I have known Bonnie Campbell for many years. She is a person of unquestioned integrity, keen intellect, and outstanding judgment. She has a great sense of fairness and evenhandedness. These qualities and her significant experience make her an ideal candidate for this circuit court position. Her nomination has been strongly supported by many of her colleagues, including the present Iowa attorney general, the president of the Iowa State Police Association and, of course, the American Bar Association.

Finally, we need a judicial system that reflects the diversity of this Nation. We need more women and people of color on the bench. Only 20 percent of all federal judge position in the country are filled by women, according to the Justice Department.

We have a backlog of judicial vacancies. It is only fair to move them, and we ought to move all of them out, especially Bonnie Campbell. She has had her hearing. Her nomination is sitting in the Judiciary Committee. If the reports I just heard are correct, the Judiciary Committee is stonewalling, refusing to move her name out to the floor of the Senate.

As I said earlier, this is another indication of how the leadership in this Senate is shirking its responsibilities to the people of this country—to put it off, delay, stonewall, don't do anything—when we have a crying need to fill these vacancies.

I am very dismayed. I had talked with the majority leader and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator HATCH, and others about this. And, Senator GRASSLEY and I had remained hopeful that her name would be reported out so the Senate could act on it, but it seems we have been led astray, that it is the intention of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee to lock up this nomination and not report out Bonnie Campbell.

The women of this country ought to know that. The women of this country ought to know that a uniquely qualified, eminently qualified individual to take a vacant position on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals is being denied by the Judiciary Committee her right to have a vote. Is that what the Judiciary Committee is telling the women of this country—that they need to take a back seat, that they will not act on these judicial nominees if you are a woman, qualified as Bonnie Campbell is?

I am very upset about this. I had in good faith been reluctant to exercise my rights as a Senator to in any way inhibit or do anything that would stop the flow of legislation or anything on the Senate floor because I had, I guess mistakenly, been of the opinion, or at least advised, if we just waited a due length of time, Bonnie Campbell's name would be reported out. Again, I think I was obviously mistaken, that my faith—my good faith—was not responded to in kind.

This is not right. It is not right to treat a person like this. It is not right to block someone who has had their hearing and is widely supported on both sides of the aisle. It might be a different story if there were a lot of controversy about Bonnie Campbell, but there is none. As I said, Senator GRASSLEY, a conservative Republican, is openly supporting her. Republicans in my State have been supportive of her getting on the Eighth Circuit.

This is, I think, a black mark on the operations of the Senate, another indication of how the leadership of this Senate refuses to do the people's business, to let things come out on the floor so we can vote up or down. Bonnie Campbell is being denied her right, I believe, as a citizen of this country to have her nomination acted upon by the full Senate, and it is a bad mark on the Senate.

I am hopeful the Judiciary Committee will reconsider its action—rather, its inaction. The Judiciary Committee can meet tomorrow, they can meet Monday, they can meet any day the chairman wants them to meet and report out this nominee. I was under the impression that was going to happen today, but obviously I had the wrong impression of what the Senate Judiciary Committee was going to do.

I urge the chairman to convene the Judiciary Committee and report Bonnie Campbell's name out before this session is over.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes before those who have time reserved come to the floor.

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

REFORMS VERSUS ROADBLOCKS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I have been in some meetings this morning. Of course, we do not have any more committee hearings going on because the other side has objected to that. I haven't listened to everything, but I heard enough to hear my friends on the other side of the aisle complaining about not moving forward.

So I just believe it is really important to talk a little bit about the whole idea of what has been going on here now for several months, where we have been seeking to make some reforms and seeking to move forward, moving a number of bills, and finding nothing but roadblocks from the other side of the aisle. It is almost hilarious to hear that kind of conversation when the facts are that we have had nothing but roadblocks coming from the other side of the aisle. And it is too bad.

We are down to where we don't have a great deal of time, and the notion that we continue to bring up the same topics, over and over and over again, simply because these folks want to make it an issue as opposed to a solution, frankly, gets pretty redundant and tiresome.

Let me just mention a few of the things specifically that have been troublesome.

S. 2045, amending the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to H–1B nonimmigrant aliens: Senator LOTT offered, on the 15th of September, a UC for both sides to bring the bill to the floor; objected to by Democrats.

S. 2497, the McCain-Lieberman bill dealing with the entertainment industry's marketing of inappropriate R-rated videos: In response to the FTC report, Senator SANTORUM offered a UC to bring it to the floor. The other side objected.

Four district judges in Illinois and Arizona: Asked to be brought to the floor; the minority leader objected.

S. 2507, the intelligence authorization: We tried to bring that to the floor and get a UC; no response from the minority leader.

H.R. 1776, the housing construction bill, with 32 cosponsors, including a dozen Democrats: The leader requested UC to go to conference; objected to by that side of the aisle.

H.R. 3615, the Rural Local Broadcast Signal Act, a satellite bill so we can have local-to-local broadcasting in rural areas: The leader asked for a UC to go to conference; objected to by the Democrats on that side of the aisle.

The Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Act, which the President and the other side of the aisle, along with Vice President GORE, claim they support: The leader asked for a UC September 7 to call it up. It was the sixth time in the 106th Congress that the Democrats have blocked the lockbox from coming up.

It takes a lot of nerve to get up and talk about not moving forward when these are the kinds of things that have actually taken place.

S. 2, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: We spent 2 weeks of floor time this spring and summer—2 weeks—debating and voting on amendments. The other side of the aisle has blocked two UCs—including 20 additional amendments—which have kept us from finishing this measure.

It is really almost laughable to talk about that. What we need to do is to move forward. What we need to do is get these bills out, have our disagreements, vote on them, and get the job done that we are here to do. We tried to do that yesterday; we couldn't get it done.

Let me share with you another batch of information. So far in the 106th Congress well over half the votes cast on amendments are initiatives from the other side of the aisle; that is, 231 out of 403 rollcall votes. Many of these votes are repetitive votes on their favorite agenda items which are out

there more to create an issue than they are to create a solution. And they say they don't have a voice.

Further, they have continued to block action on important issues for Americans, including education reform, meaningful tax relief, protecting Social Security, Medicare. We have pushed for effective reforms. That side of the aisle has continued to throw up roadblocks. We are continuing to look to the future and getting these items accomplished. Unfortunately, our friends continue with the roadblocks.

Total rollcall votes during the 106th Congress, through September 11, 611; rollcall votes on amendments, 403. Those asked for on Democrat-sponsored amendments, 231; Republican-sponsored amendments, 172.

Votes on the Democrat agenda: Votes to raise taxes or to reduce tax relief, 55; votes to increase Federal education spending, 35; Federal funds to hire new teachers as opposed to having local decisions, 9; Federal funds for school construction as opposed to letting people decide for themselves, 5; Federal funds for afterschool, 6; votes to further regulate gun owners, 13. Now, that is an issue that people disagree on, but how many times can we continue to bring it up? How many times can we have votes on it? How many times can it be used to slow down the progress toward getting our job done? Minimum wage package, 5; the minimum wage package is in a bill they have held up.

This idea of our friends on the other side getting up and talking about things not happening here is ludicrous, absolutely ludicrous, in terms of the kinds of issues that have been put up over there as roadblocks. It is time for us to get on with it. Let's take a look at what we have before us. Let's have our debate; Let's have our exchange; and let's vote and move forward.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FITZGERALD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, what is the pending question before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed not to exceed 20 minutes.

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

APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, as the end of the 106th Congress is fast approaching, I am deeply dismayed about the prospects of completing action on the thirteen annual appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2001, which begins October 1st. Unfortunately, as has happened far too often in recent years, much of the work on appropriations bills remains to be done. There is really no valid excuse for the Senate's failure to do its appropriations work. The House has done its work in a timely fashion.

Yet, to date, only two of the Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations bills have been signed into law—Military Construction and Defense. Of the remaining eleven bills, four have yet to even be brought up for debate in the full Senate. Those bills are Treasury, Commerce-Justice-State, VA–HUD, and The District of Columbia. As Members are aware, the conference report on H.R. 4516, the Fiscal Year 2001 Legislative Branch Appropriations is divided—broken into two divisions. Division A contains the conference agreement for the Legislative Branch bill. Division B, which was inserted into the Legislative Branch Bill without any input by Democratic Members of either the House or Senate, contains the entire Treasury-General Government Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001. This was done despite the fact that the Senate has never taken up the Treasury-General Government Appropriations bill at all. In addition, again without any input from the Democratic Members of the House or Senate, a tax measure to repeal the telephone excise tax was inserted in this same conference report. The measure was soundly defeated in this body yesterday, as I believe it should have been.

Here we are with only nine calendar days left before the beginning of Fiscal Year 2001, and we have enacted only two of the thirteen annual appropriations bills and had them signed into law; two more were contained in the conference report on H.R. 4516, namely the Legislative Branch and Treasury-General Government bills. That leaves nine fiscal year 2001 appropriations bills remaining. Since, on yesterday, we did defeat the conference report, actually the Legislative Branch and Treasury-General Government bills have not been acted on, we have eleven bills remaining.

To conform with the Constitutionally envisioned process, all four of these bills should be passed in the Senate before being taken up in conferences with the other body. To shortcut that process means that the full Senate never has an opportunity to amend these bills or debate provisions in them. Especially when it comes to bills which spend the taxpayers' money, we ought to take the time to allow debate and amendment by the full membership of this body. I hear all of this talk about tax cuts and giving the people back their hard-earned money. How does that square with the rather cavalier attitude we sometimes exhibit here when it comes to appropriations bills? Do we forget, that when it comes to appropriations bills, we are spending the people's money? Don't Members of the Senate feel an obligation to let the full Senate scrutinize, debate, and, if necessary, amend, bills that allocate those hard-earned tax dollars? No public debate by the Senate on the billions of dollars contained in these bills for programs and projects means that the public is denied critical information about the use of the public's money. In a body formulated to foster debate and to protect the rights of the minority view, it is especially irresponsible to abdicate those functions when it comes to spending the people's tax dollars.

There is plenty of blame to go around as to why the Commerce-Justice-State, VA–HUD, and DC bills have not been brought up, as well as the Treasury bill. I do not seek to point the finger at anybody.

The chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the members of the Appropriations Committee have done their very best to work on these bills, to report them. The Commerce-Justice-State bill has been before the Senate long enough that we could have passed it, we could have stayed in on Fridays and, if need be, on some Saturdays. We have done that before, and we could have gotten that bill passed and, at the same time, let Senators have the chance to offer amendments to it. That is what the process is all about.

The leadership too often files cloture on appropriations bills and other matters, in order to limit the number of controversial and politically loaded amendments that can be offered by Senators on the minority side of the aisle. Democratic Members too often bring up ''message'' amendments over and over again on appropriations bills because they find little opportunity to have those matters debated by the Senate on other bills.

I have to say that the authorization committees, some of them at least, do not do their work and, as a consequence, the action and the responsibility then falls upon the Appropriations Committee. Members do not have an opportunity to offer amendments to authorization bills that ought to have been reported and brought to the floor. When those authorization committees do not act, naturally appropriations bills are the only vehicles to which Members can offer amendments that they would otherwise offer to the authorization bill.

Every action has a reaction. Polarization breeds polarization. Nevertheless, we must find a way to accommodate the needs of all Senators, as well as fulfill the responsibility of the leadership to move must-pass legislation.

This is not the first year that the regular appropriations process has broken down, but I urge us all to work on a bipartisan basis to ensure that it will be the last. Let us call a truce to the perennial warfare that we fight over these appropriations bills. Let us stop the drift that leads us to short cut the deliberative function of this Senate and all too often produces mammoth omnibus bills with everything but grandpa's false teeth thrown in. This