

ROTC program. This experience allowed him to build up the skills and discipline that would become the foundation of his success in the services. Outside of school, Sergeant Hermogino relaxed by skateboarding, BMX racing, and displaying his talent for fixing just about anything.

Sergeant Hermogino enlisted in the Air Force in 2001, and he served for 8 years as a medical administrator based in the U.S. and Manas, Kyrgyzstan. While he assisted fellow servicemembers suffering from life-threatening wounds, Sergeant Hermogino always felt compelled to expand his contribution. His brother, Marvin Jeff, has said, "He wanted to be more involved."

In 2009, Sergeant Hermogino joined the Army and served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as a member of the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, based at Fort Carson, CO. Sergeant Hermogino's bravery and exemplary service did not escape the notice of his commanders. He earned, among other decorations, the Air Force and Army Commendation Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal.

Mark Twain once said, "The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time." Sergeant Hermogino's service was in keeping with this sentiment by selflessly putting country first, he lived life to the fullest. He lived with a sense of the highest honorable purpose.

Today's tribute to the memory of Sergeant Hermogino must also honor his profound love for family. In this spirit, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our deepest respects and condolences to Norma, his mother, Renato, his father, and to his entire family. Please know that Colorado and Americans across the country are profoundly grateful for Ken's sacrifice. For his bravery in Afghanistan and across the world, he will forever be remembered as one of our country's bravest.

HONORING OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN THIS MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the sacrifice of those to whom we are forever indebted: the brave men and women of our Armed Forces, both past and present, who died in defense of freedom. It has been and continues to be their duty, honor, and privilege to serve. With Memorial Day 2011 approaching, it is our duty to pause and honor those who have sacrificed.

Memorial Day has become the unofficial beginning of summer. Schools are beginning to break for summer vacation, community pools are opening for the season, and friends and family are gathering this weekend for barbecues. It is important that we not lose sight of the true nature of this holiday and I encourage all of us to take time to pause and remember the meaning of Memorial Day.

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our Nation's service. Since 1868, this time of year has been designated as a time to pause and honor our war dead. It was officially designated a Federal holiday in 1971. An often overlooked tradition is to have a moment of remembrance specifically at 3 p.m. local time.

Throughout the Nation over this holiday weekend we will see many American flags and flowers adorning the graves of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. I will remember in particular the 104 Marylanders who have been killed in our most recent conflicts, and I will remind myself that our freedom isn't free. I will remind myself of their ultimate sacrifice and I will remind myself of the ongoing sacrifices their families continue to make each and every day.

I am immensely proud of the men and women—fewer than 1 percent of our population—who serve in our All-Volunteer Force. But there is a drawback, of sorts, to having an All-Volunteer Force: the sacrifices of the few are not felt by the many; therefore, they can be overlooked. We mustn't allow this to happen. This environment is much different than the conflicts of the past where nearly everyone had a friend, neighbor, or loved one who wore the cloth of our Nation.

I call on my colleagues and all Americans to remember the true meaning of Memorial Day and take the time to pause and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedom and for the continued success of this great Nation.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as the Senate prepares to adjourn for the Memorial Day recess, I had hoped that we would be allowed to proceed with the consensus judicial nominees ready for confirmation and who are so needed to fill vacancies on Federal courts around the country. Instead, the Republican leadership's filibuster of the nomination of Goodwin Liu is being supplemented with delays of even those judicial nominations supported by Republican home State Senators and approved by Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee. This is too bad.

With judicial vacancies continuing at crisis levels, affecting the ability of courts to provide justice to Americans around the country, I have been urging the Senate to vote on the judicial nominations reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee and pending on the Senate's Executive Calendar. The Senate is recessing with 19 judicial nominations awaiting final action. Of those, 16 are by anyone's definition consensus nominees. All 16 were unanimously approved by all Republican and all Democratic Senators on the Judiciary Committee. Yet they remain stalled without final Senate action.

We should have regular votes on President Obama's highly qualified

nominees, instead of partisan filibusters and more delays. With vacancies still totaling 90 on Federal courts throughout the country with nearly two dozen future vacancies on the horizon, there is no time to delay taking up these nominations. Had we taken positive action on the consensus nominees, vacancies could have been reduced below 80 for the first time in years.

All of the nominations reported by this committee and pending on the Senate's Executive Calendar have been through our Judiciary Committee's fair and thorough process. We review extensive background material on each nominee. All Senators on the Committee, Democratic and Republican, have the opportunity to ask the nominees questions at a live hearing. Senators also have the opportunity to ask questions in writing following the hearing and to meet with the nominees. All of these nominees which the Committee reported to the Senate have a strong commitment to the rule of law and a demonstrated faithfulness to the Constitution. All have the support of their home State Senators, both Republican and Democratic. They should not be delayed for weeks and months needlessly after being so thoroughly and fairly considered by the Judiciary Committee.

They include several nominees to fill judicial emergency vacancies, including Paul Engelmayer and William Kuntz of New York, Michael Simon of Oregon, Richard Brooke Jackson of Colorado, Kathleen Williams of Florida, and Nelva Gonzales Ramos of Texas, as well as Henry Floyd of South Carolina to the Fourth Circuit. The nomination of Professor Liu being filibustered by Republican leadership is also to fill a judicial emergency vacancy.

Those nominees who have the support of home State Republican Senators include Bernice Donald of Tennessee to the Sixth Circuit, Henry Floyd of South Carolina to the Fourth Circuit, Sara Lynn Darrow of Illinois, Kathleen Williams of Florida, Nelva Gonzales Ramos of Texas, John Andrew Ross of Missouri, Timothy Cain of South Carolina, Nannette Jolivet Brown of Louisiana, and Nancy Torresen of Maine. In spite of that support, we are unable to secure consent from the Republican leadership to consider and confirm them.

Of the judicial nominations we have been able to get the Senate to consider this year almost 70 percent were delayed from last year. We have only been able to confirm eight judicial nominees that had hearings and were reported for the first time this year. So when some say we are taking "positive action" on large percentages of nominees, what this shows is how many unobjectionable nominees were stalled last year by objections from the minority.

We could have made significant progress helping Americans seeking justice in our Federal courts before