

mantra among those who want to leave our planet in better shape than it was when we got here.

On Earth Day 2016, I am proud to note that the landmark Paris Climate Agreement is scheduled to be signed by more than 150 nations, including the world's biggest polluters: China, Brazil, and the United States. The quickest, most direct way we are making every day Earth Day, this Friday, is by implementing the largest international agreement the world has ever known.

Earth Day isn't just about the environment. It is about the people who inhabit it. It is about the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

The Paris Agreement is already working, setting the foundation for an historic reduction in greenhouse gases, and paving the way to a thriving, clean global economy. Here at home, it is also about creating new jobs and empowering the private sector to once again harness that uniquely American brand on innovation to lead the global marketplace.

We may celebrate it once a year, but Earth Day truly is every day. That is a promise that is as important today as it was 46 years ago. And 46 years later, we are making Earth Day every day with the Paris Climate Agreement.

□ 1600

UNITED STATES V. TEXAS

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to talk about families.

Yesterday, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on DACA and DAPA. I challenge anyone to look at the children who were protesting in front of the Supreme Court yesterday and not feel an urgency to protect them and their families.

Our unjust and broken immigration system has forced millions of families to live in the shadows. Where is our compassion?

Immigrants, regardless of legal status, deserve justice and dignity. We are a Nation of immigrants. Uniting and keeping our families together is an integral American value. We should be protecting the stability of our hard-working immigrant families instead of tearing them apart.

Comprehensive immigration reform is the moral imperative of our time, and I urge this Congress to pass it.

EARTH DAY

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, this coming Friday, April 22, is Earth Day.

I had the pleasure this morning to be at Masonville Cove in Baltimore. This is the first national wildlife urban refuge that was established in the country. I was there with a class of young people—high school students from Benjamin Franklin High School—who are learning science in the classroom but then are taking that knowledge outdoors and are connecting to nature.

I am very excited that recently, when we passed the new reauthorization of the Federal Education Act, we embedded in it environmental education, which is now going to allow nonprofits, local school districts, and others to apply for competitive grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education to support environmental education and outdoor activities all across this country.

The excitement these young people have today shows that our planet is in good hands.

OBSTRUCTION OF JUDGE MERRICK GARLAND'S APPOINTMENT TO THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for all Members to have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise to implore the Senate to fulfill its responsibility and give fair consideration to President Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court.

During my tenure in this honorable body, I have witnessed no comparable examples of partisan politics and complete obstructionism with respect to the consideration of a Supreme Court nominee.

I introduced H. Res. 661, together with my Democratic colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee. This resolution calls on the Senate to hold hearings and an up-or-down vote on the President's nomination of Judge Garland. The Senate majority's flat-out refusal to consider President Obama's nominee, regardless of the nominee's qualifications, is historically unprecedented and is part of a longstanding pattern of disrespect shown to this administration in particular. Our Constitution relies on a system of checks and balances; yet the Senate majority's continued stonewalling of the President's nominee threatens to throw the system into an imbalance.

The President, of course, has the constitutional authority and obligation to

appoint Justices to the Supreme Court, pursuant to Article II, section 2, and he has fulfilled his duty with his nomination of Judge Garland. The Senate has both the authority and the duty to provide advice and consent on the President's nominee; yet the Senate has, thus far, refused to do its job, which is simply unacceptable.

It is clear the Constitution requires that both the President and the Senate fulfill their respective roles in the Supreme Court nomination process in order for the Supreme Court to be able to fully perform its constitutional role. Otherwise, what is to stop the Senate from grinding the Court—a coequal branch of government, I remind you—to a halt by simply refusing to consider any nominees to fill any vacancies on the Court?

There is no merit to their argument that we have to wait until we elect a new President. After all, the American people twice elected President Obama to fulfill the duties of President, including the duty to appoint Supreme Court Justices. A strong and independent judiciary is a prerequisite for a strong democracy. This remains as true in the last year of a Presidency as it does in the first. Moreover, there is ample precedent for Presidents nominating and the Senate confirming Supreme Court nominees in a Presidential election year. For example, in 1988, during the last full year of Ronald Reagan's Presidency, the Democratic-controlled Senate confirmed the nomination of Justice Anthony Kennedy by President Reagan by a vote of 97-0.

There are 9 months left in President Obama's term. The President has nominated an eminently qualified jurist in Judge Garland, and the Senate has more than enough time to consider and vote on his nomination. It is vital that the Supreme Court have a full complement of Justices so that the critical constitutional and legal questions before the Court can be given the full attention they need. Already, we have seen a number of 4-4 decisions that have left much uncertainty in place for the lower courts, for the litigants, and for Americans generally.

The Senate should do its job: comply with regular order, hold hearings on Judge Garland's nomination, and then have an up-or-down vote on the nomination.

Now it is with great pleasure that I yield to the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. STENY HOYER, the distinguished minority whip.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his distinguished service.

Madam Speaker, I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee for leading today's Special Order on the important issue of the vacancy on the Supreme Court and the Senate Republicans' unprecedented obstruction of the President's nominee.

That nominee, of course, is Judge Merrick Garland of the U.S. Circuit