

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