

House of Representatives for all but 4 years going way back to 1931.

The best approach to good leadership is to keep an ear to the ground and a finger to the pulse of the American people, much like our 45th and 47th President has done since 2017. Throughout my public service, that is how this U.S. Senator has worked to represent Iowans. By listening, by keeping in touch, and by going home every chance I get, I hold myself accountable to the people. This year, I will start my 45th consecutive year holding meetings with Iowans, holding Q&A meetings in each of Iowa's 99 counties.

Now, for a basis for keeping in touch and keeping government responsible, let's look at Federalist 57. In that Federalist Paper, James Madison wrote about the vital need for what he called "communion of interests" between the people and their leaders, "without which every government degenerates into tyranny." In the 21st century, you could call that having skin in the game.

Back to this 30th anniversary of the Congressional Accountability Act, during the period of Congress having exemption from some workplace rules, Iowa's small businesses and Main Street civic leaders hit the nail on the head. They said to me and other Members of Congress: What is good for the goose ought to be good for the gander.

So some of us rolled up our sleeves and got to work. I teamed up with former Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut here in the Senate. Like many legislative efforts, it took years to build a bipartisan coalition to have these laws applied to the Congress of the United States. The 1994 electoral victory was the boost that we needed to get across the finish line.

On January 4, 1995, I reintroduced the Congressional Accountability Act. My good friend and former Senate majority leader Bob Dole summed up the reason for this legislation better than anybody else. I quote Senator Dole:

Many of our citizens have begun to view the Senate and House of Representatives not as a people's body, but as an "imperial Congress," as an institution that considers itself above the law and without accountability.

That double standard had to end. We had to restore confidence with the American people. That is why I championed the Congressional Accountability Act—to inject common sense into lawmaking.

This Federal law would provide that lawmakers walk in the shoes of our constituents, abiding by the same workplace rights and worker protection laws, including civil rights, age discrimination, disability, overtime pay, and occupational safety and health laws.

One of my opponents during those years of trying to get this legislation passed was Senator Stevens of Alaska. I remember as this bill passed the U.S. Senate and I was victorious, he came up to me and poked his finger in my chest and said: I hope you are the first

Senator to get sued because of this legislation.

Well, I haven't been sued, and I don't think anybody has been sued.

The first bill that we sent to the President's desk in the 104th Congress was the Congressional Accountability Act. President Clinton signed it, as I mentioned earlier, 30 years ago today, on January 23, 1995.

Since then, I have led reforms to expand whistleblower protections to employees in the legislative and executive branches. In 2018, President Trump signed into law reforms to the law's reporting and resolution process for workplace harassment claims.

Although the ink has long dried on the Congressional Accountability Act, we all still need to be fighting every day to keep a reality check here in Washington, DC.

I am going to finish with this ironic statement. Even though this legislation was passed 30 years ago and even though I have heard about its need for a long time before that, I still—as I say, ironically—hear at my town meetings some constituents say to me: Why don't you have to live under the same laws that we live under? Then I have an opportunity to tell them about the Congressional Accountability Act.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I think we all remember the situation just a few short months ago in the lead-up to the election. Democrat Senators and Senate candidates were declaring their commitment to eliminating the filibuster or creating carve-outs that would render it meaningless. The Democratic leader himself made it very clear that the days of the filibuster were numbered, telling a crowd at the Democratic National Convention that his party would be changing the rules to pass the Democrats' Federal takeover of elections. The filibuster, it seemed, was on its way out.

Fast-forward to yesterday. Yesterday, it seems there was a sudden change of heart because yesterday every Senate Democrat—the Demo-

cratic leader, new Democratic Senators, long-serving Democratic Senators who had expressed their desire to get rid of the filibuster—joined together and filibustered a bill. That is right. Every Democratic Senator participated in a filibuster of yesterday's legislation.

I will leave aside the disturbing fact that Democrats chose to unite to block a bill to protect living, breathing, newborn children born alive after an attempted abortion.

What I want to talk about today is Democrats' apparent belief that there should be one rule for Democrats and another rule for everyone else. Back in 2017, during President Trump's first term, when Republicans controlled the Senate, 32 Senate Democrats—many of whom, I might add, are still serving today—joined a letter to Senate leadership asking for preservation of the legislative filibuster. Then Democrats took power, and all of a sudden Democrats started to find the legislative filibuster a major inconvenience. They wanted to pass highly partisan legislation like their Federal takeover of elections, and they discovered the filibuster was getting in the way.

Now, Republicans are in power again, and it seems Democrats are back to supporting the filibuster. And the only thing I can gather from that is that Democrats think they should be free to pass any legislation they choose when they are in power but the Republicans should not; that the rules should apply when they serve the aims of the Democratic Party and that the rules should be abolished whenever they interfere with Democrats' far-left agenda; in short, that one party, the Democratic Party, should be making decisions in this country.

That is not a very democratic attitude. It also betrays an elitism, a disdain for half of the electorate that perhaps had something to do with Democrats' electoral defeat in November.

Now, there is no doubt that the filibuster can sometimes be frustrating. I am frustrated that we couldn't pass legislation yesterday to uphold basic human decency by requiring that babies born alive after an attempted abortion receive appropriate medical care. But the filibuster serves a crucial purpose.

The Founders intended the Senate to be a counterbalance to the House. It was designed to be a more stable, thoughtful, more deliberative legislative body to check ill-considered or intemperate legislation or tyranny by the majority. And as time has gone on, the legislative filibuster is the Senate rule that has had perhaps the greatest impact in preserving the Founders' vision of the Senate.

The filibuster acts as a check on imprudent or ill-considered legislation. It forces discussion and compromise, and, critically, it ensures that Americans whose party is not in power also have a

voice in Congress. Preserving the filibuster is crucial to preserving the Senate's checks and balances role in our system of government.

I expect that Democrats will continue to display a renewed enthusiasm for the filibuster during this Congress. And while I may strongly disagree with their choice of when to use it, I will continue to defend their right to do so. Keeping the Senate the Senate and ensuring it continues to fill the role envisioned for it by the Founders is more important than temporary political gain. I hope that when the day comes that Democrats retake the Senate, their time in the minority will have reminded them of the crucial role the filibuster plays and that they will carry their newfound enthusiasm for the filibuster with them when they again find themselves in our shoes.

NOMINATION OF SEAN DUFFY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I will be filing cloture on former Congressman SEAN DUFFY's nomination to be Secretary of Transportation here shortly.

Yesterday, the Commerce Committee favorably reported Congressman DUFFY's nomination in a 28-to-0 vote—in other words, unanimously—and I hope we will be able to move this nominee quickly, as we did with Secretary Rubio, who was also unanimously reported out of committee.

Congressman DUFFY is highly qualified for this position. He served five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. As the cochair of the Great Lakes Task Force, he played a role in advancing a number of transportation and infrastructure projects. At his hearing last week, he demonstrated his knowledge of the issues that will be his responsibility in this role. Our colleague Senator BALDWIN said that he is "the right person for this job."

There is no reason to delay this uncontroversial and qualified nominee. If Democrats want to spend their nights and weekends taking votes on uncontroversial nominees, we can do it that way, but one way or the other, these nominees will be confirmed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 6.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of SEAN DUFFY, of Wisconsin, to be Secretary of Transportation.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 6, Sean Duffy, of Wisconsin, to be Secretary of Transportation.

John Thune, Shelley Moore Capito, Jon Husted, Tom Cotton, Mike Rounds, Jim Justice, Mike Crapo, Ted Budd, James Lankford, Dan Sullivan, Todd Young, Cynthia M. Lummis, Katie Britt, John R. Curtis, Rick Scott of Florida, Thom Tillis, Ron Johnson.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

ILLEGITIMATE COURT COUNTER-ACTION ACT—Motion To Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 3, H.R. 23.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to Proceed to Calendar No. 3, H.R. 23, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the International Criminal Court engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. I send a cloture motion to the desk for the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 3, H.R. 23, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the International Criminal Court engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies.

John Thune, Tom Cotton, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Pete Ricketts, Shelley Moore Capito, Deb Fischer, Markwayne Mullin, Rick Scott of Florida, Tim Sheehy, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Marsha Blackburn, Mike Rounds, James Lankford, Ted Budd, John R. Curtis, Tommy Tuberville.

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, the Senate will hold votes on two piv-

otal Cabinet nominees. First, we will vote to advance the nomination of John Ratcliffe to serve as CIA Director. I will respectfully vote no, not because of our political difference, which, of course, exists, but because I am deeply worried that Mr. Ratcliffe will be unable to stand up to people like Donald Trump and Tulsi Gabbard, who are known to falsify intelligence.

As CIA Director, Mr. Ratcliffe will have to make decisions based on intelligence and fact. There may be no Agency more important than the CIA that has to be fact based. Sometimes, these facts will lead to inconvenient conclusions for his superiors and the President. It is in those cases where truth—not fiction, not ideology—must prevail, and I have my doubts that Mr. Ratcliffe will be able to hold firm.

Most troubling about Mr. Ratcliffe were the answers I got from him about Tulsi Gabbard, President Trump's nominee to serve as Director of National Intelligence. If confirmed, Ms. Gabbard would oversee the CIA and our entire intelligence community, and I think she would be colossally disruptive for American security.

If there is anyone who hasn't been fact based as you have listened to her statements over the years, it is Tulsi Gabbard. She seems to make things up out of thin air. No one could be worse in a position of DNI than someone who doesn't believe in facts.

So I told Mr. Ratcliffe he should urge President Trump to drop her nomination. If he really cares about the CIA and its integrity, he couldn't report to somebody like Tulsi Gabbard in good conscience. She is simply too risky.

Ms. Gabbard has a whole history of spreading falsities, cheering America's adversaries, and, if confirmed, I am worried she will push false intelligence for political ends. Those are precisely the moments Mr. Ratcliffe will have to hold firm, reject what she says, and go to the President and speak truth to power.

His answers to my questions about that were unsatisfying. So I am voting no because it is such an important position.

Now, on the Hegseth vote, today the Senate will vote to advance one of the most unqualified, erratic nominees for a major position we have ever seen in America. No position in the Cabinet carries the weight, the responsibility of Secretary of Defense.

The Secretary of Defense is in charge of keeping us safe and keeping the men and women in our Armed Forces and the civilians safe. So you need someone who has a steady hand. You need someone who has had experience in this kind of stuff. You need someone who, when he shows up to a meeting, you are sure that he knows all the facts and is going to be able to conduct himself properly.

If there is any Cabinet that should be universally trusted and uncontroversial, it is the Secretary of Defense. Unfortunately, Mr. Hegseth is