

common agenda. Neither China nor the United States want to see a nuclear North Korea. Both China and the United States recognize that the Kim Jong Un regime in North Korea is unreliable. We are both looking for an off-ramp so we don't need to use a military option.

China has the capacity to turn the pressure on North Korea through sanctions that could change the equation in North Korea. China and North Korea have a common agenda. Both want to preserve the regime of Kim Jong Un—Kim Jong Un for obvious reasons; China, because they do not want to see a unified Korean Peninsula under West-ern influence.

Our objective is for North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. China needs to be convinced that our objective is the same as theirs. With that, they could instill greater pressure on North Korea, and diplomacy could work.

What should be our objective? We have to be realistic. In the short term, it should be containment. Freeze the current program. Stop the testing. Make it clear that we cannot allow these programs to continue. Ultimately, we want to see a nonnuclear Korean Peninsula.

We know that in the past—the 1994 framework agreement with North Korea lasted for 8 years. So there is an ability to make progress, but we have to develop confidence between the parties.

In conjunction with this, let me urge us not to lose sight of the North Korean people. Let's continue our focus on the human rights problems in the country. Let's work with our allies, particularly Japan and the Republic of Korea, and let's rigorously enforce the sanctions until progress is made.

We can achieve an alternative outcome in North Korea, but it requires U.S. leadership, and President Trump needs to engage on that issue. We need confidence building, and we need to make sure that we make progress. Time is not on our side, but there is still time to make progress. Without a diplomatic surge, there are only unacceptable options. Our goal should be a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous northeast Asia community.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all time has expired.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL), the Senator from New Jersey

(Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 261 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Cochran	Inhofe	Sasse
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Franken	Peters
Bennet	Gillibrand	Reed
Blumenthal	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Hassan	Schatz
Brown	Heinrich	Schumer
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Shaheen
Cardin	Hirono	Stabenow
Carper	Kaine	Tester
Casey	King	Udall
Coons	Klobuchar	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Warren
Donnelly	Markey	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Merkley	Wyden
Durbin	Murphy	
Feinstein	Murray	

NOT VOTING—4

McCaskill	Nelson
Menendez	Warner

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Bibas nomination, the motion 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.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

The Senator from Nevada.

## JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS AND TAX REFORM

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, this week, we have the unique opportunity to move forward on promises we made to the American people last year, con-

firming judges and providing tax relief to hard-working Americans. The American people sent us to Congress to complete this critical work, and we must stop at nothing to do it. We have already taken significant steps to address both of these issues by confirming 13 judges, with 5 more this week, and passing a budget with instructions for tax reform.

There is still much more that we need to do, and I stand ready to stay here until that job is done. Most people can't go home until their work is finished; I don't think we should either. Imagine dropping your car off at the auto mechanic and, instead of staying to finish the job, they leave at 3 p.m. to go home because that is convenient for their schedule; yet you still have to pay them for a full day's work. That is effectively what we have been doing here in Congress, and that needs to stop. We need to work as much as possible to ensure that the Federal judiciary is filled with judges that will uphold the Constitution and bring us closer to providing tax relief for the American people.

We need to have a fully occupied, fully functioning Federal judiciary to ensure that Americans' constitutional rights are upheld. In almost 10 months, we have started to address the issue of judicial vacancies by confirming 13 judges, most notably Justice Gorsuch, who has already served as a strong, conservative voice on the Supreme Court. As a fellow westerner, I was proud to vote for such a qualified judge to serve in our Nation's highest Court.

Beyond the vacancy we filled on the Supreme Court, there are vacancies on all levels of our Federal judiciary. We cannot forget the importance of every single court that makes up the Federal system. We must prioritize confirming judges to fill these openings, especially those deemed judicial emergencies. The fact that we have so many judicial emergencies is incredibly concerning and should be a wake-up call to all Senators, especially those who are slowing down this important process.

The President is continuing to send us well-qualified nominees, and Chairman GRASSLEY has done an excellent job of moving nominees through the committee process. I am especially encouraged that this week we are confirming five more judges, including four circuit court judges. This is the pace we need to keep. If that means working 24/7 to continue confirming these constitutionalists, you can count me in. Confirming Federal judges is a unique duty of the U.S. Senate, and we cannot allow obstructionism from the other side of the aisle to prevent us from filling vacancies throughout the country.

It is clear that when judges are brought to the floor for a vote by a healthy majority, the gridlock being caused is purely political. Because of this, leadership is having to file cloture on all of these judicial nominees, and some of my colleagues across the aisle