

Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously reported the next Director of the USPTO, Andrei Iancu. As a long-time champion of intellectual property rights, and head of the High-Tech Task Force, I encourage my colleagues to swiftly confirm him to this post.

Overall, this President has delivered on his nominations, and his nominees have delivered on his promises. While I am on the topic of nominations, I want to talk about the judiciary. Controversy seems to be swirling, due to a few recent—and I would say unfortunate—bumps in the road, but we must not miss the forest no matter how much the press would like to harken on a few of the trees. The accomplishments of this administration and Senate in addressing the judiciary have been historic.

Neil Gorsuch was a superb choice for the Supreme Court. At a critical juncture for our courts, he stands poised to seize the mantle left by Justice Antonin Scalia and carry the cause of originalism and textualism forward for a new generation, but Justice Gorsuch was only the beginning. From the circuit courts to the district courts, judicial nominations across the board have really been outstanding. We have confirmed more circuit court nominees this year than in any President's first year in American history.

We accomplished this despite Democrats using their time-tested obstruction tactics and even coming up with some new ones. They forced us to take 18 cloture votes on judicial nominees alone this year, compared to just one cloture vote during the first year of all previous Presidents combined. Nevertheless, we got the job done. The results will be felt for decades to come.

Whatever our differences on other issues, conservatives across the board heartily approve of the way this administration has handled judicial nominations.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Senate Judiciary Committee, as well as Leader MCCONNELL, to confirm these judges. As the rest of our agenda gains steam, judicial selection will remain the vanguard. There are more judges to come this new year, and we are going to keep on confirming them. Each and every week, a new trial or appellate court judge will add to the ranks of a rapidly improving judiciary.

Finally, on the legislative front, this administration and Republican Congress have just delivered the most consequential and far-reaching tax reform package in 30 years. When other administrations and other sessions of Congress couldn't get it done, we did. Individuals will see their tax rates drop. Businesses, from large corporations that employ thousands to small businesses paying passthrough rates, will enjoy new capital for investment, expansion, and more. In fact, seemingly to the dismay of our Democratic colleagues, businesses are already responding to the good news with announcements of bonuses and new ventures, and that is just the beginning.

On top of it all, the individual mandate has been repealed and ObamaCare is now firmly on its way out, thank goodness. Despite earlier difficulties, we are well on our way toward repeal. As we move toward 2018, we can look forward to additional policy success on everything from entitlements to infrastructure to immigration.

In conclusion, I don't want to hear anyone claim that this President and this Congress have not gotten things done. Promises were made and promises were kept. Only a year into things, we are making good on our pledge for historic change in Washington.

#### NOMINATION OF RYAN NELSON

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, on another matter, I would like to offer a few words of support for the nomination of Ryan Nelson to be the Solicitor for the Department of Interior.

Mr. Nelson has a distinguished legal background. He has worked in both the private and public sector, including in all three branches of the Federal Government. Most importantly, he is respected by those members of the Idaho State Bar who know him best.

He has been endorsed by numerous colleagues representing a broad spectrum of political views. Mr. Nelson's exemplary legal background makes him ideally suited to serve as the Department of Interior's Solicitor, and we owe the people of Utah and the West the opportunity to confirm him at once.

Once confirmed, I am very eager to work with Mr. Nelson and Secretary Ryan Zinke to continue a shared mission of restoring trust between the Federal Government and the people of the West.

There have been some marvelous changes this year, and there will be even more if we could just work together and quit all the bumbling around here as though we hate each other. I am grateful for my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I believe we have made important strides this year, and I think we can make even more. I am grateful for what we have been able to get done this year.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

I ask to speak in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this morning to outline some ideas about our national security as we approach the end of the year.

Many Americans are heading into the holiday season with some very reasonable fears about the threats facing our Nation. In 2017, we saw an emboldened North Korean regime testing missiles and nuclear weapons. Terrorist groups

continue to execute attacks across the globe. Violent state and nonstate actors continue to destabilize Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Nigeria, and others. We saw Russia continue meddling in elections, just as they did in ours last year.

This is a year of great volatility and uncertainty. However, we also saw the U.S. military leading an international coalition that is loosening the stranglehold ISIS had on parts of Iraq and Syria. We saw the recovery of American hostages, including constituents of mine, held captive for years by terrorists. In Europe, U.S. and NATO forces partnered to counter Russian aggression and dispel propaganda. U.S. development assistance projects helped hundreds of millions of people across the world, including 11 million farmers and 27½ million children under the Feed the Future Program.

Even when it seemed like there were many reasons to be afraid, the U.S. military, diplomats, and development professionals were responsible for a lot of good progress this year.

On Monday of this week, President Trump laid out his administration's national security strategy. I commend the work of the national security professionals who crafted the document which warrants a thorough review. It is a substantial body of work, but it paints a very dark picture of the world and our role in it.

A little more than 2 years ago, I stood on this floor and invoked the words of Senator Vandenberg—the Senator from Michigan back in the World War II era—for “maximum united effort” and Senator Vandenberg's admonition that politics should stop at the water's edge. When I spoke these words, this was at a time when it seemed the only response my Republican colleagues had to the Obama administration's foreign policy moves was categorical condemnation.

I will not categorically condemn the administration's new strategy, but I will pose a challenge to reject the false choice between investing at home and engaging abroad; utilize our diplomatic and development toolkit as much, if not more, than we exercise our defense capabilities; lead by example. The world will indeed become a dark place if we hide America's light under a bushel basket, to use words from Scripture.

In the face of our adversaries' aggression, we can choose between competition and cooperation. The new strategy outlined by the administration references competition nearly three times more than cooperation. I suggest to the administration the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who said: “Competition has been shown to be useful up to a certain point and no further, but cooperation, which is a thing we must strive for today, begins where competition leaves off.”

Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished Democratic leader.