

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, first, the Senate is currently considering two well-qualified nominees, both for the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. Yesterday afternoon, we voted to advance the nomination of Marvin Quattlebaum, a graduate of Rhodes College and the University of South Carolina. He presently serves as a district judge for the District of South Carolina. At noon the Senate will vote to confirm his nomination.

When he was nominated to the Federal bench last year, Judge Quattlebaum received strong, bipartisan support from the Senate. The American Bar Association deemed him unanimously “well-qualified,” their highest possible rating.

Once we complete consideration of Judge Quattlebaum, we will turn to Jay Richardson. Mr. Richardson is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and the University of Chicago Law School. He has held clerkships with Seventh Circuit Judge Richard Posner and with the late Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist.

Since 2009, he has served as assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of South Carolina. Current and former peers in the U.S. Attorney’s Office say he has a “well-earned reputation for excellent preparation, good judgment, fairness, and hard work.”

In that role, Mr. Richardson led the successful prosecution of the gunman who murdered nine innocent people at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, back in 2015. Our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee have received a letter from Jennifer Pinckney, the wife of the late Clementa Pinckney, one of the victims of that senseless violence. Ms. Pinckney wrote to enthusiastically support Mr. Richardson’s confirmation. She said that he “will make a fine jurist.”

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm both of these impressive nominees.

TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, Members were back in our home States meeting with constituents last week. I had the opportunity to visit a remarkable business in my hometown of Louisville.

Caldwell Tanks has been making large industrial and water storage tanks in Kentucky for over 100 years. It is no secret that they do good business, but when I stopped by on Friday, they had some especially good news to share. In 2018 they invested \$100,000 in upgrades to their fleet of cranes. Their 150 Kentucky employees, along with hundreds more in other States, are seeing estimated wage increases of up to 10 percent or more. Preload, Caldwell’s sister company, which makes prestressed concrete tanks, has invested \$500,000 in new manufacturing equipment.

The company’s leadership states that all of these improvements—every one of them—are direct results of the historic tax reform this Republican Congress passed last year.

Tax reform, along with all of our other pro-growth policies, has helped to transform the overall business climate in our country. In the words of Bernie Fineman, Caldwell’s CEO, “the most important thing that it’s done is to provide hope”—hope—“for our future.”

So while these developments alone are remarkable, the conditions that made them possible are not a fluke—not in a State that has recently seen its unemployment rate drop to a 42-year low, not in a country where the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits is about as low as it has been in half a century.

Tax reform and regulatory reform helped to make this happen. They helped to unleash free enterprise and give Caldwell’s customers the confidence to fill up the warehouse’s backlogs and drive up 2018 sales by 14 percent so far.

Caldwell is just one case study in what has become a national phenomenon. Nationwide, consumers are experiencing renewed confidence. Retail sales are up 6.4 percent from July of last year. According to one industry survey, a majority of U.S. manufacturers say this favorable policy climate has been more likely—more likely—to raise wages for their workers.

Bustling warehouses and rising wages weren’t exactly what our Democratic colleagues predicted when they railed against tax reform last year or voted in lockstep to oppose its passage, but one would hope that hindsight is helping our Democratic colleagues to see how tax reform and regulatory relief were exactly what the doctor ordered and how they have contributed to a healthy economy that is paying dividends for American workers and middle-class families.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING PAUL LAXALT

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I come to the floor today to pay tribute and honor to one of the great Nevadans of our lifetime—Senator Paul Laxalt. Last week, Senator Laxalt passed away at the age of 96, having forever changed the State of Nevada and this country. The State motto in Nevada is “All for our Country,” and Senator Laxalt exemplified that principle every day by giving his all through public service for every Nevadan.

Paul Dominique Laxalt was born on August 2, 1922, and grew up in my hometown of Carson City, NV. His parents had both emigrated from the Basque region in Europe and brought their values and traditions to northern Nevada. Even today, Basque influences, like chorizo, lamb, and sweetbreads, are still staples of life in northern Nevada.

As the son of a Basque shepherd, Paul made his mark early in life by attending Carson High School, playing on the 1938 State championship basketball team, and as a student body president—which is significant, and I will share more in a few minutes.

Paul would go on to serve his country in the U.S. Army as a medic during World War II, and he saw action in the Philippines. After the war, like many Americans, Paul started a family. He married Jackalyn Ross in 1946, and they had six children: Gail, Sheila, Michelle, Kevin, Kathleen, and John Paul.

Paul began his career in public service when he served as a district attorney for what was then Ormsby County, NV. He then won his first statewide race, serving as Lieutenant Governor from 1963 to 1967. During his term, Paul made the decision to run for the U.S. Senate in 1964 and challenged then-Senator Howard Cannon. In one of the closest races in Nevada history, Paul lost his bid for the Senate by just 48 votes. A result like that could break a lesser man, but Paul picked himself up and won the Nevada governorship just a few years later.

Under Governor Laxalt, Nevada began growing and turning into the State we know today. He helped establish the community college system and the first medical school in Nevada. Under his guidance, Nevada’s gaming industry was transformed, and his vision for our State’s future is now enjoyed by millions of tourists each year who visit Nevada for our world-class attractions, our services, and our entertainment.

It was during that time that Paul started to become friends with another famous Governor in neighboring California—Ronald Reagan. Together, they worked to protect and preserve Lake Tahoe for future generations. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency—the TRPA—is the premier bistate compact to save the lake, and in 2020 we will celebrate its 50th year.

After his work as Governor, Paul decided the time was right to make another run for the U.S. Senate. This time he won, and he served the State of Nevada from 1974 to 1987. As a U.S. Senator, he continued his faithful dedication to his friend Ronald Reagan and served as his Presidential campaign chairman in 1976, 1980, and 1984. He also served as general chairman of the Republican National Committee from 1983 to 1987.

Senator Laxalt was famously called “the first friend” of President Reagan’s. Together, they helped each other

set our country down a new path of prosperity and freedom.

Senator Laxalt was a hero and a mentor to me and many others who grew up in Carson City.

Like Paul, my mother, my children, and I also went to Carson High School. I played on the basketball team, and my daughter Emmy was the student body president, following in Senator Laxalt's shoes.

Before my daughter Emmy took office, she reached out to previous Carson High School student body presidents to ask for their advice. Senator Laxalt was gracious and told her the following:

When I was elected as student body president, Franklin Roosevelt was the President of the United States. With World War II looming on the horizon, my fellow classmates and I had no idea how dramatically our lives would be altered in the next few years. Of course, the school itself was much different. I doubt there were more than 30 students in my entire class. Until my senior year, all classes—K through 12—were in the same building!

He then said:

I'm not entirely comfortable offering advice, particularly to someone who knows more than me! I would just tell you to have fun and enjoy every single day, remember those who elected you, and always do what you—Emmy Heller—think is right.

I know Emmy has never forgotten that advice.

Senator Laxalt set a high bar for all us kids who went to Carson High School but also showed us all the possibilities of what could be achieved as Nevadans.

When I was sworn in as a freshman Member of the House of Representatives, Senator Laxalt was there for me on day one. I will never forget his support and his advice: Always stay close to family, friends, and your constituents. They will never lead you astray.

Having been a Presidential campaign adviser to President Reagan, President Bush, and Senator Dole, Senator Laxalt's advice carried great weight, and I knew I needed to listen to every piece of advice he was willing to give me.

Senator Laxalt also had a profound impact on many of my colleagues in the Senate. It didn't matter whether you were a Democrat or Republican, Senator Laxalt would be your friend. In fact, on my very first day as a Senator, I remember my colleague Senator LEAHY telling me about all of his work and his fond memories of his friend Senator Laxalt.

Senator Laxalt showed us all what true friendship is. His character and warmth that he shared with all of us will never be forgotten. I extend my deepest condolences to Senator Laxalt's wife Carol and to their entire family. I will miss my friend Senator Laxalt. His colleagues in the Senate will miss their friend, and the people of Nevada will miss their friend.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as the Senate continues to work on appropriations, I want to thank the chairman, Senator SHELBY, and the ranking member, Senator LEAHY, for their work. The process has so far been productive and bipartisan in the Senate. Both sides have worked to avoid poison pill riders. That has meant steady progress. Next up are the annual appropriations bills for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Defense, which I hope will follow the same bipartisan course of the previous few bills.

We have already achieved substantial increases in funding for important priorities through the appropriations process, including significant new resources for the NIH, significant new resources to combat the opioid epidemic, and significant new investments in infrastructure, childcare, college affordability, Social Security, and the VA. That is a big victory for the American people, who have waited too long for our country to invest in them.

Middle-class people are worried about staying in the middle class. People trying to get to the middle class are worried—the ladder is steeper and longer. These kinds of things help them: college affordability, help with childcare, building infrastructure, making sure Social Security is around. All of that helps the middle class. For years, a hard-right group on the Republican side cut the smithereens out of these things, but this year, we managed to restore them. The American people will do a lot better because of it.

NDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I am happy to report that the annual authorization of the national defense was signed into law. I want to take a moment to thank a colleague who is not here today to celebrate that fact—Senator JOHN S. MCCAIN, for whom the bill has been named. Our dear friend Senator MCCAIN has been such a stalwart champion for the men and women in uniform. He would be proud that once again Congress has met its obligation to give the military the support and certainty it needs to conduct missions around the globe.

Even from afar, Senator MCCAIN's influence on this Chamber is considerable and strong. His presence hovered over us as we all made sure—knowing he would importune us, if he were here, to make sure the Defense bill was strong and voted on quickly. So many of the bases in my State—including our Niagara Air Force base, including our Fort Drum—are so much the better because of JOHN MCCAIN's great work. I

wish him all the best and commend his staff and Senator INHOFE's and Senator REED's staff for their work on the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on the Supreme Court, as we return from the State work period, the Republican majority continues to steam forward on President Trump's nomination to the Supreme Court, announcing that hearings will begin on September 4. That is just 12 business days from today. Yet the Senate remains unable to do its due diligence on the nominee because we have access to only a tiny percentage of his record.

Why is this? Senate Republicans are in the midst of a blatant and historic obstruction of a Supreme Court nominee's record, denying the Senate and the American people critical information about this potential Supreme Court Justice.

The entire record of Judge Kavanaugh's 3 years as Staff Secretary in the White House—the most senior position he held before joining the bench—is being deliberately withheld from the Senate and from the public. The Republican majority has unilaterally declared those papers irrelevant even though Judge Kavanaugh himself has testified to the importance of the position and the work he did there.

Meanwhile, the small percentage of documents the Judiciary Committee will get to see are being prescreened by a political operative named Bill Burck—a longtime Republican lawyer and former deputy to Brett Kavanaugh when he worked in the White House. A deputy to Brett Kavanaugh is now determining what Brett Kavanaugh's record should be there—somebody who was a lawyer for Steve Bannon—notorious Steve Bannon—a lawyer for Reince Priebus, a lawyer for McGahn, White House Counsel.

Mr. Burck and his team have already started delivering documents to the Judiciary Committee, but they are refusing to provide a privilege log. Why are they giving us this document and not that one? Aren't we entitled to know what their reasoning, at least, is? So the Judiciary Committee cannot understand how many documents are being held back and on what basis. A privilege log has always been provided in previous Supreme Court vetting processes, and without it, we have no idea whether the basis for Mr. Burck's withholding all of these documents is legitimate.

Where is our chairman of the Judiciary Committee? He says: Oh, this is the best ever. Then why aren't we getting such a log? What is his answer to that? I know he will come to the floor and rail and rail, but the process—the actual facts—is much worse than we have seen.

Here is something new—also being done by the chairman of the Judiciary