runaway inflation is hammering American families. Democrats' reckless policies have backed the Fed into a very tricky corner. Just this morning, the new "Producer Price Index Report" showed wholesale inflation is up 10 percent—10 percent—over 12 months, tied for the worst year ever.

At a time like this, the Fed's independence is paramount. But President Biden's nominee for this powerful seat has spent years campaigning to turn the Fed from a nonpartisan central bank into a far-left superlegislature that voters cannot get rid of.

Explicitly and repeatedly, she has called for the Fed to go about picking winners and losers in accord with liberal ideological goals completely unrelated to the Fed's core duties.

The far left cheered Ms. Raskin's nomination for the same reason that Senators from both parties oppose it. She wants to take radical policy aims that liberals can't achieve through Congress and hardwire them directly into our financial system instead.

President Biden was literally asking for Senators to support a central banker—a central banker—who wanted to usurp the Senate's policymaking power for herself.

Ms. Raskin would have been a Vice Chair who sought to raise gas prices, raise home heating costs, and undermine the very institution of the Federal Reserve in the process.

It is not surprising that there is bipartisan Senate opposition to such a radical nominee. Even before one considers the unanswered ethical questions to which the Banking Committee has not been able to get straight answers, President Biden's selection wildly—wildly—missed the mark. It is past time the White House admit their mistake and send us somebody suitable.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Now, on one final matter, what can the Senate conclude about a Supreme Court nominee from the nature of their fan club?

That is a question the Democratic leader answered very clearly a few years back. In 2005, Senator SCHUMER accused future Chief Justice John Roberts of being "embraced by some of the most extreme ideologues in America."

Our colleague continues:

That gives rise to a question many are asking: What do they know about you that we do not know?

That was Senator SCHUMER questioning the Chief Justice. Of course, there was nothing extreme about then-Judge Roberts, nor about mainstream scholarly groups like the Federalist

Society. But given Democrats' principle that the Senate ought to examine nominees' fan clubs, let's take a look at the loudest cheerleaders for President Biden's nominee, Judge Jackson.

Before the 2020 election, one far-left dark money group put Judge Jackson on their Supreme Court short list—well, not at first. She was left off their first version, but, shortly thereafter, the judge published a fiery 118-page opinion in a politically charged case that won attention and praise from liberal pundits.

One cable TV host observed that Judge Jackson's opinion was not standard legal writing, but was written with "a broader audience in mind."

Not long after, Judge Jackson was added to the next version of the activists' short list. Practically as soon as President Biden was sworn in, this group began spending big sums of money boosting Judge Jackson's profile. They put her face on posters around the Senate. They paid for billboards pushing Justice Breyer to retire.

This is a far, far-left group. They agitate for partisan Court packing. They drive around town trying to harass Justice Kavanaugh. They filed a frivolous ethics complaint against former DC Circuit Judge Tom Griffith. Last week on television, one of their board members said our Constitution—listen to this—our Constitution "is kind of trash."

This group's entire purpose and fundraising model is waging war on the legitimacy of the judiciary itself, and for some reason, these people desperately wanted Judge Jackson in particular to end up on our highest Court. Why? Well, Senators will need to explore that.

A representative from this radical outfit told the Washington Post that they like Judge Jackson for reasons that include her work "as a public defender and on the U.S. Sentencing Commission."

We are in the middle of a violent crime wave, including soaring rates of homicides and carjackings. Even last summer, when the pandemic posed a bigger challenge, more Americans said violent crime was a bigger problem than said COVID was.

Amid all this, the soft-on-crime brigade is squarely in Judge Jackson's corner. They wanted her above anyone else on the short list. And they specifically cite her experience defending criminals and her work on the Sentencing Commission as key qualifications.

As Leader SCHUMER once asked, what do these folks know that Senators may not? I hope the vigorous Senate process ahead, including all the necessary documents and records from Judge Jackson's time on the Sentencing Commission, may begin to shed more light.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am glad I was on the floor to hear the Re-

publican leader's comments about our Supreme Court nominee, Ketanji Brown Jackson, because there are a couple of elements that he obviously inadvertently missed that he should have reported when he was talking about the support that she has received from across the political spectrum. He made her out to be a product and creation of some far-left political cause or movement, but she is much more than that.

He went on to say that Judge Thomas Griffith of the DC Circuit was harassed by the same special interest group that supports Judge Jackson. He missed one key element. I just received a letter within the last 2 weeks from Judge Thomas Griffith, a well-known, retired, conservative Federal judge, endorsing Ketanji Brown Jackson. How about that?

It doesn't sound like a special interest group to me. It sounds like a Republican-appointed judge who saw her in action and wants to make sure that she gets a chance to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States.

It makes a big difference because, if you take a look at what he had to say about her, Judge Griffith wrote:

Judge Jackson has a demonstrated record of excellence, and I believe, based upon her work as a trial judge when I served on the Court of Appeals, [that] she will adjudicate based on the facts and the law and not as a partisan.

That is exactly the opposite of the point that was being made by Senator MCCONNELL. She has the support across the political spectrum. He failed to mention that she has been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police.

Oh, she is supposedly suspect of being too liberal. Well, I can just tell you that she is a person of quality, integrity, and values, and she has the support across the political spectrum to prove it.

I believe she is going to be an extraordinary Justice on the Supreme Court, and President Biden made a good choice in selecting her.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, moving to a different topic, what does courage look like? What does the face of courage look like? Well, we see it every day on television out of Ukraine. We see individuals leaving their regular lives, grabbing a rifle to defend their nation, and being prepared to die in the process. That is the face of courage.

We see the face of courage in the President of Ukraine, an extraordinary individual, who once was a rising standup comedian and now is a rising standup President for his nation of Ukraine, risking his life every day to stay in Kyiv and to be there to inspire his people to resist Putin's barbaric invasion of that country.

We are going to see that tomorrow in the joint session of Congress. It is the first Zoom joint session of Congress that I have ever been in attendance, and I am glad we are doing it. For the last several weeks, I have been in touch