

needs to give the U.S. Supreme Court a full complement of nine Justices. The Republicans still refuse to give Chief Judge Merrick Garland a hearing or a vote. ORRIN HATCH, who opened the Senate a few minutes ago, has said Merrick Garland is a consensus nomination. I don't know if he forgot what he said or didn't mean it at the time. I think he did mean it at the time. Republicans want to hold the seat open for Donald Trump to fill. If that doesn't startle you, I don't know what would.

What more do you need to see from Trump to realize that he is dangerous and unfit for the Presidency? How can you hold a Supreme Court vacancy open for this man and his weird ideas?

It is not just the Supreme Court. Republicans have deadlocked our entire system of justice because of the Republican Senate's dysfunction. This Republican Senate has confirmed the fewest circuit and district court judges in many decades. Republicans want Trump to remake the justice system in his image. What an image that would be—a Trump judiciary.

To show the American people's disgust with how Republicans have treated Merrick Garland's nomination, starting today I am objecting to committees meeting for other purposes until the Judiciary Committee schedules a meeting to consider Judge Garland's nomination. If the Republican leader thinks there is a committee that needs to meet because of extraordinary circumstances, I would be pleased to consider his request. But in the meantime, as of today, we are objecting to committees meeting, in line with the rules of the Senate.

In addition to ending the disgusting and repugnant opposition to Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court, we must also pass legislation to keep guns and explosives out of the hands of suspected terrorists and other dangerous individuals. How many more acts of gun violence must we witness before we need to do something about it? How many more slaughters must we witness? The American people agree with us. Eighty-five percent want to do something about this worsening gun situation. It is gun violence. Eighty-five percent of Americans support legislation to keep guns away from suspected terrorists. This is the case all over America. Sensible background checks—that is all it is.

The Senate Republicans should listen to the American people and stop listening to the National Rifle Association. We must take a stand against violence.

There are many, many other pressing ideas. We need to address the criminal justice system, which is in deep need of repair and renovation. The United States needs to help make college more affordable for American families. The United States needs to address campaign finance reform. We must keep dark money out of politics. It is here and getting bigger every day, principally because of two people—the

Koch brothers. The Kochs today are in hog heaven because they now can secretly funnel money to all their clandestine committees and groups. They are spending hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, funneling money to the Chamber of Commerce, the National Rifle Association, and many other front groups that no one has ever heard of—none of us have—but they are out running those ads with this secret money.

The U.S. Senate has much to do; I have mentioned only a few of the things. We have to use our time wisely. Sadly, for the last 7 weeks, we have not been using our time in a productive manner, and that is an understatement. That is why I was baffled to learn that the Republicans want to move to the Water Resources Development Act next week. I understand WRDA legislation. I have been chairman of that committee on two separate occasions. I know there is money in this bill for beleaguered Flint, MI. The people of Flint have waited months and months for this overdue relief.

Also in this bill is the Tahoe Restoration Act, which I support. Last Wednesday I had my 20th and last summit on Lake Tahoe. It is a much better place because of what we have done over the last 20 years. Two billion dollars has been spent on that beautiful lake. There is only one other lake like it in the whole world, and that is in Siberia. I know how important this Tahoe Restoration Act is. The fact remains that the Republican House is not going to pass it anyway, but I am willing to do what I can to act responsibly by not blocking this bill, as the Republicans would do, but we will legislate very carefully. Staffs are working to find out if we can have a path forward. I hope we can.

I appreciate the good work of Senators BOXER and INHOFE. I am hopeful that we can find a path forward on WRDA, as well as Zika, funding the government, and other matters about which I have spoken. In the meantime, the Senate has to prioritize. I know the Republican leader sets the Senate schedule, but he should acknowledge the situation for what it is. Now we have a logjam of important legislation that he created by recessing for 7 weeks—7 weeks, everybody.

We have a mess, but the mess is of the Republican leader's own making. Now that the Republicans have finally decided to come back to the Nation's Capital, it is time we move forward on these important issues that have been ignored for 7 weeks. In short, it is time for the Republicans to do their job.

Mr. President, I see no one on the floor. I ask that the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2577, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany H.R. 2577, a bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

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

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, over the past several weeks, I spent a lot of time traveling around my home State of Wyoming. I know the Presiding Officer spent a lot of time traveling around his home State of Oklahoma. I talked to a lot of people in Wyoming, as he did in Oklahoma, about one of the top concerns of the things that are on their minds. To me, and I know to the Presiding Officer, that has been the Obama health care law and the disastrous problems that people are facing. People now tell me that some of them are paying more for their health insurance than they are for their mortgage. That is not just a problem in Oklahoma or in Wyoming; it is a problem all across the country. And that is now.

What they are also doing is reading stories in the papers, front-page stories that are saying the rates next year are going to go up again—not just a little but a lot. I know that my Senate colleagues from all across the country—Republicans and Democrats—are hearing that because of the disastrous problems that the Obama health care law is currently experiencing. In Wyoming, the Obama health insurance exchange has only one company selling insurance—only one. Wyoming is not alone. This wasn't supposed to happen.

The Democrats in Congress who supported this health care law said that they were going to create more competition—bring down prices by lots of competition. I can still remember when the President gave a speech to Congress in 2009, and what did he tell us? He said that in 34 States, 75 percent of the insurance market was controlled by five or fewer companies—five or fewer. Now in Wyoming we are down to one.

The President said that without competition, the price of insurance goes up, and he said that the quality goes down. That is what President Obama said 7