

to a lot of the things he puts in them. It lies in how he governs, and he is not governing well. He is not governing down the middle. He is not governing in a way that lends itself to compromise. We Democrats will continue to hold the President accountable. That is our job. That is what the Constitution says we should do, and we will continue until we see the President change his course in governing. No speech is going to change that or affect that.

NOMINATION OF RYAN ZINKE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, one other issue is our nominee today, Mr. ZINKE. I want to spend a minute on him. He is the nominee for Secretary of Interior. One of the most important issues handled by the Interior Department is the stewardship of our national parks. These are some of the great national resources of our country.

When my children were younger, my wife and I would take them to national parks, and we would go hiking. We loved it. We so looked forward to going out West. I remember the reward at the end of a big hike was a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I probably wanted it even more than my kids did. I loved peanut butter and jelly.

From Niagara Falls to the Erie Canalway, to places like Seneca Falls, Stonewall, and Ellis Island, my dear State of New York is home to some of our country's most famous national parks and monuments. They are places I have visited and treasured my whole life. I have been concerned in recent years about the reluctance on the other side of the aisle to properly care for these great national beauties, these great national resources. Currently, there is a \$12 billion maintenance backlog for our national parks. Our Republican majority has not seen fit to address them.

Now, adding insult to injury, the new administration's hiring freeze across Federal agencies has already affected parks like the Women's Rights National Historic Park in Seneca Falls, which I have visited many times. It has had to cancel tours due to insufficient funding.

Most troubling, our Republican colleagues want to make it easier to sell off or give away public lands and expand the footprint of the oil and gas industries on public lands—as usual, helping those narrow special interests, hurting the average American. That seems to be the trademark of this administration, which our friends on the other side of the aisle are happily going along with.

That is the context in which I approach Congressman ZINKE's nomination. He claims to be a conservationist in the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt, a great New Yorker. He has demonstrated support for rules, however, that would make it easier to sell off public lands. It is the opposite of what Teddy Roosevelt wanted.

Congressman ZINKE claims to be a conservationist, but he said he would revisit actions taken by the last administration to use the Antiquities Act to permanently protect endangered places of cultural, tribal significance. He claims to be a Roosevelt conservationist but pledged his support for the Trump administration's energy agenda—once again, centered on efforts to expand drilling and mining on Federal lands and waters. A few big oil companies would be made happy, but America would lose a great resource that is an economic resource as well as a beautiful natural resource.

I would say to Mr. ZINKE: You can't be a Roosevelt conservationist when you vote to make it easier to sell off public lands. You can't be a Roosevelt conservationist when you support opening up public lands to increased extraction and drilling. You are not much of a conservationist when you downplay the authority of the legislation that allows the President to create national monuments.

In sum, Congressman ZINKE says he is a dyed-in-the-wool conservationist but doesn't have the record to back it up. That should concern every outdoor enthusiast, every lover of our great and grand national parks.

Unfortunately, because of his record, I will vote no on Mr. ZINKE's nomination. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of RYAN ZINKE, of Montana, to be Secretary of the Interior.

Under the previous order, there will now be 20 minutes of debate, equally divided.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, what a historic day for Montana. As a fellow Montanan, as a member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, I look forward

to working with RYAN ZINKE in his new role as the Secretary of the Interior.

Serving at the helm of the Department of the Interior, I know he will be a strong advocate for our public lands. He will uphold the Federal trust responsibility to Indian tribes, and he will help unleash American energy and will strengthen our water infrastructure.

I have heard all week some friends on the other side of the aisle speak against my good friend from Montana, RYAN ZINKE. I can tell you, I am perplexed. They are concerned that RYAN ZINKE may not uphold the important roles of the Department of Interior—and that is to protect the public interests in land and mineral management—that he will take shortcuts to extract minerals. Let me tell you what RYAN ZINKE will do, and I have known RYAN ZINKE for 38 years. He will finally restore balance to the use and management of Federal land.

Do you know that in Montana we have more recoverable coal than any State in the United States? Yet the Obama administration had planned to block our ability, Montana's ability, to develop these resources. A moratorium is not a responsible policy. It is reckless. It is misguided, leaving the States and the tribes to be reliant on mineral royalties, to lose out on these revenues, and lose out on the good-paying jobs that coal supports. RYAN ZINKE will take a fresh look at our coal programs and see how we can access these untapped resources in an environmentally responsible way.

Let me remind my colleagues that RYAN ZINKE was born and raised in Montana. It is a State where we like to say we get to work where we also like to play. He will restore that balance to the Department so Montanans can gain better access to our public lands.

He will also ensure our public lands work for those who live closest to them, and that means our States and our tribes. RYAN is a Montanan. He grew up in America's public lands. He grew up in the shadows of Glacier National Park. I grew up in the shadows of Yellowstone National Park. He knows we must strike this balance between conservation and responsible energy development, and he understands better than anybody I know that one-size-fits-all policies of Washington, DC, never work for real America.

I look forward to voting for my friend, my colleague, a Navy SEAL for 23 years, and our next Secretary of the Interior, RYAN ZINKE.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I will vote against confirming Representative RYAN ZINKE as Secretary of the Interior, and I would like to take this opportunity to explain why. To put the matter succinctly, Representative ZINKE—if he is confirmed—will be charged with implementing the Trump administration's "energy independence plan," which includes maximizing energy production on Federal lands, including the outer continental shelf,