

colleagues will join me in recognizing Dr. Tantaquidgeon and Ms. Langevin as we celebrate National Women's History Month.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 100) was agreed to.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 7, 2019, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### MILITARY RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 118 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 118) recognizing the importance of paying tribute to those individuals who have faithfully served and retired from the Armed Forces of the United States, designating April 18, 2019, as "Military Retiree Appreciation Day", and encouraging the people of the United States to honor the past and continued service of military retirees to their local communities and the United States.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 118) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 14, 2019, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### CONDEMNING THE MARCH 15, 2019, TERRORIST ATTACKS IN CHRIST- CHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 124 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 124) condemning the March 15, 2019, terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, offering sincere condolences to all of the victims and their families, and expressing and standing in solidarity with the people and Government of New Zealand.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 124) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 27, 2019, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments with respect to the cloture motions filed during today's session relating to H.R. 268 be at 4 p.m., Monday, April 1, 2019.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VOTER SUPPRESSION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the most important words in our Constitution are the first three. We all know them: "We the people," written in supersize font so we don't forget what our Constitution is all about—government, as Lincoln put it, of, by, and for the people, or, as Jefferson put it, government designed to produce laws that reflect the will of the people.

We don't see that now. We don't have a government of, by, and for the people. Instead, we have a system that has been profoundly corrupted. It has been corrupted by gerrymandering. It has been corrupted by voter suppression and intimidation. It has been corrupted by dark and dirty money that has flooded our campaigns and wiped out the voice of millions of Americans. That is where we are now in this corrupted state.

We have debates on the floor that are all about helping a small group of people within a circle of power and privilege rather than having bills that help the citizens of the United States of America. In fact, we have a President who just this week said his goal was to

tear down healthcare for 30 million Americans, to wipe out the expansion of Medicaid, to wipe out the tax credits that assist so many Americans with being able to afford insurance, to wipe out the protection to be able to get healthcare if you have a preexisting condition, and to wipe out the ability of your children to be on your policy until the age of 26. That is government by and for this very little circle of privilege and power instead of the people of the United States of America. We saw it in other ways too.

In 2017, we saw a bill that reached into the Federal Treasury, took \$1.5 trillion, and gave almost all of it to that small group of people inside that circle of privilege and power while it ignored the rest of the country. That is what happens in corrupt countries. The power elite reach in, take the Treasury for themselves, and ignore the will of the people.

Every Member of this body took a pledge to the Constitution of the United States—a Constitution not founded on we the powerful but on we the people. So I ask: Are we going to honor that oath? If we are going to honor it, it means we have to stand up and end this deep and vast corruption.

Yesterday, Senator UDALL and I and all of my colleagues on this side of the aisle introduced a bill that is designed to take on gerrymandering, to take on voter suppression, and to take on dark money. Let's talk about gerrymandering.

The Supreme Court has never done a thing about it even though it is clearly all about having the powerful choose its voters rather than having the voters choose their Representatives. It is a complete shredding of the vision of the Constitution. The Supreme Court utterly failed to act. It has a case before it now, and it will have another opportunity, but don't hold your breath.

The time to address gerrymandering is before it is done. How do you do that? You do that with independent commissions. Independent commissions have been adopted in States like Iowa, and they have been widely received by the citizens as an issue of fairness. Yet, across so many States, we have congressional districts that are deliberately gerrymandered to favor the parties in power. It has happened in Democratic States, and it has happened in Republican States. You see it sometimes by the crazy configurations of the map. Sometimes you see it when a State that is essentially equally divided between the parties produces congressional Representatives heavily leaning to one side.

It is hard to remedy after the fact, but you can remedy before the fact by having independent commissions across this country. The way you take that on is you have a group of six individuals. They take two from the Democrats and two from the Republicans and two of whom are Independents, and they may select a broader set of participants—maybe an additional three