

Nation. We created over 250,000 jobs and actually put North Carolina on the map by all references—CEO measures and by independent organizations. It is the State where businesses want to set up and do business.

We took the corporate tax from 6.9 down to 2.5. We took personal income tax rates from 7.75 down to 5.49. We got people back to work.

Along the way, we had our challenges. Everybody in Washington is for tax reform. They are for tax relief. They will come into your office and tell you: Let's get her going. Then on the side they will say: except for that one righteous exemption I may need. We have to have Members who have the courage to do tax reform that helps working families, that creates jobs, and that silences the people who want to take this exemption or that exemption away, so we do what is right for the generation that is about to look for jobs and the people who need a job today.

They want their businesses to grow. They want their economies to thrive. They want the United States to be the strong, great economy that it can be. It is going to take courage. It is going to take discipline. It is going to take time—but only so much time.

I believe this Congress, this Senate, over the course of a few months, if we focus on it and with the support of the President and in collaboration with the House, can get this done. We have to get it done. We promised the American people last year that if we had majorities, we would do what we had to do to deliver on this promise. It can be done. A lot of times, people ask me what keeps me up at night. I tell them two things: coffee and the national debt. Coffee is for the obvious reasons, but why the national debt? I will tell you why. Because when I have people on the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the service chiefs come into the Senate Armed Services Committee and say the single greatest threat to our national security is our debt, we should take notice. These are people who are skilled in warfare. They are people who know how to take the fight to the enemy. When they think the greatest threat to this Nation is our national debt, we had better take that seriously.

How do you resolve the national debt? You grow the economy. How do you grow the economy? You create jobs and help businesses throughout. How do you do that? You do that through tax reform. You also take criticism that is going to be waged by some people on the far left when we talk about corporate tax reform. They are going to say: How could you favor the big guy over the little guy? I don't know about you all, but I worked for companies before in my life. When I was 19 and living in a trailer park, I was working for a corporation. I was a little guy working for that corporation. Fortunately, in the 1980s, we had a President who had the wisdom to know that, if you reduced the tax burden on corporations,

more little guys like me—that 19-year-old living in a trailer park—could get a job—a better-paying job—and, ultimately, have enough money to put himself through school.

So when we get into this argument, don't take the bait by some people who will say that because we are focusing on corporate taxes and reducing the tax burden on businesses, that is somehow a guy in a suit trying to help out a business. That is a guy who has worked his way from that trailer park now into the U.S. Senate and benefited when Congress had the courage to reduce taxes and get the economy back on track. That is what we better do. That is what we promised. That is what we are here to do today. The time is now to get it done.

The President has shown wisdom in the blueprint—and our leadership here, in terms of the broad strokes about what tax reform needs to look like. Now it is our job—each and every individual Member of the Senate and the House—to deliver on the promise to produce tax reform to help the little guy and to get this economy going to be the great economy that it has been in the past, and I have every reason to believe that it will be so in the future.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 (Mr. TOOMEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of Calendar No. 95, the nomination of Heath Tarbert to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and Calendar No. 106, the nomination of Makan Delrahim to be Assistant Attorney General. I further ask that there be 5 hours of debate on the nominations, equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed, with no intervening action or debate, and that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, in the last 24 hours since I came to the floor to talk about Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, there has been progress but far less progress than is necessary at this critical time of humanitarian crisis, when the people of those islands literally face a chasm, a deepening canyon of needs and challenges.

Over the next 24 hours, over the next 24 days, over the next 24 months, this crisis must be met with a strategy, an overarching plan, a Marshall Plan for Puerto Rico that commits the resources unequivocally and unambiguously, making sure we match the depth of this crisis with a magnitude of resources and commitment that is needed and deserved. That kind of response, which has been lacking so far, is absolutely necessary for the hope of Puerto Rico because as the threats of disease and contaminated water increase, not to mention the lack of proper medicine, healthcare, roads, transportation and communication, food, water, medicine, basic necessities rise on that island, the people of Puerto Rico will lose trust and confidence in fellow Americans that must do more. We need to give them the hope they deserve, and that hope has to be more than rhetoric and more than patting ourselves on the back as the President has done. It has to be a real commitment.

In fact, there is no reason for back-patting. The response so far has been inadequate, lacking the full attention and commitment that is needed. It has been a story of inattention and inadequate strategy so far to meet this deepening humanitarian crisis.

The people of Texas, Florida, and throughout the gulf coast and the Southeast who have been affected by the storms have received the full commitment of America. It is what we owe our fellow Americans. That same commitment is owed to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. We saw an immediate disaster response there that must also be devoted to Puerto Rico. The emergency aid and full funding made to the victims of those storms in the gulf coast and Florida must be given to Puerto Rico, and I am hopeful that a relief bill will be fashioned this week.

I am also hopeful that the financial control board that has responsibility for Puerto Rico's internal finances can be given the flexibility and that the Government of Puerto Rico will be given the flexibility that is needed to deal with this disaster—nothing less than a full court press, a full plan and strategy, and a plan that directly addresses the needs of Puerto Rico in so many areas.

On transportation, what is the plan to ensure that basic goods can move from one end of the island to another? Right now the roads are unusable. By

all accounts, getting things across the island by road is impossible. Radar and navigation systems at the airports are down. The transportation mechanism of the island is literally ripped apart. So potable water, food, and fuel are impossible to move where they need to go. That state of affairs is inadequate and unacceptable in America in 2017.

Electricity and power are disrupted across the island. What will be done to restore power and electricity throughout the island? What will be done to make sure that diesel is available there and in the Virgin Islands? Many of the machines essential for lifesaving at the hospitals cannot be powered by generators alone. That state of affairs is inadequate and unacceptable in America in 2017.

All five of the hospitals in Arecibo, one of Puerto Rico's largest cities, are without power. Many other hospitals are shuttered as well. Clinics are closed.

Mosquito-borne diseases are a real and present danger. Deadly ailments in contaminated food and water may cause serious and possibly deadly diseases. As these diseases spread, what is the plan to stop this kind of inadequacy? It is unacceptable in America in 2017.

As to communications, or the basic ability to talk to each other, to reassure each other, and to know what is going on with relatives and loved ones and friends—no wonder that angst and alarm are spreading beyond Puerto Rico to Connecticut, where those relatives and friends live now—this kind of lack of communication is unacceptable in America in 2017. What is the plan to correct it?

On public safety, looting and theft are becoming more prevalent. As the days drag on, law and order will deteriorate unless public safety is addressed more effectively.

There is another kind of challenge. A dam that is about to burst and could cause havoc in surrounding areas is a clear and present safety danger that illustrates again the weakness of Puerto Rico's infrastructure.

Towns throughout the island have suffered severe flooding. So housing and basic shelter are inadequate. What is the plan to rebuild?

Payment for medicines cannot be made unless cash is available, and the lack of electricity means that the ATM machines are not working. If there is no cash for residents to buy basic goods, including food and water, how does the administration plan to solve this problem? This kind of inadequacy is unacceptable in America in 2017.

Rebuilding will require a long-term commitment. It will require a plan and a strategy, not just over the next 24 hours or 24 days but 24 months and longer. It must deal with a financial situation that is a storm of its own.

As I described it yesterday, this storm is not a natural disaster. It is a manmade disaster, the result of healthcare and tax programs that are

beyond any fault of the people of Puerto Rico. It is not of their doing.

Vast swaths of resources have been swept away in Puerto Rico, including many of the attractions important for Puerto Rico's tourist industry. The same is true, for example, on the island of St. John in the Virgin Islands. Tourism is a key component of Puerto Rico's economy. It may take years and possibly decades to restore. What is the long-term plan? What is the strategy for Puerto Rico and for the Virgin Islands? There needs to be a kind of Marshall Plan for rebuilding because the devastating damage done is no less than what Europe suffered as a result of World War II. We have an obligation—certainly, no less than rebuilding our European allies—to restore and rebuild Puerto Rico.

All of these natural disasters and the financial manmade storm come as Puerto Rico continues to endure the struggles of its internal financial commitments that are necessary for the lifeblood of the economy. Jobs and economic progress must be the end goal.

With so many questions about the President's plan or lack of plan, I am struck by the need for this body and this Congress to take the initiative. I think we will need to begin action, begin hearings, and begin a process of building a plan if the administration fails to present it.

I believe, too, that we share so much with the island of Puerto Rico in people who have come to Connecticut and other parts of the country that we will find a ready and enthusiastic audience and support for such an effort.

In the past 2 days, after silence through much of it about Puerto Rico, the President seemed to blame the island itself, its financial struggle, other storms, and even the size of the ocean. There should be no excuses. There must be a call to action.

I thank the Coast Guard, our military, the first responders, the rescuers, and relief organizations—from AmeriCares to the Red Cross to Save the Children—that have devoted so much and given so much in these times of crisis. They have been stretched thin. They have performed with courage and generosity and so have the donors who have come forward in Connecticut and around the country. People are calling my office asking what they can do for the people of Florida and the gulf coast and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They are all fellow Americans, and we owe it to them to do more and do better to make sure that we keep faith with our fellow Americans.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to talk about this subject.

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Mr. President, I want to express as well my concern regarding the renomination of Ajit Pai to be Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. I will oppose his nomination. As much as I respect his background and his achievements, his intelligence and

ability, I believe that, during his tenure over the past year, he has taken one step after another that is contrary to the public interest. He has launched an attack on net neutrality, and he is working adamantly for undoing the open internet order.

The open internet order was established based on 10 years of evidence about how the internet has changed, and it was most recently fully upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit in June 2016. The most recent evidence shows that net neutrality has not inhibited network investment at all, in contrast to Chairman Pai's claim.

On broadband privacy, Chairman Pai forcefully advocated in support of efforts to rescind the FCC's broadband privacy rules, a blatant attack on consumer privacy rights—all the more striking in light of recent dramatic concerns about privacy. Signing up for the internet should not mean that you have to sign away your rights to privacy, and that is why it is so important to have baseline privacy and data security rules that our broadband providers subscribe to, observe, and follow.

Earlier this year, Senate Republicans gave broadband providers a green light to sell sensitive personal information to the highest bidder—a move that came with cheers of support from Chairman Pai. By supporting this measure, I think Chairman Pai raised severe doubts about his commitment to the average American consumer.

One of Chairman Pai's first actions after his designation as chairman was to direct the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau to overturn an order designating nine wireless companies to provide lifeline broadband service through the USF Lifeline Program, despite the assertion that his foremost goal was to close the internet and digital divide. I strongly criticized this decision and led a letter to Chairman Pai expressing that this action not only forfeits and affects these providers consumers' interests, but it may also have a chilling effect on other broadband providers that were interested in participating in the Lifeline broadband program. This action would limit choice and increase the cost of service for the lifeline participants.

Finally, as Chairman of the FCC, Mr. Pai has a duty to review whether Sinclair's proposal to acquire Tribune Media complies with the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules and serves the public interest by promoting localism and diversity. Rather than scrutinizing this deal as closely and carefully as I believe he should, Mr. Pai has focused his efforts on loosening restrictions to enable the deal. This transaction not only blatantly violates existing rules, but it also abridges existing FCC policy. Those policies were just recently scrapped under Mr. Pai's watch.

This action can only be explained by interest in prioritizing the demands of Sinclair over the public interest. It

also is no surprise that this decision happened just days before he had a meeting with the chairman of Sinclair.

Every market impacted by this megamerger would experience a reduction in responsive local news due to Sinclair's unresponsive, top-down approach—denigrating diversity, diminishing our already distorted civic discourse, and devaluing local voices of women and people of color. Today, I sent a letter to Chairman Pai to let him know that blessing a media behemoth such as Sinclair-Tribune would reflect an abject failure on his part to protect the public interest and to uphold the FCC's duty to promote localism and diversity. Localism needs responsiveness to local interests, local news, and local voices. That is a trust the FCC has by its own rules and as a matter of public interest.

Today we rely more than ever on the internet for so many facets of our everyday life: freedom of expression, education, healthcare, housing, entertainment, and more. Consumers need a champion that will be their voice at a time when so often the public interest is drowned by moneyed interests and special interests.

Chairman Pai, far from our champion, seems to be more a servant of those interests. American consumers deserve better. My hope is, the President will nominate someone who can better serve those interests.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Massachusetts.

DELAHIM NOMINATION

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, our economy is in trouble. In markets all across our economy, a few giant corporations hold all the power. It is everywhere. Four airlines control over 80 percent of all domestic airline seats in America. Five health insurance giants own over 80 percent of the health insurance market. Four companies dominate over 80 percent of the beef market. Three drugstore chains control almost all retail pharmacies in the country. Two companies sell more than 70 percent of the beer in America.

As competition has been snuffed out in industry after industry, big corporations have made out like bandits, and everyone else has paid the price. How do we pay? American families shell out more for lower quality goods. Small businesses find it harder and harder to compete against the big guys. Innovators and entrepreneurs struggle to promote new ideas that can change the world. Income inequality has left more American families struggling to make ends meet as the top 1 percent has grown even richer and richer. As fewer companies have seized more economic power, they have translated their economic muscle into political power—power they can use to elect the politicians they like, get the kinds of laws and policies they like, and run up even more economic power.

It is a nasty, self-perpetuating cycle, and it is exactly why Congress created antitrust laws over a century ago. Back then, like today, a few powerful companies were stifling competition in markets all across the economy and gaining extraordinary political power. Congress decided to create laws to break up trusts and protect competition.

Today the Justice Department's Antitrust Division is charged with protecting competition by blocking anti-competitive mergers and going after companies that engage in illegal conduct. For decades, though, antitrust enforcers have put their tools on the shelf instead of aggressively enforcing our antitrust laws, they have given the green light to megamerger after megamerger and allowed big corporations to misuse this power without a peep.

That problem is set to get worse in the Trump administration. Since taking office, President Trump has loaded his administration with a Who's Who of former lobbyists, Wall Street insiders, and corporate executives committed to tilting the scales even further in favor of his powerful friends and against American families.

Now, President Trump has nominated someone to head the Justice Department's Antitrust Division. His nominee, Makan Delrahim, will be in charge of determining whether there is someone to stand up for competition or let the big guys just get bigger and more powerful. Unfortunately, Mr. Delrahim's approach to antitrust enforcement is based on a hands-off economic theory that just leaves big corporations to do pretty much whatever they want to do. Case in point, just last year, when asked what he thought about the proposed merger of AT&T-Time Warner—a merger that would combine two of the most powerful companies in media—Mr. Delrahim said he didn't think it was a "major antitrust problem."

Mr. Delrahim spent over a decade working to convince government officials that other megamergers weren't antitrust problems. During the airline merger wave that left us with only four major carriers, Mr. Delrahim was lobbying the government to approve a merger between US Airways and Delta. Despite the fact that there are only a few large retail pharmacies, he lobbied to get government approval for CVS's proposed takeover of Caremark. Even though only five health insurers control the vast majority of the health insurance market, he tried to convince government regulators to approve Anthem's unsuccessful attempt to merge with Cigna.

Now he wants to take a spin through the revolving door and regulate the industries he worked to make even less competitive. For the giant corporations, wealthy individuals who want to amass more power and profits for themselves, Mr. Delrahim is a dream candidate, but he is also a dream can-

didate for President Trump. President Trump has not been shy about his willingness to use his power against individuals or companies he doesn't like, and he has made it clear that he expects his agency heads to carry out his orders.

Mr. Delrahim has been a loyal supporter of President Trump's since the campaign. He urged fellow Republicans to support President Trump because he correctly believed President Trump would appoint a pro-corporate Justice to the Supreme Court. He also served as legal counsel to President Trump after he was sworn in and as the President reversed rules that made it easier for families to pay their mortgages or reversed rules to prevent people with serious mental illnesses from buying guns or reversed rules to stop companies from dumping toxic waste into water. As head of the Antitrust Division, Mr. Delrahim will be in a position to make even more harmful decisions.

It is no secret that Americans don't trust Washington. They see politicians who care more about catering to corporate donors than fighting for the interests of hard-working people who are trying to figure out how to pay the bills and build a little security in their own lives. It is a real problem, but it is a problem we can solve. We can begin to solve it by fighting the economic concentration that is putting more money and more power into the hands of a few giant corporations. That means choosing enforcers who will hold companies accountable when they break the rules, and that means rejecting nominees like Makan Delrahim.

TARBERT NOMINATION

Mr. President, I rise to speak on the nomination of Heath Tarbert, who has been nominated by President Trump to be the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Markets and Development. If confirmed, Mr. Tarbert will be in charge of the Treasury Department's role on a multi-agency body called the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, which reviews whether foreign acquisitions of a U.S. company would pose a threat to our national security and then makes recommendations to the President on whether the President should block the transaction.

This is not about whether foreign investment benefits our economy. Of course it does. The United States is the third largest recipient of foreign direct investment, and our markets attract the world's best talent and capital. Going back to the 1990s, only four foreign acquisitions of American companies have ever been blocked by a President based on a recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. This is about whether our national security is put at risk when foreign governments, foreign state-owned enterprises, and foreign investors acquire our companies and assets. This is also about foreign governments and the companies they own,

trying to gain access to sensitive technologies that are important to our military and our national security.

The risk posed to the security of the United States is real. I want you to consider just one example here. According to a news report last year, an internal Pentagon report found that China was making significant targeted investments in cutting-edge American startups, with expertise in areas like autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, and robotics. These can be transactions that don't necessarily result in foreign control over one of our companies, but they can give a foreign adversary access to technologies that could harm our strategic interests and erode our military advantage.

The risk is significant, but unfortunately CFIUS does not apply to these transactions. The problem is, CFIUS was created back in 1975. Since then, both technology and the nature of foreign acquisitions, mergers, and takeovers have changed substantially. The nature of the threats we face has also changed substantially. Our top military leaders—such as the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs—believe that CFIUS needs to be updated to fully address them, and I agree.

Another concern is that CFIUS does not focus enough on whether the benefits of foreign acquisition outweigh the costs when it comes to the competitiveness of American workers. While I recognize that CFIUS has historically focused on the national security impacts of foreign investment, I think Congress should consider elevating the Department of Labor to the group of agencies that are currently part of the core CFIUS review process. If we believe economic security and national security are intertwined, then I think we can both look out for the American worker and review the national security threats posed by foreign acquisitions.

Finally, the ethics problems that are everywhere in this administration come forward again in the area of national security. We all know President Trump, his family members, and other Trump administration officials have business ties in the United States and throughout the world, even if we don't know the full extent of President Trump's business ties because he will not release his tax returns.

Imagine a Trump administration official who has a financial stake in an American company, a foreign state-owned company or both. Now imagine that a foreign company backed by China, Russia, or another foreign adversary tries to acquire a U.S. company and a Trump official suddenly has financial ties to that transaction and then that transaction triggers a CFIUS review for national security concerns. If that scenario were to occur, I am deeply concerned about the conflicts of interests that could emerge. I would expect CFIUS to vigorously review such an investment as it affects our national security.

I raised all of these issues with Mr. Tarbert when I met with him today and his answers improved from when I asked him about these issues earlier this year, but I remain concerned about his commitment to modernize CFIUS and to ensure that CFIUS does more to consider the impact of foreign acquisitions on American workers. I hope I am wrong, but I still have concerns about his nomination, which is why I will vote against it.

Mr. Tarbert promised me that if confirmed, he would work to ensure that no transaction is approved by CFIUS if national security concerns remain unresolved, and that is encouraging to hear. If he is ultimately confirmed, I will use my position in the Senate Banking Committee to hold him to that promise because the threats we face are growing in complexity, and the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States must be ready to confront them. We don't want to wake up one day and discover that our adversaries have access to key components of our national security technology because Congress and the White House were asleep at the wheel.

If confirmed, I will work in good faith with Mr. Tarbert to ensure that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States is updated so it is in the strongest position to protect our national security—both from the threats we face today and the threats we will face in the future.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CRAPO. 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. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the nomination of Mr. Heath Tarbert to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Markets and Development. This position is both a critical national security and international economic policy job.

A critical part of the Assistant Secretary's job—and the reason for which this position was created by statute and passed in the Banking Committee—is to marshal the procedures and processes of the interagency, Treasury-led Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, which protects our Nation from hostile foreign transactions designed to undermine U.S. national security interests.

This is now a very time-sensitive post because Senators on both sides of the aisle are working to introduce legislation to change the CFIUS process for the first time in a decade.

Confirmation of Mr. Tarbert is critical so that he is available to provide necessary input on any proposed changes and to swiftly implement any new legislation.

Mr. Tarbert would also serve as the principal policy advisor to the Secretary on international economic matters, including serving as the Treasury's representative at the Financial Stability Board.

Finally, Mr. Tarbert has strong bipartisan support and was voice-voted out of the Banking Committee.

Mr. Tarbert has served in senior roles in all three branches of government and is an experienced lawyer and a recognized financial expert.

In short, he is an important asset whom the Congress and Treasury Department do not want to lose to further delay.

I urge all of my colleagues to support Mr. Tarbert's nomination today and to vote for his confirmation.

With that, I yield the floor.

DELRAHIM NOMINATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, the Senate is voting to confirm Makan Delrahim to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division. When Mr. Delrahim was 10 years old, his family fled the tyranny of Iran and settled in the United States, knowing no English. Since then, Mr. Delrahim received his B.S. from the University of California in 1991, his J.D. from the George Washington University School of Law in 1995, and his M.S. from Johns Hopkins University in 2002.

Mr. Delrahim's professional career and broad range of legal experiences have prepared him well to lead the Antitrust Division. He has experience in both the private and public sectors. He has worked at various law firms and served in government, including as staff director to then-Chairman HATCH of the Senate Judiciary Committee, deputy counsel to the President of the United States, and Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Antitrust Division at the Department of Justice. He also served as a Commissioner of the U.S. Antitrust Modernization Commission.

Mr. Delrahim will serve as the highest ranking Iranian-American official ever at the Department of Justice. His journey epitomizes the American dream. He is well known and liked by my colleagues and me. I am pleased to support his nomination today.

Mr. CRAPO. 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. HATCH. 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. HATCH. Mr. President, the confirmation of Makan Delrahim has been a top priority of mine. I know the man. He worked with us. He headed our Judiciary Committee staff. Amidst the rising controversy over antitrust law in the 21st century, he is precisely who we need in that position. I commend the President for having picked him.

All of us, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, are going to make sure that our markets remain free and competitive. Cheap talking points are not going to cut it; only serious debate will.

I am pleased that recent efforts to rise above the partisan fray and treat this subject with the seriousness it deserves have paid off today.

I expect our colleagues to vote for Makan because of the high-quality lawyer he really is.

I thank my colleagues for joining me in this debate. I congratulate Makan, who is sure to make us all very pleased with the way he can run things and the way he can begin this important work that he knows is important. We know it is important; I particularly know it is important.

Makan has been an honest, decent, wonderful man. He is a good father. He has been a terrific staffer here on Capitol Hill. He has worked with both Democrats and Republicans in good faith. I think almost all of them, if they are honest, will say he was a very, very good person to work with and a wonderful person to fill this position.

It is a blessing that someone like Makan, who comes from a very humble family, could rise to the top in this particular position in antitrust, and I am sure he will do an honest, decent job within the antitrust laws as they are configured and written.

I am proud of him. I think the world of him. I hope everybody will vote for him. But if not, I will commend him, and I know he will do a good job in this particular position.

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

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

VOTE ON TARBERT NOMINATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I yield back all time on both sides, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Heath P. Tarbert, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury?

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 204 Ex.]

YEAS—87

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Baldwin	Fischer	Murray
Barrasso	Flake	Nelson
Bennet	Franken	Paul
Blumenthal	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Peters
Booker	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hassan	Reed
Brown	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heinrich	Roberts
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cardin	Hoeven	Sasse
Carper	Inhofe	Schumer
Casey	Isakson	Scott
Cassidy	Johnson	Shaheen
Collins	Kaine	Shelby
Coons	Kennedy	Stabenow
Corker	King	Sullivan
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Leahy	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	Manchin	Udall
Daines	McCain	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Wyden

NAYS—8

Gillibrand	Markey	Schatz
Harris	Merkley	Warren
Hirono	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—5

Cochran	Menendez	Young
Donnelly	Strange	

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON DELRAHIM NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Makan Delrahim, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General?

Mr. WARNER. 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 assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 21, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 205 Ex.]

YEAS—73

Alexander	Boozman	Carper
Barrasso	Brown	Casey
Bennet	Burr	Cassidy
Blumenthal	Capito	Collins
Blunt	Cardin	Coons

Corker	Hoeven	Portman
Cornyn	Inhofe	Reed
Cotton	Isakson	Risch
Crapo	Johnson	Roberts
Cruz	Kennedy	Rounds
Daines	King	Rubio
Durbin	Klobuchar	Sasse
Enzi	Lankford	Scott
Ernst	Leahy	Shaheen
Feinstein	Lee	Shelby
Fischer	Manchin	Stabenow
Flake	McCain	Sullivan
Franken	McCaskill	Tester
Gardner	McConnell	Thune
Graham	Moran	Tillis
Grassley	Murkowski	Toomey
Hatch	Nelson	Warner
Heitkamp	Paul	Wicker
Heller	Perdue	
Hirono	Peters	

NAYS—21

Baldwin	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Murphy	Whitehouse
Harris	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	Menendez	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Strange	Young

The nomination was confirmed.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Erickson nomination.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Ralph E. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, one of the Senate Republicans' most important priorities for the rest of this year is passing comprehensive tax reform. Why? Because comprehensive tax reform is perhaps the single most important thing we can do to get our economy back on the path to long-term health. Comprehensive tax reform done right will boost jobs. It will increase wages. It will provide much needed tax relief for middle-income taxpayers and families. It will help businesses reinvest in their operations, employees, and new products. And most importantly, it will help us achieve strong, consistent economic growth.

Over the past few weeks, leaders from the House, Senate, and White House have been meeting to develop the framework for the tax reform bill we will take up later this year. This morning, they unveiled that framework. The framework supports Republicans' five principles for tax reform: providing tax relief for the middle class; increasing wages, jobs, and economic growth;