

American people really saw the score because we brought the thing up for a vote. Right here on this floor we had the vote, and only 4 out of 47 Senate Democrats actually voted no. Only 4 of the 47 voted against this plan to bring our economy to a screeching halt. Forty-three of our Democratic colleagues couldn't bring themselves—couldn't bring themselves—to vote even against this—not even as Republican policies, taking the exact opposite approach, have helped the U.S. job market to drive unemployment lower than it has been in half a century—lower than it has been in half a century. They want to bring all of that to a screeching halt—not even as 19 different States have hit new record low State unemployment rates in just the year and a half since Republicans passed comprehensive tax reform.

Well, I have good news for the American people. This Republican majority is going to keep fighting for you. We will not let these far-left dreams get in the way of more progress for middle-class families.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Wendy Vitter, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, this week is National Police Week—a chance to reflect on the sacrifices of our Nation's police officers and to thank them for everything they do on our behalf.

Yesterday, I spoke on the floor about Military Appreciation Month. Like members of the military, police offi-

cers are a special breed. They willingly rush into danger and put their lives on the line for the rest of us. That is not a natural human instinct, to rush into danger. Most of us are inclined to run away from danger. But police officers do the opposite. They not only stand their ground in the face of danger; they walk into the midst of it to protect the rest of us.

A centerpiece of National Police Week is Peace Officers Memorial Day, which commemorates the sacrifices of all of those who have given their lives in the line of duty. Last year, more than 100 police officers were killed in the line of duty. It is a powerful reminder that being a police officer is a dangerous job. USA TODAY reports that 10 percent of police officers are assaulted every year—10 percent. Police officers never know what they are going to face when they respond to a call, but they go in anyway.

Serving in law enforcement can take a toll. Police officers—particularly those who specialize in investigating and responding to the worst crimes—have to see a lot of evil on a daily basis. It is yet another way they protect the rest of us. They face evil so that we don't have to. Yet, despite all they do, they don't line up to be thanked. The police officers I meet tend to minimize their contributions. "I am just doing my job" is a pretty frequent refrain.

A lot of us don't interact with the police very frequently. We don't often see the work they do to keep our towns and our cities safe. But being in Congress has given me a chance to interact with police officers on a daily basis. The U.S. Capitol Building and the congressional office buildings, where I work, are protected by the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police. I see them every day, manning security checkpoints, directing traffic, standing on guard outside in the blazing Sun or the cold rain, responding to incidents, and protecting dignitaries and visitors. I know there is a lot they do that I don't see, too—the countless things that go into keeping the Capitol Complex and the thousands of people who work and visit here safe from threats.

I was in the Longworth House Office Building on September 11, 2001, when the planes hit the Pentagon and the Twin Towers. Once it became clear that our Nation was, in fact, under attack, the entire Capitol Complex was evacuated. People were rushing, running out of the buildings. Do you know who wasn't running? The Capitol Police. They weren't going anywhere until they were sure that all of us had gotten out.

Since I became whip, I have gotten to know a number of the outstanding plainclothes police officers who protect Members of leadership. It was two members of the Capitol Police security detail who stepped into the line of fire at the Republicans' baseball practice two summers ago and prevented a terrible day from becoming much worse.

Many Members of Congress are safe today because of the actions of those two police officers.

Here in the United States, we are blessed with a peace and a safety that is denied to many around the world. It is important to remember that one of the big reasons most of us are able to live free from fear is because of the countless police officers on duty around our country. They are there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, ready to step between us and danger. We owe these dedicated men and women a very great debt.

As we observe Police Week, I want to say thank you. Thank you to the police officers who serve across our country. Thank you to their families, who also sacrifice so that the rest of us can live in safety. A special thank-you to the Capitol Police and the police officers who keep the peace back home in South Dakota. May God bless each of you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

NOMINATIONS

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I come to the floor again this morning to discuss several judicial nominations considered by the Senate this week.

Earlier this week, the Senate voted to confirm Michael Truncale to the Eastern District of Texas and Kenneth Lee to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals seat in California, and today we will be voting on the nomination of Wendy Vitter to the Eastern District of Louisiana.

The Senate is considering and confirming nominees whose records indicate they are far outside the mainstream. I have worked very hard over a number of years now—I guess we are in our eighth year—working with Senator TOOMEY, to fill district court vacancies in Pennsylvania with well-qualified and experienced judges whom I believe will be able to set aside their ideologies or personal beliefs and apply the law to the cases before them. But I do not have the same confidence in many of the nominees before this body today and especially the nominees we are considering.

I will go in the order that I mentioned before—first, Michael Truncale, then Kenneth Lee, and Wendy Vitter. I believe that in all three cases, all are not mainstream conservatives. Their backgrounds and records are very political, and they have long records of advocating for certain positions on issues that may come before them as either a U.S. district court judge or an appellate judge.

First of all, Mr. Truncale has advocated strongly for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which provided healthcare coverage and critical patient protections for 20 million people

in terms of coverage and tens of millions more in terms of protection.

He said that the Affordable Care Act would “lead to the rationing of healthcare.” He has personally advocated for abolishing the Department of Education, and he used false, unfounded claims of voter fraud to support voter ID laws that disproportionately affect low-income voters and communities of color.

Second, Kenneth Lee was confirmed over the objections of both California Senators, Senator HARRIS and Senator FEINSTEIN—Senator FEINSTEIN, in this case, being the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, the very committee that considers judges. Mr. Lee has a litany of writings that include offensive statements about immigrants, people of color, and LGBT Americans. He has strongly opposed affirmative action policies that help make our institutions of higher learning more diverse, and it is very possible that he may consider matters relating to these policies as a member of the Ninth Circuit.

Finally, Wendy Vitter has virtually no Federal trial court experience, has a long record of opposing contraception, and has promoted false information about the safety of oral contraceptives. These views are not only outside of the mainstream—the judicial or legal mainstream—but they are also not supported by science.

I don’t believe these nominees will be able to set aside their personal views and apply relevant precedent, and my concern is compounded by recent efforts by conservative jurists to overturn longstanding precedents. Most Americans thought that the Voting Rights Act, which for decades protected the franchise for Americans of color, particularly Black Americans, was a foundational, almost untouchable statute. But in 2013, the conservative majority of the Supreme Court, which has gotten only more conservative, moved to the right even more. That Court, the Supreme Court, gutted the protections of the Voting Rights Act in the *Shelby County v. Holder* case.

Just last year, in the *Janus* decision, the Supreme Court overturned a four-decades-old precedent in the *Abood* case that allowed public sector unions to collect nonpolitical, so-called fair share fees to cover the costs of negotiations that benefit all workers. So you have the union doing the work, and the law allowed them, for four decades, to charge other employees who benefit from the work of the union, and the Supreme Court struck that down.

Pennsylvania passed a similar law in the 1980s, which has been the law of the land in Pennsylvania for years. It was signed into law in the late 1980s by my father when he was serving as Governor, so that is an important issue in Pennsylvania for working men and women.

The conservative majority of the Supreme Court overturned the *Abood*

case, eviscerating a precedent that was relied upon by public sector unions and their governmental employers all over the country. I believe the next step by the far right and by this court and maybe by the Supreme Court and maybe in another court would be to make illegal the very right to organize for wages and benefits. I hope I am wrong about that, but I believe that is the logical next step for the right.

Just this week, a conservative majority of the Supreme Court overturned a 40-year precedent regarding States’ sovereign immunity in the courts of other States. In the last line of his dissent, Justice Breyer sounded alarm bells about this kind of judicial activism from the right, saying: “Today’s decision can only cause one to wonder which cases the court will overrule next.”

He is right. We no longer know what is civil law and what could be up for debate. We thought that *Abood* was settled law in the context of labor unions and the right to organize or an issue related to the right to organize. We thought the Voting Rights Act was settled law.

This week we mark the 65th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, a unanimous Supreme Court decision holding that segregation in our public school system, in addition to being a profound moral failure, was a violation of our Constitution. I would hope—we all would hope that *Brown v. Board of Education* would remain rock solid settled law. Yet, because of what we have seen in the last couple of years with this Court, we must stay vigilant. We cannot let civil rights that Americans fought for and earned and have cherished for decades be chipped away by extreme judicial nominees who hold insuperable political and policy preferences.

I oppose the nominees that the Senate has considered this week, and I will continue to oppose extreme nominees to our Federal courts.

I yield the floor to the distinguished Democratic leader.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER
THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I thank my colleague Senator CASEY for, as usual, his thoughtful, erudite, on-the-money remarks—this time about judges. I am going to talk about that in a minute.

We see something happening here. We see State after State trying to repeal *Roe*. When we ask our Republican colleagues directly “Do you want to appeal *Roe*?” they are usually silent. Their votes on judges say they do, and that is what they are doing. The voters should hold them accountable. I will get to that more in a minute, but I wanted to follow up on the remarks about judges by my good friend from Pennsylvania.

IMMIGRATION

Madam President, yesterday, the Trump administration released the

outlines of its plan for immigration reform. Truth be told, the reported White House plan isn’t a serious attempt at immigration reform. If anything, it is a political document that is anti-immigration reform. It repackages the same partisan, radical, anti-immigrant policies that the administration has pushed for 2 years, all of which have struggled to earn even a simple majority in the Senate, let alone 60 votes. The hands of Stephen Miller are all over this plan, and, of course, he had a watchful eye when other administration officials came into the Republican lunch yesterday and talked about it.

The plan they put together holds immigration precisely at current levels, meaning that for every new immigrant the plan potentially lets in, it must kick one out. What kind of logic is that? What kind of harebrained logic is that—the idea that for every immigrant you help you have to hurt another? How arbitrary. How simplistic. How cruel. It is like the Procrustean bed of immigration policy.

We need immigrants in America. Our labor force is declining. If you go to businesses at the high end, the middle end, and the low end, they say their greatest problem is a lack of workers. And we come up with a policy like this? Make no mistake about it. It is cruel and inhumane, but it also hurts our economy significantly. If you don’t believe me, talk to business leaders—any business leader you know.

Shockingly, the White House’s immigration proposal fails to deal with Dreamers or the 11 million undocumented immigrants now living in the United States. The White House Press Secretary said Dreamers were “left out on purpose.” What does that say about the administration? That goes to the root of what is wrong with this administration’s approach to immigration. If they think they can repeat what they failed to do in the past, if they try to repeat it, saying “OK, we will let Dreamers in, but you accept a whole lot of bad things,” which is why immigration reform failed last time, last year, it ain’t happening. It ain’t happening.

I would say two things. If you are going to do major immigration reform through Congress, you are going to need bipartisan support. That means you sit down and talk to Democrats. Four of us on the Democratic side and four of us on the Republican side in the Gang of 8 spent hours and weeks and months together and carved together a bill that got overwhelming support from Democrats and Republicans in this Chamber and was overwhelmingly supported by the American people and still is. I think 68 percent still support comprehensive immigration reform.

But what does the White House do? Typically, they put together their own plan—Stephen Miller, chief cook and bottle washer—and they say that Democrats should support this. Ain’t happening.