

home to the Coast Guard yard in Curtis Bay, our Nation's facility for maintaining and repairing the Coast Guard fleet, and I am proud of the work they do every day to support the security of our Nation and ships at sea. However, I remain concerned with title IV of this bill, the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, VIDA, which would regulate ballast water discharge from ships in the United States. While these provisions have improved since they were first brought to the floor, the title continues to preempt State authority on ballast water discharge from ships. The State of Maryland currently has a more protective standard that is critical to maintaining a healthy Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is enormous: 64,000 square miles, part of six States and the entire District of Columbia, and almost 18 million people.

The Chesapeake Bay is one of Maryland's crown jewels, and it is of upmost importance to me that we continue the progress in cleaning up the bay. The Chesapeake Bay is a delicate ecosystem that is particularly sensitive to invasive species that can be spread through ballast water discharge. These invasive species could compete with our native species in the bay like blue crab, oysters, and striped bass.

There are many provisions of this bill that I will support through the conference process, including additional funding for operating expenses and acquisition funding and \$30 million for environmental compliance and restoration. The Coast Guard yard in Curtis Bay is currently on EPA's National Priorities List and the Coast Guard's priority list and is eligible for this funding.

The bill also includes a provision that allows for incentive payments to go to Curtis Bay's wage-grade employees who demonstrate improvements in performance or delivery during a project.

I hope to gain clarity on section 310 of the bill, which claims to provide more flexibility to choose where ship alterations or repairs can occur. I am concerned that this provision may have unintended consequences in certain situations, particularly with respect to the Coast Guard yard. As this bill moves to conference and eventually the President, I hope to work with my colleagues to clear up this provision and will continue to advocate for the rights of States like Maryland to protect their clean water.

I will vote no today, but believe that we can continue to improve this bill in the conference process. I look forward to working with my colleagues to do so.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### AMENDING THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE WATER RIGHTS QUANTIFICATION ACT OF 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany S. 140, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 140, a bill to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with McConnell (for Thune) modified amendment No. 4054, in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 140, with amendment No. 4054, as modified.

Mr. WICKER. 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 senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 241 Leg.]

YEAS—94

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

NAYS—6

Cardin	Harris	Schumer
Gillibrand	Sanders	Van Hollen

The motion was agreed to.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Michelle Bowman, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2006.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Rounds, Jon Kyl, Tom Cotton, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, David Perdue, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, Mike Crapo, Lindsey Graham, Jerry Moran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Michelle Bowman, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2006, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 63, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 242 Ex.]

YEAS—63

Alexander	Flake	Moran
Barrasso	Gardner	Murkowski
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Peters
Boozman	Hassan	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heitkamp	Roberts
Carper	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Coons	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shaheen
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Jones	Sullivan
Crapo	Kaine	Tester
Cruz	Kennedy	Thune
Daines	Kyl	Tillis
Donnelly	Lankford	Toomey
Enzi	Lee	Warner
Ernst	Manchin	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	Young

NAYS—36

Baldwin	Harris	Paul
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	McCaskill	Udall
Duckworth	Menendez	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Nelson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 63, the nays are 36.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Michelle Bowman, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2006.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

#### SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as I return to the Nation's Capital from home, back in Austin, TX, so we can finish our work out before the end of the year, I want to relay some of the wisdom that I heard from working families and Texans back home about their verdict on what we have done so far this year and actually even last year.

I stopped by a couple of food banks—one in North Texas and one in El Paso—ahead of this year's upcoming holiday season. This is when they have the greatest demand for food by people who need either to supplement their diets or who rely on food banks to provide them with their basic sustenance.

I also had a chance to visit with a Nobel Prize winner at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, Dr. Jim Allison, to discuss his groundbreaking work in cancer treatment, much of which was funded by money we have appropriated to the National Institutes of Health, which, in turn, provides grants for basic science and other research that come up with lifesaving cures, such as Dr. Allison has come up with.

Then I met with the local leadership in the Corpus Christi area, down in the gulf coast, to discuss their Hurricane Harvey recovery process. It has been a little over a year since Hurricane Harvey hit. Of course, many of those communities and many families are continuing to recover from that devastation.

I also held a roundtable with local leaders and the drug-free communities councils to discuss how local, State, and Federal leaders can work together to fight the supply of illegal drugs coming into the country and to support those who are in recovery from addiction. It won't surprise you that people had a lot to say. Yet their stories remind me that while being back here in Washington—although Texas is a long way away, about 3 hours or so by jet—folks back home are paying attention to what we are doing here, and I know some of that gets lost in the back-and-forth of the political campaigns that have just passed.

There is one thing that we have done that I think has been well received, and that is, since the voters gave us a Republican in the White House and gave us Republican majorities in the House and the Senate, we have put our foot on the gas pedal and haven't let off since. We have delivered concrete results for the American people, and they

have continued to see gains under this administration—promises made and promises kept.

I will start with the transformation of the Federal judiciary. One of the most important jobs the U.S. Senate has under the Constitution is to provide advice and consent on executive branch nominations—in this case, to our article III courts. A historic number of judges who will interpret the law as written have been confirmed under the administration. That number is 84, and it includes the most ever appellate judges—the midlevel Federal courts—to have ever been confirmed during a President's first 2 years in office. These are principled, experienced, highly skilled lawyers and judges who respect precedent and understand their critical but limited role under our system of government. Their job is to interpret the law; they shouldn't rewrite it. That is one of the principal battles we end up fighting when Supreme Court nominations come across the well of the Senate floor. There are those who think that judges should be able to impose their views on the American people even though they don't run for election and have lifetime tenures, but that is simply not our system. In my view, that is an impermissible role to be played by a judge.

When it comes to judges, perhaps our two greatest achievements have been Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, both of whom were confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Yet, as I say, we have confirmed a total of 84 other Federal judges, including 3 on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals from Texas. All of these nominees and now judges have brought great intellect, legal expertise, impartiality, and good will to bear as they make decisions with their very distinguished colleagues.

We saw the first major overhaul in the Tax Code in 31 years. It lowered rates for every tax bracket, doubled the child tax credit to help working families, and made our business tax scheme more competitive globally. All of this has allowed many of those employers to pass along benefits through bonuses and higher wages. We have also incentivized investment in economically distressed communities in every State through the Opportunity Zone Program.

Some like to shrug off the benefits of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act by calling the savings crumbs, which is what Ms. PELOSI has called them, but they are certainly not taking into account what I am hearing from my constituents back home in Texas. The effects of tax reform are real, and they are extremely significant to every American. All employers have been able to provide additional benefits—as I said, some in the form of bonuses or in increased pay. Those who have seen their pay remain the same have seen more take-home pay because their tax obligations have been reduced.

One of the taxpayers I heard from in Texas was a gentleman by the name of

David Tong from Arlington, TX, which is halfway between Fort Worth and Dallas. Dave wrote to me to say that the company at which he is employed has increased the number of hours people are able to work. He said Christmas bonuses have been promised, too, and that the company has hired more people, has bought more new machinery based on the accelerated depreciation provided for under the bill, and has made long overdue repairs to their working place. Now, with the tax law changes in place, David says the guys down on the shop floor are taking home a little more in their paychecks each week. He said all of this adds up and makes a huge difference in the lives of the guys on the shop floor.

We have heard similar stories from around the country because more than 700 companies, including many that are based in Texas, have used the tax savings to benefit their employees and their customers. They have announced pay raises, as I said, and 401(k) match increases.

We have actually seen seniors and people on fixed incomes have a decrease in their utility bills, when their electricity is provided by investor-owned utilities, because of the reduction in taxes to be paid by those investor-owned utilities. So there are lower utility rates for seniors and those on fixed incomes.

These developments are part of the reason the economy is thriving. Since tax reform was signed into law, the economy has added more than 2 million jobs, and unemployment has been at its lowest rate since 1969. My State has a population that is roughly 38 to 40 percent Hispanic; yet Hispanic unemployment sits at the record low of 4.4 percent. That is a big deal to my constituents back home. Joblessness for African Americans has fallen to its lowest level ever—the lowest level ever—under this administration.

Then, of course, with more demand—with more money in people's pockets, more money to spend—there is more demand for goods and services. So in October alone, the economy has added another 250,000 jobs, exceeding all expectations. As a matter of fact, the biggest concern I hear from employers now is that they are looking for qualified employees who are able to perform the jobs that are now available, and many of these are very well-paying jobs.

So people are back to work. They are earning more. They are investing, and the economy is moving at full throttle.

But it wasn't just the work of the tax bill. That was just part of it. Part of it has to do with the increased confidence and optimism that people feel about their future as a result of the improvement of their economic circumstances. We saw that with the passage of the bipartisan Dodd-Frank reform. We have also provided additional relief to our community banks and credit unions so they are able to spend less money on redtape and have more money invested