

It is so important that when we do this, we do this in a way that is thoughtful, deliberative, reasonable, and with an eye toward making sure we are getting a good return for the American taxpayer and delivering assistance in a targeted way to those folks who need it the most—unemployed workers; those who are employed; the small businesses that employ them; the healthcare frontline workers who are out there every day fighting this fight against this virus, making sure they have the PPE to protect them—and then, of course, the important investments we are making in vaccines and therapeutics and testing and all the things that will help defeat this; money for schools, colleges, universities, elementary and high school students and faculty and administration—those who are trying to keep our kids in school, keep them educated by dealing with a lot of additional costs related to providing that education in a safe way.

Those are all things on which there is broad bipartisan agreement. We could pass it today. We could pass it today in the Senate, but the Democrats insist on a liberal wish list, which includes a multitrillion-dollar proposal—multitrillion-dollar proposal—with a liberal wish list, an agenda that in many cases has nothing to do with combating or fighting the coronavirus but simply is an attempt to deliver on a liberal agenda for their political base. So let's just make that point very clearly here when we talk about what we should be doing.

I believe what we should be doing is sitting down and working on a reasonable bill, a targeted bill, a fiscally responsible bill. Republicans have been more than willing to do that and more than willing to compromise, but the Democrats both in the House and the Senate continue to insist upon a multitrillion-dollar bill that consists, again, of a bunch of liberal wish list items—taxpayer bailouts for blue States, tax cuts for millionaires across this country, putting money into diversity studies on cannabis—instead of the targeted things, the things that are really going to be necessary to help the American people and our economy recover from the coronavirus.

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY

Madam President, as I begin today, I just want to say that our thoughts are with Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY after his coronavirus diagnosis. It was a strange day in the Senate yesterday with CHUCK GRASSLEY not voting, because he broke a 27-year-long streak of showing up for every single vote. We are praying for his swift recovery and his speedy return to the Senate.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Madam President, a couple of weeks ago, we confirmed one of the most qualified Supreme Court Justices in living memory. This week, we are confirming more district court judges, bringing the total number of judges we have confirmed over the last 4 years to nearly 230.

Confirming good judges is one of the most important responsibilities that we have as Senators, and it is a responsibility that I take very seriously. In fact, one of the main reasons I was first elected to the Senate was to make sure that outstanding judicial nominees were confirmed to the Federal bench.

It is hard to imagine now, but confirming judges used to be a pretty bipartisan affair. Presidents of both parties generally got the majority of their judicial nominees confirmed to the bench. But all of that changed back in the early 2000s.

After President George W. Bush's election, Democrats decided that the President's judicial nominees might not deliver the results that Democrats wanted, and so they decided to adopt a new strategy: blocking judicial nominees on a regular basis. That became the routine here in the Senate.

I was one of the many Americans who were upset by the blockade of impressive, well-qualified nominees, and it was one of the main reasons that I ran for the Senate in 2004. I promised South Dakotans that if they elected me, I would help put outstanding, impartial judges on the bench. I am proud to have delivered on that promise.

The list of outstanding judicial nominees we have confirmed over the past 4 years is long. We have confirmed brilliant, accomplished men and women with superb qualifications, but most importantly, we have confirmed men and women who understand the proper role of a judge, who know that the job of a judge is to interpret the law, not make the law, to call balls and strikes, not to rewrite rules of the game.

It is here that Republican judicial philosophy diverges from the judicial philosophy of a lot of Democrats. Republicans believe that the job of a judge is to look at the law and the Constitution and then rule based on how those things apply to the facts in a particular case. Judges, we believe, should leave their politics and their personal opinions at the courtroom door and base their opinions solely on what the law and the Constitution say.

For Democrats, on the other hand, what matters most is not how judges reach their conclusion, not whether they apply the law, but what outcomes they deliver. If a judge can deliver the right outcome by following the plain meaning of the law, then great, but if she can't, then Democrats want a judge to reach beyond the plain meaning of the statute to deliver what Democrats see as an appropriate result.

Then-Presidential candidate Barack Obama back in 2007 said:

[What you've got to look at is, what is in the justice's heart? What's their broader vision of what America should be?

Well, that is a very dangerous standard. It is not the job of a judge to impose his or her "broader vision of what America should be"; it is the job of a judge to determine what the law says and then apply the law to the particular case before him.

President Obama famously said that he wanted judges with empathy. Well, that is all very well until you are a party in a case, and you have the law on your side, but the judge empathizes with the opposing party. What happens then?

The only way to preserve the rule of law in this country is to confirm judges who understand that their allegiance must be to the law and to the Constitution, not to their personal feelings, their personal beliefs, their political beliefs, or their "broader vision of what America should be." Otherwise, you replace the rule of law with the rule of a bunch of individual judges.

So I am very thankful that we have confirmed so many judges who understand that the job of a judge is to apply the law, not make it, and who won't try to usurp the role of Congress by legislating from the Federal bench. I thank the majority leader for making judicial confirmations such a priority. I look forward to confirming more outstanding judicial nominees this week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Vaden nomination be waived.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 Stephen A. Vaden, of Tennessee, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade.

Mitch McConnell, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, John Thune, Mike Crapo, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Kevin Cramer, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Todd Young, John Boozman, David Perdue, James E. Risch, Lindsey Graham, Roger F. Wicker.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 Stephen A. Vaden, of Tennessee, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade, shall be brought to a close?