

met with the healthcare providers, mostly from central Washington, who said, "You literally will take away essential revenue that keeps our hospitals open, and our State could see five to seven hospitals close."

That is not what we want to see out of a budget proposal to give a tax break to wealthy corporations and individuals. So I ask my colleagues to make sure that we are fighting these cuts to Medicaid. Our communities are demanding it. They are watching, and just like with the block granting of Medicaid, they are not going to believe another idea that has already been tried and failed and doesn't even meet the goals of being successful in making the most affordable healthcare possible and keeping the cost down on all of us.

I urge my colleagues to reject this House proposal on Medicaid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

REMEMBERING CHRISTOPHER S. BOND

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise for two things. First, I wanted to make the Chamber aware of the passing of legendary Missouri Senator Kit Bond.

Former Senator Bond served as Missouri's Governor. He was I think at the time Missouri's youngest Governor and still is historically. He served in this Chamber for 24 years—one of the longest serving Senators from my State.

I have the honor of standing behind, I suppose, the desk that he once had, that Harry Truman had, that Tom Eagleton had, Jack Danforth had, Roy Blunt had, and Senator Bond.

He had a flare, a sense of humor, and an intense dedication for delivering for his home State. He will be missed. I am praying for him, his wife Linda, his son Sam, and all those who knew and loved Senator Bond, during this difficult time.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The second reason I rise, Mr. President, is to seek unanimous consent regarding the nomination of Mr. Brian Burch to be U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican.

The last few weeks have been a whirlwind for Catholics. I had the honor of representing my country, along with four other Senators, at the Vatican for the funeral of Pope Francis. As the first Republican Catholic elected to the Senate from my State, it was certainly an honor, a somber day.

Of course, the conclave then happened, and we now have Pope Leo XIV. He will be installed formally this weekend, which is why I am rising to have this Ambassador approved by the Senate before this weekend so that he can maybe attend as the Ambassador.

Of course, Pope Leo is the first American elected Pope, which is significant and historic. He is from Chicago.

I will note that at my 5 o'clock mass this weekend, during homily, it was made clear that although he is from Chicago, he is not a Cubs fan. So as a Cardinals fan, that was reassuring to know.

But it is a historic time for Catholics, and I think it is important to have this relationship with the Holy See and with the Vatican. It is critical for our country. I think it is important to move forward with this nomination.

Brian is a devoted husband and father to his wife Sara and their nine children. Brian and his wife are raising their family in the greater Chicago area. Ironically, our new Pope was raised there. He is also the cofounder of CatholicVote, a national, faith-based, advocacy organization whose mission has inspired every Catholic in America to live out the truths of the Catholic faith in public life. He has been very involved.

He is a deserving candidate. He has been passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee and would do a great job.

I think it is a very important statement for this Chamber to make to have this Ambassador approved by the Senate before this weekend.

With that, Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 100, Brian Burch to be Ambassador to the Holy See; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would like to explain what I am doing here.

I have a hold on nominees coming out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee because it has been almost 4 months since Donald Trump and Marco Rubio illegally and unilaterally shuttered the U.S. Agency for International Development under the guise of a so-called review, which should be done by now. This is in violation of the appropriations law, the Foreign Assistance Act, and probably the Impoundment Control Act.

Here is the thing: As a direct result—and it is not so common that you can say "as a direct result"—of something that was done by the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID, people are dying. Children are dying. Mothers are passing HIV-AIDS to their children. Disaster survivors are being stranded with nowhere to turn. All of this suffering is because of what the United States is doing, in contravention of their own laws.

So I will not expedite confirmation of State Department nominees until and unless this administration starts complying with the law and being accountable to Congress.

I want to make two other points here. I will stipulate that it would be a very nice time to send our Ambassador to the Holy See. It would be an auspicious time to do so. But let's under-

stand how hard it would be to do this in the normal course of business.

You file cloture. It is a cloture petition. The majority leader is in charge of it. You put it at the desk. You wait a day. You take a procedural vote. Two hours later, you take the final passage vote. You have your Ambassador. Why do I know this? Because we are doing this on nine other nominees this week.

So it was the choice of the Senate majority to prioritize the Chief of Protocol; the Legal Adviser for the Department of State; the Secretary of the Air Force; the Deputy Secretary of Energy; the Deputy Secretary of the Interior; the Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources; the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering; the Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget; and the Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

If this is a very important and time-sensitive confirmation, all we need to do is have the majority leader file a cloture petition, we wait 1 day, and then we vote. It is perfectly available to us, if that is an urgent matter, to just do this in the normal course of business.

As I was talking to the Senator from Missouri, with whom I have a pretty solid working relationship, I was explaining that when I was in the majority and we were trying to get confirmations through, I spent a fair amount of time talking to people who had holds. I would always go to their offices, sometimes catch them on the floor, sometimes go to the cloakroom, and say: Hey, what would it take to release this hold?

To this moment, not a single Member has walked up to me and said: What would it take to release the hold? Not the majority leader, not the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, not the Senator from Missouri, not anybody.

The normal way that the minority flexes its authority is to slow things down, even if it is slightly. And this is all this is—like a day, plus 2 hours. So if this is important, we can get it done this week. If it is important for me to release those holds, then somebody should come and talk to me. I remain ready and willing to talk to Leader Thune or any Republican colleague as we continue consideration of these nominees going forward.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I would like to address that.

If this were a blanket hold, if these weren't indiscriminate, maybe that would be productive, but these are indiscriminate holds.

I would offer to this body that not only is the Senate broken through this process and this ruse, the Democrats are broken.

By the way, you don't need to filibuster everything. You don't need 60

votes for everything. For goodness' sake, Clarence Thomas—Clarence Thomas—was confirmed to be a U.S. Supreme Court Justice with 52 votes. That was a different era.

But I will also point to another era. We have not seen an effort like this by the minority party to be obstructionists in 50 years. Not since the Ford administration has it taken this kind of effort for every single nominee. That is brokenness, underlain by the brokenness of their party.

I will use a bit of a baseball analogy here. They are swinging at every pitch, every single pitch, and they look ridiculous.

This week, it is this. Next week, somebody will be down in El Salvador at an MS-13 prison—a prison down there—dining with an MS-13 gang member who beats his wife. This is who they are.

They are also the people now standing up objecting to the confirmation of the Ambassador to the Vatican. Yes, you heard that right—the Ambassador of the Vatican, who could be there for the installation of the Pope.

So I don't want to hear anything about how anybody is being reasonable. This is totally unreasonable. By the way, my friend from Hawaii is defending USAID. Let's talk about that. Let's talk about some of the reforms real quickly, a bit of a breakdown.

Heaven forbid we stop \$20 million on a "Sesame Street" show in Baghdad promoting LGBTQ ideals; \$11 million to instruct Vietnam to stop trash burning; \$56 million to boost Egyptian and Tunisian tourism; \$100 million to build schools in Jordan; \$11 million to instruct Vietnam to stop burning trash—I already mentioned that—DEI programs in Burma, and money for Guatemalan sex changes.

Maybe, just maybe, this isn't the hill to die on. But maybe, just maybe, defending people who are deported, who are MS-13 gang members who are terrorizing our communities, that is not the hill to die on. But next week, it will be something else.

But the truth is, this is really about Trump derangement syndrome. The truth is, this is about the Democrats not coming to grips about, you know, getting smoked in November because they don't have a message. So what are they grasping at? All of these ridiculous things so somebody can say they are the chief resister.

I just never thought I would see a day that the resistance would mean holding up the Ambassador to the Holy See to be there for the installation of the Pope, but here is where we are; total brokenness from the other side.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I am just a little bit taken aback by the personal—the tone here. But I do enjoy working with the Senator on the Commerce Committee, so I am not going to respond in kind, except to say some-

thing very simple, which is: It is Tuesday. If we file a cloture petition—which is not my authority—tonight, there will be one intervening day, and then we vote on Thursday.

So if this is important to the majority leader, all he has to do is file a cloture petition.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I would just like to respond by saying it is not personal. The Senator from Hawaii, who is my friend, is—by defending USAID—is defending these positions. That is the only remark I made.

But also acting like—and we did have a conversation on the floor about what it would take—acting like there would be some kind of accommodation that would allow this to move forward in what would normally be a normal process here, but where we are at is the Democrats are objecting to everything. That has not happened in 50 years. That is not normal.

So the accommodation for this instance, I think, is reasonable. Evidently, he doesn't. It is not personal, and here we are. But the idea that the Democratic Party is grasping at straws every single day to make headlines and make themselves look ridiculous isn't personal necessarily, but it is the truth.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 218

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, on another matter, it really should go without saying, but no President should be accepting a \$400 million gift from a foreign country. It is gross; it is reckless; it is corrupt; and the outrage and condemnation, especially on the Republican side, should be universal.

There is no excuse or justification for this. It is wrong. That is the end of the story. There is no legal justification. There is no commonsense justification.

Let's unpack this a little bit. Trump is planning to accept a \$400 million luxury plane from Qatar, which he just so happens to be visiting this week on his first foreign trip of his term.

The stated purpose of that trip is to cut business deals, but it is very hard to drive a hard bargain when the people that you are negotiating with just gave you a \$400 million gift. And it means that the other side will have a much easier time getting what it wants, even if American interests are harmed.

A law enforcement official called the gift a "security nightmare" because it would require basically the whole thing to be busted up, taken apart, and reconstituted. If that all sounds blatantly corrupt and incredibly wasteful, it is because it is.

I just want everyone to go through the thought experiment. Imagine if it were a President of the other party, imagine if this happened 25 years ago and you were reading about something in history, do you think that an American President should accept a \$400 million gift?

Do you think that Air Force One—this icon, this symbol of American power abroad that has carried John F. Kennedy's body; where LBJ was sworn in; where George W. Bush was whisked away when the Twin Towers fell; where multiple Presidents of both parties and multiple generations have done extraordinary work around the world making sure that we are the indispensable Nation; that we are the leader of the free world—now sponsored by Qatar.

I remain flabbergasted that this thing is not going to pass. I remain completely aghast. This is the most blatant, obvious, ridiculous, gross corruption that I have ever seen in my entire life by dollar amount, by symbolism, by violating constitutional and statutory law, and also just violating like—I am not a lawyer. You don't have to be all fancy pants to understand how ridiculous it is that a foreign government is going to say: Hey, we will take care of Air Force One for you.

And so we have a simple resolution—and it is simple. I was going to read it, but you know what, I will just summarize it. It basically says—and the way these things are structured, it is bunch of whereases: Whereas Air Force One is a symbol of the United States; Whereas Air Force One is one of the most recognizable symbols of the Office of the Presidency; and so on and so forth; therefore, be it resolved that we shouldn't do this, that the American President should not accept a \$400 million gift from anybody.

And so, as if in legislative session, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 218, submitted earlier today; that there be up to 2 hours for debate on the resolution and that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the adoption of the resolution; finally, that if the resolution is adopted, the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, as usual, my Democratic colleagues are losing their minds over this situation, but let's just talk about the facts.

First of all, this is not a done deal. It has not happened yet. It is all talk. But if reports are accurate, the Government of Qatar is considering gifting the United States Department of Defense an American-made Boeing 747—I will repeat that—an American-made Boeing 747 plane for temporary use as Air Force One.

It is not for the President's personal use, and he will not be using it after he leaves office.

It is customary and totally normal for foreign countries to give our government gifts. The DOJ has already