

serve in their administration. In the vast majority of instances, the individuals nominated by the President are not controversial, but many have faced delays before assuming their positions. These delays mean critical decision-makers are not in place. And, the delays make it harder to find qualified people—many great nominees simply cannot wait around for months as the stress and uncertainty affects their families and careers. We need to do better in the 112th Congress. According to the Congressional Research Service, the Senate has a constitutional duty to exercise “advice and consent” on more than 1,215 executive branch nominees. That is a large number. Is my friend from Kentucky aware of that the Senate confirms more than 1,215 executive branch nominees?

Mr. McCONNELL. I am aware that the number of presidential appointees has grown substantially. According to the bipartisan Commission on Public Service report from 2003, President Kennedy took office in 1960 with only 286 positions to fill by Presidential appointment. Many of those required Senate confirmation. About 40 years later, President George W. Bush faced a total of 3,361 Presidential appointment slots to fill. I am sure the current President faced a similar number of appointments.

Mr. REID. I remember the Public Service Commission well and its Chairman Paul Volcker. We may need a new working group in the Senate to examine the confirmation process and ways to improve, streamline, and in some cases perhaps eliminate the confirmation process for lower level nominees. I would like to propose a new working group on executive nominations headed by Chairman SCHUMER and Ranking Member ALEXANDER of the Rules Committee. We will develop the details of this effort in the coming weeks, but I think a Senate level working group is a good place to start. And I would also recommend that Senators SCHUMER and ALEXANDER work on this effort in conjunction with Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS. The Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee has held hearings on the confirmation process in the past, and Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS have been engaged in this issue for some time. They can bring a valuable perspective here.

Mr. McCONNELL. I agree the Senate should establish a working group to examine this issue. Surely, Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS have bipartisan respect and should be a part of any such group on executive nominations. Senators ALEXANDER and SCHUMER are good choices to spearhead this effort. I look forward to working with the majority leader and my colleagues in the coming weeks as we finalize this proposal.

FIRST DAY FOR INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the first day for

the introduction of bills and joint resolutions in the 112th Congress be Tuesday, January 25, 2011.

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

ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE

Mr. REID. I have a concurrent resolution at the desk. I ask the clerk to report the same.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 1) providing for a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate and adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The concurrent resolution is considered and agreed to.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 1) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 1

Resolved, by the Senate of the United States (the House of Representatives concurring), That (a) when the Senate adjourns or recesses on any day from Wednesday, January 5, 2011, through Monday, January 10, 2011, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned or recessed until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and

(b) when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Wednesday, January 12, 2011, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, January 18, 2011, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 3 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Wednesday, January 26, 2011, through Friday, January 28, 2011, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, February 8, 2011, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 3 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. (a) The Majority Leader of the Senate, or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the Senate, or his designee, shall notify the Members of the Senate to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the Senate recesses or adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the Senate shall again stand recessed or adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

SEC. 3. The Speaker or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify Members of the House to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider that vote.

Mr. McCONNELL. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

SENATE PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, happy new year to you. And happy new year to all my colleagues, those returning to the Senate and those taking office today for the first time.

I am honored, humbled, and will forever be grateful that the people of Nevada have entrusted me with another term as a Senator. I will continue working hard to create jobs for the people of my State and our country and get our country back on track. I am also grateful for the continued support and confidence of my caucus, which has given me the honor of serving as its leader. Neither title—Senator nor majority leader—is a responsibility I take lightly or for granted.

They say you can never step in the same river twice; new water flows in replacing the old and continually renewing the river. The Senate is the same. This body never stops changing. Every 2 years—occasionally more frequently—new Senators take their seats in this Chamber. They join the Senate family in this ever-evolving team of 100 tasked with moving the country forward. Our fundamental responsibilities and traditions anchor us in that river. Our respect and reverence for the people we serve and this institution never wavers or changes.

According to academics, pundits, and Congress watchers, the 111th Congress was the most productive in American history. But many challenges and opportunities still lie ahead for this new Congress that starts today. We have to do even more to help middle-class families, to create jobs, to hasten our energy independence, to improve our children's education, and to fix our broken immigration system. We also have to make sure the Senate can operate in a way that allows the people's elected legislators to legislate.

We will soon debate some reforms to Senate procedure, reforms proposed not for the sake of change itself or for partisan gain but because the current system has been abused and abused gratuitously. The filibuster in particular has been abused and in truly unprecedented fashion. There are strong passions on both sides of this debate on this issue. There are nearly as many opinions about what to do about these abuses as there are Senators. But let's start the conversation with some facts.

There were about as many filibusters in the last two Congresses as there were in the first six and a half decades the cloture rules existed. There were nearly as many filibusters in just the last 2 years as there were in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and half of the 1970s, all combined. In the entire 19th century, the Senate saw fewer than 12 filibusters. Now we see that many in a single month. Many of these recent filibusters were terribly unproductive. Many of them prevented us from even holding debate on a bill, let alone an up-or-down vote. After we wasted hour after hour, day after day, sometimes weeks, many of those bills passed and