

won't be in and we won't be able to have votes, in the evening we can have as many votes as we need. There is no reason we can't work into the night and then come back on Thursday.

There are some important things going on this weekend, and the Republican leader and I have talked about that. We will be as understanding as we can of everybody's schedule, but I do remind everyone that the Presidents Day recess is coming up. We have been here 6 weeks, and we not only have obligations here but we have obligations at home. There is work we have to do at home, but we are not going to be able to do that important work until we finish this economic recovery legislation. So we are going to be as thoughtful and as considerate on both sides as necessary.

I have to say, Mr. President, as far as the managers of this legislation, we are in the majority at this time, but it wasn't long ago that Senator COCHRAN and Senator GRASSLEY were chairmen of those committees. These are four of the most respected, knowledgeable, and experienced managers we could have, the four people we have mentioned—INOUE, BAUCUS, SPECTER, and COCHRAN. So there is no reason that these people, with the experience they have, can't help us move through this legislation.

Mr. MCCONNELL. May I ask the majority leader one other question?

I have a very short statement, unrelated to the Holder nomination, if the majority leader wouldn't mind.

Mr. REID. I would be happy to have the Senator do that.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### JUMP STARTING THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. On the same subject, Mr. President, I think we all agree it is important to jump-start the economy, and this week we will have the opportunity, as the majority leader and I have been discussing, to have full debate and many amendments on how to do that and how to improve on the bill passed by the House.

Republicans agree with President Obama that we should trim things out that don't put people back to work. The standard he set for this bill is pretty simple and easy to understand. He wanted to incorporate good Republican ideas and trim the fat that won't put people to work right now. I think that is a pretty good principle. Republicans believe a stimulus bill must fix the main problem in the economy, which is housing. We need to fix housing first.

Republicans also believe we must put money back into the pockets of taxpayers, and we believe we must eliminate wasteful spending from this package.

The American people have real questions about the merits of spending tens of millions of dollars sprucing up government buildings here in Washington, for example, or removing fish barriers, rather than growing the economy and creating jobs. We will have an opportunity to further craft this measure as it moves through the Senate. Republicans are anxious to offer amendments, have debate, and have votes.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I thank the majority leader for deferring to me for a moment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

#### HOLDER NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the long and lurching march toward equality that in no small manner defines our progress as a nation, this moment in history will be remembered as a golden age. The election of Barack Obama fulfills a dream that seemed unimaginable a generation ago, or even a few years ago. A child born today will have every reason to believe the old adage that in America any boy or girl can grow up to be President.

To join him in governing our country, President Obama has chosen a brilliant, honorable, and exceptionally well qualified individual to serve as Attorney General of the United States. With historic challenges facing the Department of Justice, I urge all my colleagues to support the nomination of Eric Holder.

What began as a one-man, part-time office to represent the United States in Supreme Court trials, the Attorney General now has been transformed over the years to be the lead agency to fight terrorism, prosecute crime, and uphold the fundamental rights of every citizen.

In 1957, with the civil rights movement growing and conflicts bubbling in all regions of our country, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice was established. When Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sex, handicap, religion, or national origin, it was the Civil Rights Division that ensured they would be enforced; that is, the laws passed would be enforced.

In the fall of 1962, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy ordered U.S. Marshals to stand guard at the University of Mississippi so that James Meredith, the first African American accepted for admission, could enroll and attend classes peacefully amidst a violent mob of thousands.

In the summer of 1963, the Justice Department, led by Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, confronted Governor George Wallace as he physically blocked the admission of two African-American students to the University of Alabama. It took the federalization of the Alabama National

Guard to force Governor Wallace to step aside and allow those students to enter.

These are only two of countless examples of the U.S. Department of Justice enforcing the laws of our country.

Although the parchment of our Constitution may be a little yellow and the ink faded somewhat, as long as the Justice Department stands behind the people's demands for liberty, the spirit of our Founders will never recede. I have no desire to rehash the many ways the Bush administration politicized and degraded the Justice Department away from its historic mission. While we must not fail to remember that sad chapter in our history, I am far more interested in looking toward a more hopeful future.

With President Obama in the White House and Eric Holder leading the Justice Department, that brighter future begins right now. The experience of this nominee is unquestioned. As a young lawyer, fresh out of Columbia Law School, one of the finest law schools in America, Eric Holder accepted a job at the Justice Department. He didn't want to see how much money he could make, he wanted to enter public service, and he did. The job he took at the Justice Department is now a department he stands ready to lead.

At the time he worked there, as a young new lawyer, he was charged with the unenviable task of prosecuting corrupt public officials who had violated the public trust. This kind of work can be thankless and politically sensitive, but from a young age Eric Holder showed the courage to stand for the public interest no matter the personal or political cost.

In 1988, Eric Holder was appointed by President Reagan to be a judge in the District of Columbia Superior Court. In this capacity he presided over countless trials involving violent crimes and murder, proving himself to be a fair and tough administrator of justice.

In 1993, President Clinton chose Eric Holder as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, where he focused on improving some of Washington, DC's most crime-ridden neighborhoods by locking up wrongdoers and involving communities in law enforcement.

As Deputy U.S. Attorney General starting in 1997, Holder showed fearlessness in prosecuting crimes against children, white-collar crimes, and crime in general. During his tenure as Deputy Attorney General, Mr. Holder was also faced with the difficult decision of how to advise Attorney General Janet Reno on the investigation that led to the impeachment of President Clinton. He chose to urge the Attorney General to expand the investigation to ensure that all facts would come to light. He was harshly criticized by members of his own party for causing political trouble for the President.

But in this decision, Eric Holder again showed the courage to uphold perhaps the most important principle for any Justice Department official: answering to the people first.