

ready to confirm a new Attorney General, but Republicans weren't and aren't.

February and March flew by and Republicans still aren't ready. Now we are half way through April, and once again, Senate Democrats are ready and willing to confirm a new Attorney General, but the Republicans are not.

Ms. Lynch has a spotless record. No one can question her integrity, her background, and there is no question that she should not have to wait any longer.

SGR LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have spent a little bit of time talking about the sustainable growth rate—the doc fix—or the SGR. Before the Senate recessed for the Easter break, Republicans were unable to agree on how to prevent the physician pay cut. Democrats were ready to proceed. The last night we were here, we said: When we come back, we want to move this House bill forward. We want three simple amendments.

We still feel the same way. We are willing not only to move forward on those amendments, but we will give a very short time agreement on each one of them.

The Republican leader said when bills come to the floor, he wants to have amendments. We don't want to amend this bill to death. We want three simple amendments. We said that the night we were here when closing the Senate for the Easter recess, and we say it again. I wish Republicans would have joined us years ago in our efforts to repeal this faulty law, but they did not do that.

Regardless of the history, we have an urgent need before us today to get this bill done. Each day that passes without doing this SGR, this sustainable growth rate—to get rid of it is basically what we are doing. It would be a good day for America. It would also be a good day for America when we can confirm Loretta Lynch. Each day that passes without her confirmation and without a doc fix is just another example of Republicans' inability to govern.

Mr. President, would you announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

DISAPPROVAL OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8—PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

On March 31, 2015, during the adjournment of the Senate, a message from the President of the United States was received returning to the Senate the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 8) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8 is considered as having been read, will be printed in the RECORD, and spread in full upon the Journal.

The veto message ordered to be printed in the RECORD is as follows:

MEMORANDUM OF DISAPPROVAL

S.J. Res. 8 would overturn the National Labor Relations Board's recently issued "representation case procedures" rule and block modest but overdue reforms to simplify and streamline private sector union elections. Accordingly, I am withholding my approval of this resolution. (The Pocket Veto Case, 279 U.S. 655 (1929)).

Workers need a strong voice in the workplace and the economy to protect and grow our Nation's middle class. Unions have played a vital role in giving workers that voice, allowing workers to organize together for higher wages, better working conditions, and the benefits and protections that most workers take for granted today. Workers deserve a level playing field that lets them freely choose to make their voices heard, and this requires fair and streamlined procedures for determining whether to have unions as their bargaining representative. Because this resolution seeks to undermine a streamlined democratic process that allows American workers to freely choose to make their voices heard, I cannot support it.

To leave no doubt that the resolution is being vetoed, in addition to withholding my signature, I am returning S.J. Res. 8 to the Secretary of the Senate, along with this Memorandum of Disapproval.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 31, 2015.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

SGR LEGISLATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to talk once again about the ongoing effort to replace the Medicare sustainable growth rate, or SGR, formula.

As we know, SGR has been a problem pretty much since its inception. Members of both parties have grown tired of passing temporary SGR patches that have been cobbled together at the last minute behind closed doors. This constant, seemingly unending, cycle has only grown more tiresome as the years have gone by.

That is why a little over 2 years ago a group of leaders from both the House and the Senate set out to fix this problem once and for all. I was part of this effort. I was joined on the Senate side by former Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus. Together, Senator Baucus and I worked with the leaders of the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees to craft legislation that would repeal and replace SGR with an improved payment system that rewards quality, efficiency, and innovation.

While many critics deemed our efforts a lost cause, we introduced our bill in late 2013 and got it reported out of the Finance Committee on a voice vote. That same legislation formed the basis of the SGR bill that passed overwhelmingly in the House with 392 votes at the end of March.

Now the bill is before the Senate. It is my hope that we will act quickly to pass this bipartisan, bicameral legislation and send it to the President's desk as soon as possible.

This SGR bill is historic for a number of reasons. First of all, it demonstrates what Congress is truly capable of when Members work together. While that type of cooperation used to be commonplace around here, it has in recent years been in short supply. The bill also represents a step forward in the effort to reform our Nation's entitlement programs. The bill contains bipartisan reforms to the Medicare program, and it is not limited to fixing the broken SGR system.

To go along with the permanent SGR fix, the bill includes a meaningful downpayment on Medicare reform without any accompanying tax hikes. These reforms include a limitation on so-called Medigap first-dollar coverage, more robust means testing for Medicare Parts B and D, and program integrity provisions that will strengthen Medicare's ability to fight fraud.

I am aware that these are not transformative reforms and that much more work will be necessary to put Medicare—not to mention our other entitlement programs—on a more sustainable trajectory. However, any Senators who, like me, have been clamoring for entitlement reform should welcome these changes. After all, for years the idea of bipartisan Medicare reform seemed, at best, farfetched. President Obama and his allies here in Congress have stated repeatedly that, before they would consider changes to our safety net programs, Republicans would have to agree to massive tax hikes. But here we are, just one Senate vote away from enacting meaningful and bipartisan Medicare reforms into law.

Of course, as I said last month before the House vote, this bill is not perfect. Anyone who is determined to vote no could likely dig through the bill and find a reason to do so. I have my own thoughts as to how I would like to improve the bill.

But, let's be honest. While I have only been in the Senate for 38 years or so, I don't remember voting on many perfect bills, particularly not on a subject matter this complex and under a divided government. So, while I understand the impulse of some who may want to hold out for a better, more ideal solution to the SGR problem, I think it would be a grave mistake to pass up this bipartisan opportunity we have before us now.

As I see it, we have two options. We can hold out for a better bill, one that satisfies every demand and subject ourselves to many more years of the last-minute, time-consuming SGR patches that are loathed by everyone in Congress and everyone in the health care industry or we can pass the bipartisan, bicameral bill we have before us now, fixing the SGR problem once and for all and setting the stage for future entitlement reform.

It should be pretty clear where I stand. This is a good bill, and it is coming at the right time.

I want to once again commend the leaders in the House from both parties who worked so hard to reach a deal on this legislation and to pass it with such an overwhelming consensus. I know it was not easy.

It is now up to us here in the Senate. Let's get this done. I hope all of my colleagues will join me in supporting the SGR bill.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HONDURAS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, over the course of the Easter recess, I went to meet with the President of Honduras, President Hernandez, about the limited albeit progress his country is making against crime, as well as all the drugs that are coming in. I had gone to Honduras with our four-star Marine general, General Kelly, the Commander of United States Southern Command.

Between the U.S. military and the Coast Guard, we have been successful—as a matter of fact, I even went on some simulated drug interdictions out in the Caribbean off of Key West. They showed me how one Coast Guard fast boat can interdict a drug smuggler's fast boat, and basically they shoot out the engines. They can do that from another fast boat or they can do that from a helicopter.

That has had an effect. There are less drugs coming out of South America going into Honduras, which is one of the three Central American countries that had become so prime for the drug trade.

They arrive in big shipments into Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala. Then they break them down into much smaller packets and go through this very efficient distribution system that goes north through the rest of Central America, into Mexico, and from there to the United States.

It is hard to catch them when there are the much smaller packets of cocaine going north. Therefore, we have really made an effort to assist the three Central American countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

Needless to say, there is a lot of corruption in the governments and the local police of all of those three countries. As a result, the drug lords find it fairly easy pickings to buy off people and buy off judges, so President Hernandez came into office wanting to really make a difference.

He started doing some shows of force. He has worked with General Kelly on this issue, but the fact is it is still a very violent country, with not only the drug trade but also human trafficking, but the trends are in the right direction.

One year ago, Honduras was the murder capital of the world. It was about 86 murders per 100,000 of population. They have cut that number down to about 66 per 100,000 of population—still very high, but the trend is in the right direction.

I commend President Hernandez, and I commend the First Lady of the country. They have been trying to help their country with its economy so the extreme poverty that is so evident in that part of the world is not a caldron bubbling that is ripe for corruption and for paying off people to transport the drugs.

In addition, of course there is the human trafficking. There is part of it for the sex slaves, and that is a trade where often parents are sending their children north—thinking they will have a better life—and the young girls are just brutally treated and ultimately forced into prostitution. But part of it is also, because of the poverty, the hopelessness of the parents that their children have no future. They are willing to turn—after paying thousands and thousands of dollars to a human trafficker—their children over to a coyote to transport those children to the north.

Some of them don't make it, and it is true some of the reforms that the Hernandez government have been putting in place have lessened the migration of these young children, but there is a lot more to do. That is where I would commend the Senate to take a look at the administration's request for Central America. It has a name, something such as Alliance for Progress. It is about a \$1 billion appropriations re-

quest that will help with the economic development and the medical care in that very poor region of the world. If the Congress will approve that request, I think we will continue to see the fruits of our labors—a very positive outcome.

As long as there is such a difference between the economic elites and the very poor—a huge majority who are very poor—we are always going to have those problems, but at least we are seeing the steps in the right direction.

While I was there, our Ambassador Nealon asked me in the assembled press to announce that in another week the Naval Hospital ship the Comfort will be anchoring off the coast of Honduras. For 1 week it will offer the medical services of Navy doctors, nurses, and a whole host of private doctors and nurses from this country who are volunteering their time to go to Honduras and help with the medical attention that is so desperately needed in that part of the world.

I commend to the Senate that we seriously consider favorably the request of the administration for this \$1 billion into Central America. At the end of the day, it is going to lessen the drug trade going north through those countries and stop the family deprivation—lessen the family deprivation—of which they would dare risk their children to be sent north with a coyote.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNIZING CLEVELAND, OHIO

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, my home of Cleveland, OH, is one of our Nation's historic great centers of industry. Our manufacturing base helped to build our country's infrastructure to win World War II and to spur our economy to new heights in the 21st century. We are not only home to great makers, we are home to great creators as well.

We are the home of rock and roll—the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is in downtown Cleveland—great athletes and authors, people such as Jesse Owens and Toni Morrison, and we are home to great art. Cleveland is the home to world-renowned Cleveland Orchestra, Playhouse Square, Karam House, the NASA-designated Great Lakes Science Center, and one of the largest and best art museums not just in the United States but in the world, the Cleveland Museum of Art.

In the early 1900s, Midwest cities saw a cultural explosion. Cities were prospering. Government and business leaders alike sought to harness that new wealth to build livable, world-class cities. Museums were established across