

Wouldn't it be an incredible difference if instead of these silent, hidden filibusters paralyzing this body, Senators who chose for additional debate had to make a stand before the American public? They had to make their case and the public could weigh in on whether they were heroes or they were bums? In that case, maybe we would get those 60 votes.

Let me give an example. We had a case in which we had an act called the DISCLOSE Act on the floor of the Senate. The DISCLOSE Act simply said that for all campaign donations, the source must be disclosed. It was based on a premise that had been argued by many on both sides of the aisle over many years, and it was this: that disclosure is the sunlight that disinfects the political process. If voters know that ad being put up on the air is being done by a certain industry—even though they claim to be the Blue Skies Industry, maybe they are the Polluted Water Industry—the citizens should know. If that ad that claims to be from Americans for Healthy Lives is actually being put on by an industry that is poisoning people, citizens should have the right to know. This is the DISCLOSE Act. Not only under current practice is secrecy allowed, but foreign donations are allowed. Foreign companies are allowed to put unlimited secretive funds into the U.S. system. Who would defend that on the floor of the Senate? The answer is no one. We didn't have those who wanted more debate willing to debate it. No, they wanted to obstruct it in silence because they knew the American people would not approve of the fact that they were arguing for secrecy on unlimited sums of secret funds in American campaigns.

That was before this last election cycle when in election after election we saw super PACs funneling vast fortunes into the primaries for the Presidency, into Senate races, and into House races. They were funneling the money in, and no one knew where it came from. Now, some of the contributors to those super PACs did disclose that they contributed to the super PACs. They bragged about it. But when the money went from the super PAC to the State, their name was not attached to it. Nobody knew what funds went to which State. It was basically an attack by vast pools of dark money.

If we had the talking filibuster and folks had to rise on this floor and defend this secrecy and these foreign donations, then we would have gotten the 60th vote to close debate and we would have a better system to date.

How about pay equity for women? How about pay equity? I think we would have had the public weigh in if they could have seen it was being torpedoed by the silent, hidden filibuster. Now there are folks—and I have heard them over the past few weeks—who say: Oh, this strategy of asking people to talk is a way to suppress the views of the minority. Isn't that ab-

surd? Doesn't it just make you smile that a requirement to make a case before colleagues can be framed as a situation where our views are being suppressed? No, quite the contrary. We are issuing them an invitation—this affects people on both sides of the aisle—to come forward and make their case publicly. Don't kill these bills with this hidden maneuver in the dark of night. If they have the courage of their convictions, they should come and make their case. If they don't, then let the process proceed. That is the talking filibuster.

I would like to applaud others who have put ideas forward that are similar. Senator LAUTENBERG of New Jersey had a bill that said—where I am talking about after the cloture vote, he said: Well, let's require people to talk during the 30 hours before the cloture vote in order to see if nobody wants to take the floor. Let's shorten that 30 hours. That is worthy of debate.

We have a responsibility for this body to debate in a transparent, accountable fashion and to make decisions so our public can see it. That is what the talking filibuster does.

I encourage my colleagues to come to the floor and share their thoughts. If they are against making their case before the American people, then have the courage to come to the floor and say: I don't like this idea because I don't want to have to make my case in front of my colleagues.

I invite my colleagues to come to the floor and say to the American public: I am going to vote against the talking filibuster because I don't want the public to see that I am killing bills in the dark of night.

Have the courage to come and debate the issue now and in the future because the American people are looking at us with extraordinary levels of frustration. They know there are big issues facing our Nation.

Right now we are talking about the fiscal cliff. Well, the fiscal cliff has many components. It may be broken into many different bills that come before this body. We need to get rid of the motion to proceed so we can get those bills to the floor to debate them. We need to make sure that if a group says: Let's block this bill from a final vote, they express their views accountably before the public. It is the least that should happen.

The Senate is headed out for the weekend. We will be back next week, and I ask for the American public to weigh in and to think about the fact that this hidden process is hurting our ability to address the big issues facing America. I ask my colleagues to wrestle with that.

It is my hope that folks will hold those conversations with the public back home. I have done so in every county of my State through my town-hall meetings. I hold one in every county every year. I have raised this issue of whether or not, when folks vote for debate, they should be required to de-

bate, they should be required to make their case and not to kill bills in the dark of night. Whether it is a progressive county or a conservative county, people believe in transparency and accountability, and they want to see their Senators making their case on this floor. Let's make it so.

INTERNET PUBLICATION OF CERTAIN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FORMS

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 6634, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6634) to change the effective date of the Internet publication of certain financial disclosure forms.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 6634) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. MERKLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the fiscal cliff the country will face on January 4. We are beyond the point of the election, and there is 4 weeks until the date of the fiscal cliff. As Republicans have been pointing out on this floor, Congress must act soon to take on the numerous expiring tax provisions and the sequester. I believe President Obama must provide leadership in those efforts. I have seen very little so far.

Last week I came to the floor to speak about the fiscal cliff and some of the concerns I continue to have and hear about as I travel to Wyoming just about every weekend. I just got back from there a few days ago, and people are very concerned about the direction of the country and what may happen to all Americans on January 1.

Last week on the floor, I spoke about the President's proposal to raise taxes on people making more than \$200,000 a year. In terms of spending next year, that tax increase would pay for just 6.8 days of what Washington will spend. So the whole proposal the President continues to make is basically enough to fund the government for not 52 weeks but 1 week alone. The tax increases President Obama is now trying to push