

40 more this year, giving many of these veterans—some of whom have been seriously injured during the course of their military service—a real purpose in life. Indeed, in the *Army Times* story I mentioned just a moment ago, there are some heartrending, touching stories about how, even for people who suffered very traumatic injuries during their military service, this gives them a new sense of purpose and focus, and it is very, very encouraging.

I had the chance to see the HERO program in action last year in San Antonio, and it is protecting our children and taking criminals off the street. It is pretty clear that when we set our minds to it, we can make a difference in the lives of crime victims. We proved that with the passage of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, and we can do it again.

I encourage all of our colleagues to consider supporting the Justice for All Reauthorization Act. This is a bicameral, bipartisan proposal that would help victims get the support they need and they deserve.

As advocates and survivors across the country use this week to highlight the needs of millions of crime victims, let's also remember that we have a responsibility and an opportunity to do something about it right here in this Chamber.

Mr. President, I don't see anyone interested in recognition, so I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ZIKA VIRUS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, the Zika virus is getting very serious. Today one of the officials at the Centers for Disease Control said that "this is scarier than we initially thought." As to a pregnant woman who is infected with the Zika virus, it may not only cause the fetus to be deformed with a much smaller head, but they are finding other birth defects as well as premature births. Normal, otherwise healthy people who become infected with the virus usually have relatively mild flu-like symptoms, but there are devastating consequences when the virus is contracted by a woman who is pregnant. Today the CDC said: "Most of what we've learned is not reassuring." They also said: "Everything we look at with this virus seems to be a bit scarier than we initially thought." That is coming straight from the experts at CDC.

When you look at where this virus is, unfortunately, there are more people in my State of Florida who have the virus than in any other State in the country. Nationwide, there are multiples of hundreds who have the virus. In the State of Florida, we have identified just

under 100 people who have the virus. Thankfully, of those who were infected in Florida, none of them contracted it in Florida; they contracted the virus someplace else.

There is a vast amount of traveling that goes on between Florida and Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is one source where the virus is coming from. When that mosquito bites you, it transmits the virus, and that mosquito is quite prevalent in Puerto Rico. So the island is having its own trauma with the Zika virus manifesting there, but there is also a source in other countries throughout Central America, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

What do we need to do? Well, one little bit of good news I can give you is that the bill we passed in the Senate before the Easter recess is now in the House, and it will be taken up by the House tomorrow. They should pass it and send it to the President's desk for signature. What that bill does is give financial incentive to the drug companies by adding Zika as a virus to the list of tropical diseases for which the drug companies have a financial incentive to go and find a cure or a vaccine. This bill is complicated as far as what the financial incentives will be. I could explain that, but for purposes of discussion here, I just wanted to share that little bit of good news. We are going to have that bill in law, and we want to unleash the creative potential of our pharmaceutical industry to go and find a cure or vaccine that will take care of it.

The other side of it is what the CDC is saying is scarier than we thought, and that is the fact that it is having such devastating societal and medical consequences for a woman who is pregnant and gets the virus. We can imagine the trauma to that family with a deformed child being born as a result of the virus. We can imagine the expense to society of a child who is severely handicapped. As a result, we are talking about major effort.

There is something else we can do about it; that is, the President's budgetary request has \$1.9 billion specifically targeted for helping to do the research on the Zika virus. It is my hope, and I know I have the cooperation and, indeed, the considerable help and energy of my colleague from Florida, Senator RUBIO, in wanting to seek this and to get successfully in the appropriations bill for the Department of HHS the \$1.9 billion to continue the research and all of the ancillary expenses that are coming as a result of it.

Down the road, we will find a vaccine. Down the road, we will be able to manage this problem. But, in the meantime, there is a great deal of trauma, some extraordinary heartbreak to some families, which should be, again, the warning: If you are pregnant, do not go anywhere exposing the skin to a mosquito bite, particularly in those regions with that variety of mosquito that carries the Zika virus.

So I hope by this time tomorrow night, we will say one hallelujah that

the House bill has passed, the Senate bill has passed the House, and it is on the way to the President's desk for signature. Then, let's take up this issue in the appropriations bill when it hits the floor in another few weeks.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Waverly D. Crenshaw, Jr., of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes for debate only on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during quorum calls be charged equally.

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

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in December of 2014, Judge William Joseph Haynes, Jr., of the Middle District of Tennessee, assumed senior status, creating a vacancy on the Middle District bench. That vacancy has resulted in increased caseloads for the three active Federal district judges—Judge Sharp, Judge Campbell, and Judge Trauger.

Fortunately, help is on the way.

In June, Senator CORKER and I had the pleasure of introducing Waverly Crenshaw to the Senate Judiciary Committee when it met to consider his nomination. I was pleased that the committee agreed with our position, and they reported out his nomination by voice vote the following month.

It's easy to see why Tennesseans support Mr. Crenshaw and are excited about his nomination—and the prospect that the Senate will confirm him tonight. He was born in Nashville, and then he stayed—attending Vanderbilt

University for both college and law school.

After law school, he clerked for Judge John Nixon in the Middle District of Tennessee, the same court where we hope he will soon serve. After his clerkship, he worked for the Tennessee attorney general before entering private practice. In 1987 he became an associate of a small labor and employment law firm in Nashville. In 1990 he joined one of our largest firms—Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis—where he is currently a partner.

He is also active in the Nashville community serving as unpaid legal counsel to the Nashville Conventions and Visitors Corporation, the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, and the YWCA, among others.

The Middle District of Tennessee is fortunate to have such a well-qualified nominee. Waverly Crenshaw is a man of good character and of good temperament, and today I encourage my colleagues to vote for his confirmation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I am glad to join the senior Senator, as I have many times, but I thank him for his comments about this distinguished person whom I hope is going to be confirmed this afternoon as a district court judge.

When the White House began looking for someone to fill this position, I spoke with people, as I am sure Senator ALEXANDER did, across Middle Tennessee to really find someone who not only would serve in his position well but had, in his current role, been involved in the community and had done many other things outside of law to benefit the community itself. Certainly, this is someone who has done that.

It became very clear that he has distinguished himself not only as a talented attorney but also as a well respected leader in the Nashville community. As Lamar has mentioned, he is a lifelong Middle Tennessee resident. He received his law degree from Vanderbilt University. He was the first African-American attorney at the Waller law firm, and he has been a partner since 1994.

He served as Tennessee's assistant attorney general from 1984 to 1987, and as a law clerk, as was mentioned, for the Honorable John Nixon. This is exactly the branch he hopes to serve in.

I am confident he will serve the people of Middle Tennessee in this new role in an honorable fashion. I am proud to be here to support him with our senior Senator and with so many other people, by the way, in Middle Tennessee who want to see him confirmed in this position. I hope others will join us today in confirming him, and I look forward to him serving. By the way, it is a place where there is a dire need to have someone of his capacity. We have many cases that are backed up. This is one of those places

where we not only need someone to fill the role, but we need someone as distinguished as Mr. Crenshaw.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the time. This Senator looks forward to his confirmation. I hope everyone will join in confirming this nominee.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today we will finally vote on the nomination of Waverly Crenshaw to fill a judicial emergency vacancy in the Federal District Court in the Middle District of Tennessee. This vacancy has been open since December 2014, and Mr. Crenshaw was nominated over a year ago, on February 4, 2015. He has the support of his two Republican home State Senators, Senators ALEXANDER and CORKER. He was voted out of the Judiciary Committee by unanimous voice vote last summer on July 9, 2015. There is no good reason why it has taken 14 months to confirm this nominee.

Mr. Crenshaw is currently a partner at the law firm Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, LLP, in Nashville. Mr. Crenshaw was the first African-American partner at Waller, and in his nearly three-decade career in private practice, he has tried approximately 50 cases to verdict. Mr. Crenshaw also served for 3 years in the Tennessee attorney general's office as an assistant attorney general. He has the experience and qualifications necessary to serve on the Federal bench, and he should be confirmed.

This is our first judicial confirmation vote in 2 months. In the last 2 years of the Bush administration—with a Democratic majority—the Senate confirmed 68 judges. This new Congress, the Republican leadership has allowed only 16 judges to be confirmed since they gained the majority last year. This record of obstruction began last year, when Senate Republicans confirmed the fewest judicial nominees in more than half a century.

Senate Republican leadership is failing our Federal judiciary with their obstruction of judicial confirmations. When Senate Republicans took over the majority in January of last year, there were 43 judicial vacancies. Since then, vacancies have dramatically increased more than 75 percent to 79. Furthermore, the number of judicial vacancies deemed to be "emergencies" by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts because caseloads in those courts are unmanageably high has nearly tripled under Republican Senate leadership—from 12 when Republicans took over last year to 34 today.

After we vote on Mr. Crenshaw's nomination, 19 judicial nominees will remain pending on the Executive Calendar. This includes nominees with home state support from Republican Senators, including Robert Rossiter for the Federal District Court in the District of Nebraska; Edward Stanton for the Federal District Court in the Western District of Tennessee; and Susan Baxter and Marilyn Horan for the Federal District Court in the Western District of Pennsylvania.

We can reduce the empty judgeships in those states if Republican leadership would allow timely votes on the pending judicial nominees on the Executive Calendar. All of those nominees were reported out of the Judiciary Committee by voice vote. There should not be any further delay in confirming them.

Last Thursday, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and 42 other organizations submitted a letter to Chairman GRASSLEY expressing their dismay with the failure of the Judiciary Committee to do its job to process nominees for our Federal trial and appellate courts, creating a growing backlog of judicial nominations. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of this letter at the end of my statement.

The American people expect Senators to do their jobs. This is true with judicial nominations to the lower courts, but it is even more crucial for the Supreme Court of the United States because no one can fill in for the vacant seat on our highest Court. In just the last few weeks, the Supreme Court has deadlocked twice, so it was unable to serve its constitutional function. Refusing to consider Chief Judge Merrick Garland for the Supreme Court is not only unfair to him, it is irresponsible and a threat to a functioning democracy.

A recent poll shows that nearly 70 percent of Americans—including a majority of Republicans—say that the Senate should hold a hearing for Chief Judge Garland. That is what the American people are saying, but Republicans are refusing to hear them. Instead of listening to their constituents, they are listening to powerful interest groups.

Since public confirmation hearings of Supreme Court nominees began in 1916, the Senate has never denied a Supreme Court nominee a hearing and a vote. And based on the Senate's precedent for decades, the Senate Judiciary Committee should hold a hearing for Chief Judge Garland this month.

A public hearing would allow Americans to engage in the process of considering the nomination and hear directly from Chief Judge Garland, but Senate Republicans continue to refuse to do their jobs. Instead, Republicans have outsourced their job to political interest groups whose only goal is to raise millions of dollars to launch a smear campaign against the nominee's admirable record of public service. These outside groups are not accountable to the American people. They do not have the American people's interest in mind. They are private, powerful groups whose only goal is to advance their own special interests at any cost.

These special interest groups are spending millions of dollars in dark money to run ads distorting Chief Judge Garland's record. At the same time, Republican Senators are planning to deny Chief Judge Garland a chance to defend himself at a public

hearing. It is wrong, it is harmful, and it is unfair.

Some Senators have claimed that their unprecedented obstruction against Chief Judge Garland is based on “principle, not the person.” But it is not principled to attack Chief Judge Garland’s sterling career and then refuse to allow him the chance to respond at a public hearing.

Rather than following the demands of unaccountable interest groups, Republicans should listen to the American people who want to see real leadership in Washington. Americans want Republicans to do their jobs and consider for themselves the merits of Chief Judge Garland’s record through a public hearing and a vote.

I am glad that several Republican Senators have agreed to meet with Chief Judge Garland. This is a person who has spent almost three decades in public service and has more Federal judicial experience than any Supreme Court nominee in history. Those who meet with Chief Judge Garland will see what I have seen: that he has an exceptional legal mind and a deep respect for the Constitution. His commitment to public service is inspiring, from his days at the Justice Department working as a prosecutor on the ground in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing to his nearly two decades as a Federal appellate judge.

But simply meeting with Chief Judge Garland is not enough. The Senate must act on his nomination. In the last several weeks, the Supreme Court deadlocked twice and was not able to carry out its constitutional role as the final arbiter of our Nation’s laws. Where you live will impact what your rights are. That is unacceptable and contrary to our constitutional system. If Republicans’ irresponsible obstruction of Chief Judge Garland does not stop, this will continue at the Supreme Court for two terms.

I hope Senate Republicans will listen to the American people, roll up their sleeves, and do their job. We must carry out one of our most important and solemn responsibilities and consider the Supreme Court nomination before us.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS,
Washington DC, April 7, 2016.

Hon. CHARLES GRASSLEY,
Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY: On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 42 undersigned organizations, we write to express our dismay with the failure of the Judiciary Committee to address a growing backlog of federal judicial nominations. With only 16 judges confirmed so far, the 114th Congress is on pace to have the lowest number of judges confirmed since the 82nd Congress in 1951–1952. Even worse, in the face of rising caseloads and continuing judicial emergencies, it appears that the Committee is determined to shut down the confirmation process en-

tirely—putting political considerations ahead of the national interest in a well-functioning judicial branch, and ahead of the constitutional responsibility of the Senate to do its job of providing advice and consent on presidential appointments.

While a great deal of public attention has rightly been focused on the pending nomination of Chief Judge Merrick Garland to the U.S. Supreme Court, vacancies on the lower courts must not be lost amidst the debate. This year, President Obama has nominated seven individuals to serve on U.S. Courts of Appeal in various circuits throughout the country, including several in circuits that are currently experiencing judicial emergencies. While some senators have expressed vague and superficial reasons for opposing consideration of individual nominees, the qualifications of these nominees cannot be seriously disputed—every one of the nominees below has an outstanding background, as well as the widespread respect of those in the legal community who know them best:

Rebecca Ross Haywood (Third Circuit): Nominated on March 15, Ms. Haywood has spent most of her legal career as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania, including as the Appellate Chief of the Civil Division since 2010. She regularly practices before the court to which she has been nominated—and, if confirmed, would be the first African-American woman to serve there.

Lisabeth Tabor Hughes (Sixth Circuit): Nominated on March 17, Judge Hughes was appointed to the Kentucky Supreme Court in 2007 by then-Governor Ernie Fletcher and was reelected twice, including without opposition in 2014. She previously served on the Kentucky Court of Appeals (also having been appointed by Gov. Fletcher), and has extensive experience in both private practice and as a trial judge in Jefferson County, Kentucky. She would be the first woman from Kentucky on the court.

Donald Karl Schott (Seventh Circuit): Nominated on Jan. 12, Mr. Schott graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1980. Since then, he has spent most of his legal career in private practice at Quarles & Brady, where he became a partner in 1987, and has extensive trial and appellate litigation experience, at both the state and federal levels, specializing in securities and business fraud, commercial disputes, health care, and energy-related issues.

Myra C. Selby (Seventh Circuit): Nominated on Jan. 12, Ms. Selby spent 15 years in private practice and Indiana state government before being nominated in 1995 to the Indiana Supreme Court. She was the first African American and first woman to serve there, and authored more than 100 majority opinions, before returning to private practice in 1999. Since then, she has specialized in commercial and health care litigation. She would be the first African American from Indiana and the first woman from Indiana on the Seventh Circuit.

Jennifer Klemestrud Puhl (Eighth Circuit): Nominated on Jan. 28, Ms. Puhl spent several years in private practice and as a clerk on the North Dakota Supreme Court. In 2002, she joined the criminal division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of North Dakota, where she prosecutes a wide range of criminal cases and specializes in computer hacking and cybersecurity, intellectual property, and human trafficking. She would be the first woman federal judge at any level in North Dakota.

Lucy H. Koh (Ninth Circuit): Nominated on Feb. 25, Judge Koh became the first Asian American judge to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, having been confirmed in 2010 by a 90–0 vote. Prior to her current position, she worked for

the Senate Judiciary Committee, held several positions within the Department of Justice, and spent six years in private practice. In 2008, she was appointed as a judge to the Superior Court of California for Santa Clara County by then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. She would be only the second Asian American woman ever to serve on a federal circuit court.

Abdul K. Kallon (Eleventh Circuit): Nominated on Feb. 11, Judge Kallon has served on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama since 2009, after being confirmed by the Senate by unanimous consent. For the previous fifteen years, Judge Kallon specialized in labor and employment law as a partner at the Birmingham, Alabama firm Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP. If confirmed, Judge Kallon would be the first African American from Alabama to serve on the Circuit.

In addition, the committee has failed to act on dozens of pending district court nominees—too many to list here—from throughout the country. As with the above appellate nominees, many of these nominees would fill seats in districts that are currently facing judicial emergencies. Many of the district and appellate nominees come from states in which both senators have returned their so-called “blue slips,” indicating their approval of the nominees. Normally, this should clear the way for hearings and up-or-down confirmation votes. Instead, these nominees have fallen victim to election-year gamesmanship.

The complete obstruction of nominees is unprecedented, and the arguments some are making in defense of this obstruction are wholly unpersuasive. In 2008, the Democratic party-controlled Senate confirmed 22 judges in the last seven months of George W. Bush’s presidency, including 10 in September 2008. During Ronald Reagan’s presidency, the Senate on average confirmed 16 judges in the second half of presidential election years. There is no legitimate reason why things should be any different in the last year of President Obama’s second term.

While the Committee refuses to do its job, the American people are left to pay the price. There are currently 32 judicial emergencies nationwide (16 of the pending nominees would fill these seats), and more than 40 total nominees pending in committee or on the Senate floor. Many of the pending nominees would fill vacancies in courts that have been left short-handed for years. Donald Schott would fill a Seventh Circuit seat that has been vacant for more than six years, and more than 30 of the 46 pending nominees are nominated to seats that have been empty for more than a year.

Meanwhile, the inaction is slowing the wheels of justice for all types of parties who are seeking to vindicate their legal and constitutional rights. Numerous judges have explained the consequences they and litigants face: long delays on even the most simple filings and motions, protracted waits for post-conviction sentences, spoiled evidence, witnesses whose memories fade, lost businesses and the jobs that go with them while waiting for trials, and many more. Not only is the situation rife with injustices, but it is also completely unsustainable.

The Committee has a constitutional responsibility to provide advice and consent on presidential nominees, and a duty to the American people to simply do its job. In the coming weeks and months, our organizations will continue to make the case until it does.

If you have any questions, please contact Rob Randhava, Senior Counsel at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights at (202) 466-3311, or any of the organizations listed below. As organizations that collectively represent millions of diverse

Americans who have a stake in a fair, effective judicial system, we thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, AFL-CIO, Alliance for Justice, American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Teachers, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Americans for Democratic Action, Asian Americans Advancing Justice AAJC, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA), Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations, The Center for Asian Pacific American Women, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Constitutional Accountability Center, CREDO, Defenders of Wildlife, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, Earthjustice, Human Rights Campaign, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, League of Conservation Voters, NAACP.

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., National Association of Human Rights Workers, National Association of Social Workers, National Black Justice Coalition, National Center on Time and Learning, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, National Congress of American Indians, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), National Council of Jewish Women, National Education Association, National Employment Lawyers Association, National Fair Housing Alliance, National Hispanic Media Coalition, National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund, National Partnership for Women & Families, National Women's Law Center, People For the American Way, Pride at Work, South Asian Americans Leading, Together (SAALT) United Auto Workers (UAW), The Workmen's Circle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

AMENDMENT NO. 3524

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, while we are waiting for members of the Judiciary Committee to come and speak to the judicial nomination we will vote on shortly, I want to take the opportunity to talk about a pending amendment which is being offered by Senator BENNET of Colorado and which I would recommend to the Senate that they favorably consider. It is dealing with families traveling on airlines.

As you know, things get very specific about seats and how much they charge for the seats. You pay extra for some baggage and other services, and then you get into seats that are getting increasingly smaller. It is even worse for a woman who is pregnant or is traveling with small children.

Senator BENNET's amendment is a family-friendly amendment. If a parent has a minor child who is going on the plane by themselves, it would require TSA to allow the parent to accompany the child throughout the screening process. To a small child, that can be quite intimidating.

Secondly, it would require the airlines to provide pregnant women with the opportunity to preboard the flight. How many times have we seen everybody queueing up to get on the flight? The special advantage passengers get on, the first class passengers get on, the members of the frequent flyer program get on, and here is a lady who is quite along in her pregnancy still

standing. That is just common sense. That is being gentlemanly about the rules of airlines.

Thirdly, the amendment tries to keep families together because it would require the airlines to make sure that at least one adult of the family who is traveling together can sit next to the child on the plane without the airlines saying the parent will have to pay an extra fee in order to guarantee having a seat next to their minor child. This is common sense, and it is encouraging family travel.

I certainly urge my colleagues to support this amendment as we will be taking up the FAA bill after this judicial nomination confirmation vote.

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

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I yield back any remaining time.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Crenshaw nomination?

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 44 Ex.]

YEAS—92

Alexander	Coons	Heller
Ayotte	Corker	Hirono
Baldwin	Cornyn	Hoeben
Barrasso	Cotton	Inhofe
Bennet	Crapo	Isakson
Blumenthal	Daines	Kaine
Blunt	Donnelly	King
Booker	Durbin	Kirk
Boozman	Enzi	Klobuchar
Boxer	Ernst	Lankford
Brown	Feinstein	Leahy
Burr	Fischer	Lee
Cantwell	Flake	Manchin
Cardin	Franken	Markey
Carper	Gardner	McCain
Casey	Gillibrand	McCaskill
Cassidy	Grassley	McConnell
Coats	Hatch	Menendez
Cochran	Heinrich	Merkley
Collins	Heitkamp	Mikulski

Moran	Rounds	Tester
Murphy	Rubio	Thune
Murray	Sasse	Tillis
Nelson	Schatz	Toomey
Perdue	Schumer	Udall
Peters	Scott	Warner
Portman	Sessions	Warren
Reed	Shaheen	Whitehouse
Reid	Shelby	Wicker
Risch	Stabenow	Wyden
Roberts	Sullivan	

NOT VOTING—8

Capito	Johnson	Sanders
Cruz	Murkowski	Vitter
Graham	Paul	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The majority whip.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VIEQUES

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we are all concerned about the plight right now of Puerto Rico and what is happening over there financially. And later on this week I will revisit the issue of the 4-year battle of Vieques that took place from 1999 to 2003. I am very much concerned that we might have an opportunity here to rectify something that was done that should not have been done back in 2002.

The island off of Puerto Rico called Vieques had been an integrated training center for many years—about 60 years—up until 2002. For purely political reasons at that time, it became quite an issue. First of all, joint training took place on the island of Vieques. Joint training means you have different branches of the military trying to accomplish something together that they couldn't do individually. In the case of Vieques, it was the Marines, the Navy, and the Air Force. We were able to do the type of training we couldn't do anywhere else.