

July, and, two, Roberta Jacobson is highly qualified for this position. Her nomination deserves our attention. I do so as a Senator from a border State and as a Senator who believes we have a constitutional duty to advise and consent.

We have a distinguished candidate ready to serve. We have strong support for her on both sides of the aisle. What we need is an up-or-down vote. The L.A. Times has called Roberta Jacobson “among the most qualified people ever to be tapped to represent the U.S. in Mexico.”

She has impressive experience, including important work on the Merida Initiative, fighting drug trafficking and organized crime in Mexico. She has served ably as State Department Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, working to improve relations in our hemisphere and to engage Cuba—opening opportunities for Americans after over 50 years of a failed U.S. policy.

She was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with bipartisan support. Yet the weeks go by and still we wait.

Our relations with Mexico are critical—affecting our economy, affecting our security. Mexico is working with us to stop those who cross our southern border illegally. Mexico is our third largest trading partner. One million American citizens live in Mexico. It is our top tourist destination, with millions of U.S. visitors every year. My State shares a border with our neighbor to the south. We also share a cultural heritage. The trade that grows every year—hundreds of millions of dollars in goods and services—move between our Nations. Over 36,000 jobs in my State depend on United States-Mexico trade. This increased trade is an engine of economic growth. Exports from New Mexico to Mexico have soared from over \$70 million a year to now \$1.5 billion 15 years later.

In New Mexico we know how important this partnership is. We need a strong ambassador in Mexico City—working on trade, on border security, and on cultural ties between our Nations. We need an ambassador to work with Mexico and other Central American countries to address immigration issues, to help resolve the migrant crisis, to crack down on border violence and drug trafficking. This is clear to both sides of the aisle, especially to those of us from border States. As someone who has worked with Roberta on multiple issues, I know she is the right person for this job.

I especially want to thank my Republican colleague, Senator JEFF FLAKE, for his efforts. He is concerned, as I am, that this cannot wait. As Senator FLAKE said recently:

It's crunch time now. Once you get into next year, it's easier to just put them on hold until the next president assumes office in 2017.

I hope that will not happen. I hope we will listen to Senator FLAKE be-

cause it is crunch time and because we do need to get this done.

What is holding up her nomination? It isn't her qualifications. It isn't concerns about how she would be able to carry out her duties as Ambassador. The problem is rooted in something else—something that should have no bearing on whether she is confirmed: Presidential politics and policy differences with the administration over her work on Cuba.

This year, the world celebrated the reopening of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. As the Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, Roberta helped negotiate this shift. We have begun a 21st century relationship with Cuba—one I am convinced will bring freedom and openness. I congratulate the President for leading this historic change.

A few Senators disagree with his Cuba policy, and so they are blocking Roberta Jacobson's confirmation to serve as Ambassador to Mexico.

Unfortunately, this is just one example of how the rules are being twisted and misused. She is one of the many qualified nominees whose confirmations are on hold. Many of them wait because one or two Senators want to make a political point or extract political pain. Not happy with the President? Block his nominee. Not OK with a policy? Keep the seat vacant.

The real aim is the administration. No matter how qualified, the nominee is just an easy target.

Meanwhile, the backlog grows: 19 judges, half a dozen ambassadors, even a top official at the Treasury Department whose job is to go after the finances of terrorists. That position is vacant as well.

We are on track for the lowest number of confirmations in three decades. We now have 30 judicial districts with emergency levels of backlogs. At the beginning of the year, we had 12. Thousands of people are waiting for their day in court because there is no judge to hear the case. Important work for the American people is left undone.

When we fail to do our job, when we fail to give these nominees a vote up or down, our government fails too.

This is not just the President's team. It is our team. It is America's team—working on trade and security, moving our economy forward, seeing that justice is done.

These vital posts should not go unfilled.

I urge my colleagues to allow us to move these nominations forward now.

I do not believe the Constitution gives me the right to block a qualified nominee, no matter who is in the White House. I say that today, and I have said it many times before.

A Republican President may have nominees I disagree with. That is most likely so. But the people elect a President. They give him or her the right to select a team to govern.

Today—right now—the majority leader can call a vote to confirm these

nominees, yet he chooses not to. We changed the Senate rules to allow a majority vote, but that does no good if they remain blocked. That is what is happening in this Congress. The line gets longer and longer of perfectly qualified nominees who are denied a vote and are unable to serve.

So I am not sure who wins here, but I know who loses. The losers are the American people. The losers are the men and women who cannot get a day in court, because there is no judge to hear their case.

The losers are American citizens, businesses, and workers who rely on our embassies and other public servants. The room is empty, and the work is not done—all because one Senator says no, and the majority leader says OK.

Nominees should be judged on their merits, not on feelings about a President someone may not like or a policy someone may not approve. They are public servants in the executive branch, on our courts. They serve the people of this country.

Too often now that service goes begging because one Senator wants to make a point and will gum up the works to do it. That is not governing; it is a temper tantrum.

So I say to my colleagues: Let's get serious. Let's stop these games. Give nominees the consideration they deserve. Give the American people a government that works.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RECESS

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:19 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

#### SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, last year we made a promise to the American people. If we were elected to the majority, we would get Washington working again for American families. Republicans in the Senate have been focused on putting our country on not just another course but a better course. This will allow us to begin rebuilding the trust of hard-working taxpayers who have seen their government become less effective and less accountable.

Over the course of this year, as the Senate got back to work, the American