

For many Americans, this Supreme Court seat will always come with an asterisk attached to it. They believe and I believe that it was a stolen seat that belonged to Judge Merrick Garland.

Many Americans are wondering why we are rushing to fill a lifetime vacancy while President Trump's campaign remains under investigation and will for at least some while.

I believe we have some time. Judge Garland waited 293 days for a hearing and a vote that never came. Judge Gorsuch has waited 48 days for a hearing and many of our Republican friends would like to see him seated this week.

Again, I would say: Judge Merrick Garland waited 293 days for a hearing and a vote that never, never came.

What we face here today, I think, is a rush to judgment. I would just say that we have time. We ought to hit the pause button on this nomination.

The American people are watching us, and history will judge us. I fear that history may judge us poorly if anyone other than Merrick Garland is confirmed at this time. I fear that history may judge us poorly if we do not insist that the Trump campaign is first cleared of any wrongdoing before we move forward. We need to get this right. We have time to get this right.

The Senate has been through it all. The good men and women of the Senate have always disagreed—sometimes passionately, oftentimes loudly. I understand that this disagreement before us may seem irresolvable, but that is only if we seek to cut off debate and admit defeat. Personally speaking, I am not ready to do that today or this week.

I believe we have time. I believe we have the opportunity to right a historic wrong. We have not just an opportunity to right a historic wrong but also an obligation to get this right.

I yield the floor.

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. McCONNELL. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is pretty obvious, based on the announcement Senators have made, that we are experiencing the first partisan filibuster of a Supreme Court nominee in the history of the country.

We have had plenty of time to discuss Judge Gorsuch and his credentials both in committee and on the floor, and I think it is now important to move forward.

CLOTURE MOTION

Therefore, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, John Kennedy, Jerry Moran, Mike Rounds, Chuck Grassley, Jeff Flake, Todd Young, John Cornyn, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis, Marco Rubio, John Thune, Michael B. Enzi, Orrin G. Hatch, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO RICH RIMKUNAS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I am pleased to pay tribute to a fine public servant and an incredible asset to the U.S. Congress.

Rich Rimbunas has had a career filled with outstanding achievement at the Congressional Research Service, CSR. After nearly 37 years of service, Rich will be retiring from CRS on Friday, April 28.

When Rich joined CRS in 1980, he was an analyst working on a broad array of social policy issues. Initially, he worked on issues like child nutrition, poverty, Social Security, social services for the aged, and unemployment insurance. Rich cocreated and coauthored a widely circulated CRS report on Federal social welfare spending. He was also a coauthor and contributor to several chapters in the House Ways and Means Committee print "Children in Poverty," which provided a detailed look at the incidence and characteristics of child poverty in the United States.

Rich ultimately became heavily involved in providing research and analytical support to Congress on many health policy issues, including analyses of aggregate national health expenditures, the Medicare hospital prospective payment system, the Medicare Advantage program, and Medicare catastrophic drug costs. Additionally, he has worked on numerous issues related to Medicaid. He both directed a team of CRS analysts as well as contributed his own analysis to the Medicaid "Yellow Book," a 1988 House Ways and Means Committee print that provided a comprehensive analysis of the Medicaid program as it existed at the time. Rich also managed the 1993 update of the "Yellow Book."

Rich's analyses have typically involved quantitative research methodologies, modeling techniques, and

the use of complex databases. Rich has excelled at developing approaches for simulating the effects of potential changes to Federal benefits and grant allocation formulas.

In addition to the direct impact his research and analytical work has had on Federal policies, Rich has made equally important contributions within CRS in managerial roles. During his tenure at CRS, he has served as section research manager of the methodology section, the research development section, the research development and income support section, and the health insurance and financing section. During his tenure as an SRM, Rich helped manage CRS work on the 1996 welfare reform law and the 2003 overhaul of Medicare in the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act. Rich helped manage an interdisciplinary team numbering about 3 dozen CRS analysts that provided legislative support during the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

Throughout his career, Rich has served as a role model for the highest level of CRS service to Congress, upholding the Service's standards of authoritativeness, objectivity, and confidentiality. He is known within CRS for his attention to detail, methodological strength, and creative approaches toward conducting analyses. His input is sought on a great many research efforts spanning virtually all of the major domestic social policy issue areas that Congress deals with.

Rich is renowned for his tremendous work ethic and energizing presence. Those who have worked closely with him appreciate his ability to keep his sense of humor even during the most stressful times.

In recent years, Rich has served as the deputy assistant director of CRS's domestic social policy division. In that role, he has mentored and helped develop many of the division's managers, analysts, and research assistants. He has also played a central role in reviewing written work produced by the division, helping to ensure its accuracy, completeness, and quality. Moreover, in his work as a division manager, Rich has served on numerous advisory panels that have recommended organizational practices and policies for CRS, many of which have been adopted.

Rich's policy expertise has been broadly recognized. He is regularly sought for his expertise at professional meetings and conferences. He was nominated to the National Academy of Social Insurance in 2002 and has served on the steering committee of the National Health Forum. He has also been recognized with numerous Library of Congress special achievement awards.

Rich has devoted nearly his entire distinguished professional career to supporting the work of Congress and to helping build and strengthen CRS and advance its mission.

We will miss Rich, but we wish him and his family the best of luck moving forward.

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to express my serious concerns with the budget for fiscal year 2018 recently proposed by President Trump. If adopted, this budget would have severe consequences on many Americans, but I am particularly concerned that it would be low-income families who are impacted the most. As vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will do everything in my power to make sure that does not happen.

Among countless examples within a budget that is out of touch and that will drive more American families into poverty, the President's proposal to eliminate the Community Service Block Grant, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, and the Weatherization Assistance Program should be concerning to all of us. These are resources that are essential not only to Vermonters, but to millions of families throughout the country.

The Community Service Block Grant ensures that low-income families receive the support they need for basic food and housing assistance, financial planning tools, and fuel in winter months. LIHEAP and weatherization services ensure that families do not have to choose between food and heat. They ensure that families stay safe from harmful asbestos that may be in the walls of their old Vermont farmhouses or their inefficient mobile homes. In States like mine, home heating is a life-and-death matter.

We need to show compassion when drafting our budget and provide support for those programs that help hard-working families in need. We must see the faces behind these proposed budget cuts. Vulnerable people should never be at the whim of politically driven priorities.

We have to do better. I would like to begin by recognizing the crisis so many families will face in this country without the help of our community action agencies. Without them, families will go cold. They will choose not to eat so they can heat their homes. They will deny themselves healthcare and miss rent payments so that they can stay warm, so that they can stay alive.

Last month, I had the pleasure of seeing a longtime friend and fellow Vermonter Jan Demers, who serves as the executive director of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, CVOEO, Vermont's largest community action agency in Burlington. It was Jan who said it best, noting that, "President Trump's budget is like one amputation after another. Not bringing health to the community but cut after cut—loss after loss." I am proud that CVOEO and the other community action agencies continue to meet the needs of these families and hope all Senators will continue to support them as I have during my time in the Senate.

In recognition of their leadership, I ask unanimous consent that a state-

ment by Jan Demers be printed in the RECORD.

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

Good morning, my name is Jan Demers and I am the Executive Director of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. On behalf of the more than 23,000 Vermonters that CVOEO serves: Welcome. We are standing in CVOEOs Weatherization Warehouse. It is a fitting place to talk about President Trump's recently released budget. Thank you to Senator Leahy and your staff for organizing this press conference and for the leadership you provide for Vermont and the nation. Thank you to Jonathan Bond and our staff and for all the Community Action Agencies who carry on this good work. Thank you to Bobby Arnell, Sean Brown, Sarah Phillips and to our partners in the State of Vermont who uphold the values of care and wellness for all Vermonters. And thank you to Mr. Todd Alexander who typifies the strength of those we serve.

Community Action Agencies exist to support community well-being. We make sure that everyone can reach their potential and fully contribute to the total strength of our communities.

How does Mr. Trump's budget affect CVOEO? It zeros out the Community Service Block Grant—\$990,687. This is the foundational grant that undergirds the majority of our programs. It zeros out the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that keeps Vermonters warm in the winter. It zeros out the Department of Energy's Weatherization Program. Thankfully the State of Vermont is our main source of Weatherization funding. However, this will mean that 30 Vermont homes will not be weatherized in our area. Just those 3 cuts amount to a total of \$2,056,675.

On top of that there are the cuts to Head Start, Fair Housing, Housing assistance, Mobile Home, and Voices Against Violence. There isn't an area, program, staff person or any of the 23,000 people we served that won't be touched and experience devastation of services due to this budget.

We have heard over and over that the war on poverty didn't work. However, when the programs that created the War on Poverty in 1964 measured the percent of poverty it was at 20%. Seven years later the percentage of poverty was at 11%. It worked! Then the years of cutting started, cut after cut was enacted weakening the effort substantially. In 2012 the measured percent of poverty was 15%. Currently the percentage of poverty is 13.5%. To me that signifies that the measured efforts put into place during the Obama years are working.

There isn't a CVOEO Program that isn't decimated by this budget bringing great loss for the entire population of over 23,000 people that CVOEO served in FY 16. Community Action Agencies exist to support community well-being. Instead of health, this budget is like one amputation after another. Not bringing health to the community but cut after cut—loss after loss.

Our vision is bridging gaps and building futures for the people we serve. This budget widens the chasm and diminishes life.

This cannot be the last word in the Federal budget for FY 18.

Thank you, Senator Leahy for bringing us a better way.

PRESIDENT EL-SISI'S VISIT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is in Washington where he is

meeting with President Trump and other senior administration officials, as well as some Members of Congress.

President Trump has spoken glowingly of President el-Sisi, as he has of Russian President Putin and Philippine President Duterte. "Strong leaders," he calls them, as if that is enough to justify our wholehearted support. Unfortunately, world history is replete with examples of strong, messianic leaders who abused their power in ways that caused immense hardship for their people and divisiveness and conflict in their countries.

Despite that, the White House has voiced its strong support for President el-Sisi, and for U.S.-Egyptian relations.

I have been to Egypt many times, and I have voted for billions of dollars in U.S. aid for Egypt to support economic and security programs in that country. I have recognized positive developments in Egypt when they occur, such as President el-Sisi's decision to undertake economic reforms, including by reducing some subsidies. Far more needs to be done, however, if Egypt's economy is to break free of decades of state control, endemic corruption, and gross mismanagement.

I am also aware of the security threats Egypt faces in Libya and in the Sinai, although I and others have expressed deep concern with the flawed tactics the Egyptian Government is using to combat those threats. The U.S. has an interest in helping Egypt confront these challenges by addressing the underlying causes in a manner that is effective and consistent with international law.

President Trump has called President el-Sisi a fantastic guy. Ironically, that says a lot more about President Trump than it does about President el-Sisi.

President el-Sisi, a former general who seized power by force, has ruled with an iron fist. He has effectively banned public criticism of his government since the removal of former President Morsi, enforcing what amounts to a prohibition on protests and arresting hundreds of people in connection with the ban, many preemptively.

President el-Sisi's government has engaged in one of the widest arrest campaigns in the country's modern history, targeting a broad spectrum of political opponents. Local civil society organizations estimate that between 40,000 and 60,000 people are detained on political grounds, such as for protesting or calling for a change in government. Police have accused many of having links to the Muslim Brotherhood, usually without evidence that they have advocated or engaged in violence. Many other detainees belong to other political organizations or have no party affiliation.

A systematic crackdown on Egypt's independent civil society has left it on the verge of collapse. According to human rights groups, nearly every prominent Egyptian human rights defender or civil society leader is banned