

We still have more work to do in Congress, but I am optimistic that the path has now been paved and our objective is clear. We must pass this bipartisan agreement avoiding default as soon as we can. I hope the House moves quickly, and I will make sure the Senate moves quickly the moment this bipartisan bill is sent to us by the House.

#### BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, now, on Senate business, as Congress fulfills its responsibility to avoid default, the Senate begins this work period with a lot of work to do both on and off the floor. Later this afternoon, the Senate will vote on the confirmation of Darrel Papillion to be a district judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Off the floor, Senators will be busy with a number of important hearings on a wide range of bipartisan priorities.

This Thursday, for instance, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will hold a markup on a critical treaty for the United States: the U.S.-Chile tax treaty. At stake in this treaty is access to critical minerals like lithium that make everything from iPhones to EVs function. The world is racing to source these materials, and this U.S.-Chile treaty would give America an important edge. Thursday's markup represents a crucial step toward ratifying this treaty.

Also during this work period, I look forward to working with colleagues on both sides to begin the process of advancing bipartisan legislation to, one, outcompete the Chinese Government; two, prepare for a future defined by artificial intelligence; three, to lower the costs of prescription drugs, including insulin; four, to strengthen rail safety regulations; and, five, to build on our work from the past 2 years to make the United States more competitive and more prosperous in the 21st century.

I thank my colleagues for their good work.

I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

#### DEBT CEILING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 4 months ago, Speaker McCARTHY invited President Biden to start negotiating an agreement to preserve the full faith and credit of the United States and to begin to get our Nation's financial house in order.

The Speaker stood ready to discuss a responsible way forward, but for weeks on end, the Biden administration and the Senate Democratic leader insisted that there would be no discussion of reasonable reforms to Federal spending. Washington Democrats wanted a green light to spend more taxpayer dollars with no strings attached. Well, the people's House had other plans.

Speaker McCARTHY and his team committed to what I said repeatedly was the only way to get an outcome. Just as with 7 of the last 10 debt limit

agreements in recent history, House Republicans focused on reaching a bipartisan agreement to put reasonable caps on Federal spending.

The Speaker's deal secures reductions in discretionary spending. But this top-line achievement is actually just part of the story. House Republicans also succeeded in clawing back \$28 billion in unspent COVID emergency funds, they eliminated this year's budget for hiring new IRS agents, and they expanded work requirements to put more Americans on sustainable paths out of poverty. They put an important down payment on permitting reform by imposing a shot clock on the costly bureaucratic reviews that hamstrings infrastructure projects. And they forced the executive branch to start balancing the cost of new regulations with corresponding cuts—a move that would have saved taxpayers \$1.5 trillion in just the past 2 years.

Last fall, the American people elected a divided government. After 2 years of total Democratic control—2 years of radical spending and runaway inflation—they decided to send a Republican majority to the people's House. They decided to require that President Biden and Washington Democrats start working with Republicans on the biggest issues facing our country.

Now divided government means negotiated deals. It means nobody gets everything they want. But in this case, it means the American people got a whole lot more progress toward fiscal sanity than Washington Democrats wanted to give them.

Speaker McCARTHY and House Republicans deserve our thanks. This spring, they passed the only viable legislation that both preserved our Nation's full faith and credit and made real progress toward getting Federal spending under control.

House Republicans' unity forced President Biden to do his job. It is really just that simple. And now Congress will vote on legislation that locks in that important progress.

Republicans have a tremendous opportunity to take on an existential challenge facing our economy and future generations of Americans. We have a chance to start bringing Washington Democrats' reckless spending to heel. Soon it will be the Senate's turn to put this historic agreement on the President's desk. Let's not pass up our shot.

#### HONORING DEPUTY CALEB CONLEY

Now on an entirely different matter, Mr. President, yesterday, our Nation took pause to remember the brave service men and women who laid down their lives in defense of our country. Today, I would like to take a moment to honor another fallen hero from my home State of Kentucky who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Sheriff's Deputy Caleb Conley was shot and killed last week during a traffic stop in Scott County. Deputy Conley served 8 years in the U.S. Army

before coming home to join law enforcement in Kentucky.

He was a hard worker and a man of profound faith. His dedication to protecting and serving his community was known all across the Commonwealth.

Elaine and I continue to hold his wife Rachel, their young children, his parents, and the entire Scott County Sheriff's Office in our prayers.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF DARREL JAMES PAPIILLION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, pending before the U.S. Senate is the nomination of Darrel Papillion, to be U.S. district judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana. I want to say a word about this nomination because it indicates a positive development in the Senate Judiciary Committee, which the Acting President pro tempore and I share membership in, and the fact that this is a bipartisan nomination.

On May 11, Darrel Papillion was voted out of committee by a vote of 15 to 6. Senators on the Republican side—GRAHAM, CORNYN, KENNEDY, and TILLIS—joined all committee Democrats in voting for this nominee. He received the unanimous rating of “well qualified” from the American Bar Association, and he has the obvious support of the two Louisiana Senators—CASSIDY and KENNEDY—both of whom returned positive blue slips, which is committee process, and both of whom are Republican.

Papillion had a B.A. from Louisiana State University and a J.D. from LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center before clerking for Associate Justice Catherine Kimball on the Louisiana Supreme Court.

He entered private practice in New Orleans where he specialized in the defense of products liability actions. Since moving to Baton Rouge in 1999, Papillion's main areas of practice have been personal injury and wrongful death litigation. Papillion has tried at least 33 cases to verdict, including more than a dozen jury trials. He has been a special prosecutor for the East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office and a mediator for mediation cases in South Louisiana. He has served as a special master in State court on three different occasions.

He is deeply involved in the Louisiana legal community in having served as the president of both the Louisiana State Bar Association and the Baton Rouge Bar Association. Let me repeat that—the president of the Louisiana State Bar Association.

The committee received several letters of support from individuals and organizations on his behalf: the former

President of the Louisiana State Bar Association, the former president of the New Orleans Bar Association, six former opposing counsels, and the treasurer of the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

The reason I read that in detail is that, if I went back home to Illinois, like I did last week, and told people we are considering judges before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, their first reactions are, can't you find a judge that both Democrats and Republicans agree on?

Here is one. He wouldn't be here before us today but for the fact that the two Republican Senators from Louisiana reached an agreement with the Biden White House for this man to have a lifetime appointment to the Federal bench.

Now, in case that sounds like front page news, it happens, and it happens more often than not. And the reason I come to the floor at this moment is to make sure it is a matter of record.

During the Trump administration, Democrats approved what we call blue slips for 120 nominees for Federal court. Some of those were with two Democratic Senators, in a State like Illinois, but there was a level of negotiation and cooperation. As the senior Senator from Illinois, I had to sit down with the legal counsel from President Trump's White House and put nominees on the table, saying: Here is one that we want, and here is one that you want. I think we can agree on those two. Let's move forward.

And we did it. That happened, as I said, over 120 times with Democratic Senators working with the Trump White House. We filled all of the vacancies of Illinois—virtually all of them—during the Trump administration with that bipartisan agreement.

Today, we have another one, two Republican Senators with a Democratic President. It happens. And for it to happen, you need two things: the will for Members to move, to put nominees on the bench; and, secondly, a person so qualified that both sides don't feel they will be embarrassed by them. There are more judges and attorneys than there are politicians, and, in this case, I think we found just that kind of nominee.

Now, we have a lot more to go. There are roughly 87 pending vacancies in the district courts across the Nation. Almost half of them are in States with two Democratic Senators, and the other half in States with at least one Republican, maybe two Republican Senators.

We are trying to reach a point where we have an agreement on this, and I think we can do it. I could list some other Senators whom I am working with on the Republican side to fill those vacancies as well. I think that is what the American people are looking for—more evidence that we are trying to find some common ground, despite the obvious political differences in this Nation.

This is an issue that I think is timely, and I wanted to bring it to the attention of the Senate and do it on the floor this afternoon.

#### U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. President, when I went home to Illinois, I can't tell you how many people who know that I chair the Judiciary Committee asked me: What is going on with the U.S. Supreme Court?

It is an obvious question because, in the last few weeks, there have been disclosures about at least one Justice on the Court that have raised some serious questions.

Justices have an important job to fill as one of the major branches of our government. They will be issuing their remaining decisions for this term, and they will recess soon, until they reconvene in October.

But the debate is still going to continue, even if they are not sitting in the Court across the street. How will the Justices spend their time during these several months when they are not in session? That is really the question.

Rest up? Possibly. Or spend time with their family? Possibly. Or maybe take a trip or two. There, we have a question that is timely.

We have learned through recent investigative reporting that some Supreme Court Justices on the highest Court in the land have enjoyed lavish travel during the summer months. That travel was often paid for by others, and the Justices, in some cases, did not disclose this free travel as is required by law.

These are the Justices on the highest Court in the land, and the question is whether they are following the law. They impose legal obligations on citizens across the America. Are they living by the same legal obligations that affect them as Justices? It is a pretty obvious question.

Most notably, ProPublica recently found that in June 2019, after the Court issued its final opinion that term, Justice Clarence Thomas boarded a private jet and flew to Indonesia. Then the Justice and his wife spent 9 days island hopping through the South Pacific on a yacht that was 162 feet long.

ProPublica estimated the cost of chartering the plane and yacht at more than half a million dollars, but Justice Thomas didn't pay for that. The travel and trip were provided by billionaire real estate developer Harlan Crow and several corporate entities in Crow's business empire. This is just one example of the largess provided to Justice Thomas by Mr. Crow and his businesses.

It has also been reported that the Justice has regularly spent time at a luxury retreat in the Adirondacks owned by one of Mr. Crow's companies—again, free of charge.

Mr. Crow has also bought real estate owned by Justice Thomas, including the home in which his mother lives. And Mr. Crow even paid for private school tuition for one of the Justice's relatives.

Justice Thomas did not disclose any of these gifts or travel or lodging or other benefits.

Let me say at the outset that Justice Thomas is not the only Supreme Court Justice, past or present, who has accepted gifts of free travel and failed to disclose them in a timely manner. But the scope and scale of the undisclosed Justice Thomas gifts have gone far beyond anything we have ever seen, and this highlights the enormous gap in the ethical standards for the Supreme Court Justices.

We have known this for years. In February of 2012, 11 years ago, I first wrote to Chief Justice Roberts and urged him to adopt a code of ethical conduct to bind the Justices, just like the code that binds every other Federal judge in America. Chief Justice Roberts failed to act when I wrote to him 11 years ago. Since then, the Court's ethics problems have just gotten worse.

Last month, after ProPublica published its first report on Justice Thomas's undisclosed travel, I renewed my call for Chief Justice Thomas to clean up the ethical mess across the street, and I invited him—I personally invited him—to testify at a hearing before our Senate Judiciary Committee so he could speak directly to the American people.

You say: Wait a minute. How many times does a Supreme Court Justice come across the street and formerly appear before Congress?

Well, it turns out, 92 different times since the year 1960—92 different times.

So they come across the street when they have something to tell us. I think they should be coming across the street to discuss the ethics of the Court. This would have been an opportunity for the Chief Justice to reassure the American people and start to restore trust in the High Court.

I watch some of those news programs on Sunday morning—I am a typical politician—and they have the polling data of what people think of the Supreme Court. The numbers are bad. They are almost as bad as Congress. The fact is, they can do something about it, and they should. Trust in this Court has fallen to the lowest level in 50 years, and, unfortunately, the Supreme Court's Chief Justice didn't accept my invitation to walk across the street.

Time and again, I have made clear one point that I want to make clear today: The Chief Justice, John Roberts, has the ability right now, the authority right now to impose higher ethical standards on his fellow Justices—standards that would be transparent and enforceable. Wouldn't that be refreshing? He could take that action today, but, for some reason, so far, he has declined the opportunity.

If he won't act, Congress must. We cannot tolerate a system in which the highest Court in America has the lowest ethical standards in the Federal Government. And we certainly should not begin another Supreme Court summer recess where Justices can take free