

sent us timely nominations to fill the remaining executive branch vacancies with nominees who will restore the independence of Federal law enforcement. There are now 19 districts across the country with acting or interim U.S. attorneys instead of Senate-confirmed, presidentially appointed U.S. attorneys. For more than a year I have been talking publicly about the need to name U.S. Attorneys to fill these vacancies to no avail.

I was disappointed but not surprised to see the administration return to tired political attacks. What better time than right now, when the economy is slipping farther off the tracks, when the President's budget shows record annual deficits, with Osama bin Laden still at large, when gas prices rise well beyond \$3 a gallon, when we lost 63,000 jobs last month, and when a mortgage crisis grips many parts of the country. I wish the President would put aside his partisan playbook and work with us to address the priorities of ordinary Americans.

We have seen what happens when the rule of law plays second fiddle to a President's agenda and the partisan desires of political operatives and it is a disaster for the American people. Both the President and the Nation are best served by a Justice Department that provides sound advice and takes responsible action, without regard to political considerations—not one that develops legalistic loopholes to serve the ends of a particular administration.

I congratulate the nominees and their families on their confirmations today.

#### NOMINATION OF KRISTINE SVINICKI

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to express my great pleasure with the Senate confirmation of Kristine Svinicki to serve as a Commissioner of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

As you may know, Ms. Svinicki is both a longtime resident of my State, and a staff member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, which I have had the privilege to serve on for over 28 years.

During her time with the Senate Armed Services Committee, Ms. Svinicki served with distinction, immersing herself in nuclear energy matters. Her tireless efforts proved invaluable in our committee's work, and her service has been appreciated by not only me but by the other members of the Armed Services Committee—on both sides of the aisle.

It is not well known in some quarters, but the Armed Services Committee has jurisdiction over approximately two-thirds of the Department of Energy—including the very sizable nuclear weapons production sites and laboratory complex, as well as the extensive environmental program to clean up the legacy of nuclear contamination created during the Cold War. These are the programs which I hired Kristine to staff.

With her extensive background and experience in nuclear matters both at

the Department of Energy, where she worked prior to joining the Armed Services Committee, and subsequently in her work here in the Senate, Ms. Svinicki is uniquely poised to take on this next challenge.

It is my sincere belief that Kristine Svinicki will be a favorable addition to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and I am pleased the full Senate agrees. I appreciate the overwhelming support given to her by this body, and I know she will do all in her power to honor the trust placed in her by the President, the Senate, and the American people.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, these have been approved; is that right?

Mr. BROWN. They have been.

Mr. REID. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, just to show that we are trying to work with the President's Chief of Staff, as I indicated earlier, we put this in. Even though it wasn't part of the original agreement I had with Mr. Bolten, we added Doug Shuma, Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service—I am looking for Mr. Sullivan—and John J. Sullivan, Deputy Secretary of Commerce. So we have worked hard to live up to our end of the bargain. I hope when we come back after the break, we can do more. I have indicated to the distinguished Republican leader and to Mr. Bolton, if things work out right and we are able to work together, there should be some judges we can approve when we come back.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume legislative session.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO REPORT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, everyone has worked long and hard tonight. I appreciate everyone's patience and cooperation.

I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the Senate's recess, committees be authorized to report legislative and executive matters on March 27 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THANKS TO STAFF

Mr. REID. Mr. President, everyone has expressed appreciation to a lot of people, but the people in front of the Presiding Officer have been here all day, all night, and now it is morning time. They get very little recognition or attention, but on behalf of the whole Senate, we really appreciate all of your work. We have pages who have been here since early this morning. I would

like to express my appreciation to the wonderful floor staff we have, especially someone whom I couldn't do the work without, Lula Davis, who does such great work for the majority, and Dave Schiappa, who is really—even though he looks out, sometimes, a little too much for the minority, he is a pleasant person to work with and is always very fair and understanding of our issues. So I appreciate the work he and Lula do, the work they do together.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in recess until 12 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18, for a pro forma session only, with no business conducted; that the Senate recess until 11 a.m. Friday, March 21, for a pro forma session only, with no business conducted; that the Senate recess until 10 a.m. Monday, March 24, for a pro forma session only, with no business conducted; that the Senate recess until 9 a.m. Thursday, March 27, for a pro forma session only, with no business conducted; that the Senate recess until 2 p.m. Monday, March 31; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECESS UNTIL TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2008

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess under the previous order as a mark of further respect to the memory of Howard Metzenbaum, late a former Senator from the State of Ohio.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 2:36 a.m., recessed until Tuesday, March 18, 2008, at 12 noon.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

DAVID R. HILL, OF MISSOURI, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE ROGER ROMULUS MARTELLA, JR.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BARBARA MCCONNELL BARRETT, OF ARIZONA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND.

T. VANCE MCMAHAN, OF TEXAS, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

##### THE JUDICIARY

G. STEVEN AGEE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT, VICE J. MICHAEL LUTTIG, RESIGNED.