

common agenda. Neither China nor the United States want to see a nuclear North Korea. Both China and the United States recognize that the Kim Jong Un regime in North Korea is unreliable. We are both looking for an off-ramp so we don't need to use a military option.

China has the capacity to turn the pressure on North Korea through sanctions that could change the equation in North Korea. China and North Korea have a common agenda. Both want to preserve the regime of Kim Jong Un—Kim Jong Un for obvious reasons; China, because they do not want to see a unified Korean Peninsula under Western influence.

Our objective is for North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. China needs to be convinced that our objective is the same as theirs. With that, they could instill greater pressure on North Korea, and diplomacy could work.

What should be our objective? We have to be realistic. In the short term, it should be containment. Freeze the current program. Stop the testing. Make it clear that we cannot allow these programs to continue. Ultimately, we want to see a nonnuclear Korean Peninsula.

We know that in the past—the 1994 framework agreement with North Korea lasted for 8 years. So there is an ability to make progress, but we have to develop confidence between the parties.

In conjunction with this, let me urge us not to lose sight of the North Korean people. Let's continue our focus on the human rights problems in the country. Let's work with our allies, particularly Japan and the Republic of Korea, and let's rigorously enforce the sanctions until progress is made.

We can achieve an alternative outcome in North Korea, but it requires U.S. leadership, and President Trump needs to engage on that issue. We need confidence building, and we need to make sure that we make progress. Time is not on our side, but there is still time to make progress. Without a diplomatic surge, there are only unacceptable options. Our goal should be a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous northeast Asia community.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bibas nomination?

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL), the Senator from New Jersey

(Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 261 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Cochran	Inhofe	Sasse
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Franken	Peters
Bennet	Gillibrand	Reed
Blumenthal	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Hassan	Schatz
Brown	Heinrich	Schumer
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Shaheen
Cardin	Hirono	Stabenow
Carper	Kaine	Tester
Casey	King	Udall
Coons	Klobuchar	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Warren
Donnelly	Markey	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Merkley	Wyden
Durbin	Murphy	
Feinstein	Murray	

NOT VOTING—4

McCaskill	Nelson
Menendez	Warner

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Bibas nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Nevada.

## JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS AND TAX REFORM

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, this week, we have the unique opportunity to move forward on promises we made to the American people last year, con-

firmed judges and providing tax relief to hard-working Americans. The American people sent us to Congress to complete this critical work, and we must stop at nothing to do it. We have already taken significant steps to address both of these issues by confirming 13 judges, with 5 more this week, and passing a budget with instructions for tax reform.

There is still much more that we need to do, and I stand ready to stay here until that job is done. Most people can't go home until their work is finished; I don't think we should either. Imagine dropping your car off at the auto mechanic and, instead of staying to finish the job, they leave at 3 p.m. to go home because that is convenient for their schedule; yet you still have to pay them for a full day's work. That is effectively what we have been doing here in Congress, and that needs to stop. We need to work as much as possible to ensure that the Federal judiciary is filled with judges that will uphold the Constitution and bring us closer to providing tax relief for the American people.

We need to have a fully occupied, fully functioning Federal judiciary to ensure that Americans' constitutional rights are upheld. In almost 10 months, we have started to address the issue of judicial vacancies by confirming 13 judges, most notably Justice Gorsuch, who has already served as a strong, conservative voice on the Supreme Court. As a fellow westerner, I was proud to vote for such a qualified judge to serve in our Nation's highest Court.

Beyond the vacancy we filled on the Supreme Court, there are vacancies on all levels of our Federal judiciary. We cannot forget the importance of every single court that makes up the Federal system. We must prioritize confirming judges to fill these openings, especially those deemed judicial emergencies. The fact that we have so many judicial emergencies is incredibly concerning and should be a wake-up call to all Senators, especially those who are slowing down this important process.

The President is continuing to send us well-qualified nominees, and Chairman GRASSLEY has done an excellent job of moving nominees through the committee process. I am especially encouraged that this week we are confirming five more judges, including four circuit court judges. This is the pace we need to keep. If that means working 24/7 to continue confirming these constitutionalists, you can count me in. Confirming Federal judges is a unique duty of the U.S. Senate, and we cannot allow obstructionism from the other side of the aisle to prevent us from filling vacancies throughout the country.

It is clear that when judges are brought to the floor for a vote by a healthy majority, the gridlock being caused is purely political. Because of this, leadership is having to file cloture on all of these judicial nominees, and some of my colleagues across the aisle

are just running the debate clock on these nominees instead of actually debating. We have what is known as a 1-hour rule in the Senate, and I think it is time to start enforcing it.

Members are entitled to their opinions, and, as the deliberative body, we should debate nominees. But if you are going to debate a nominee, I think you actually need to come here and speak about them. You can't just hide behind your desk and run the debate clock. If you have a problem with a nominee, then you should come to the floor and voice your concerns. If you are not willing to do this, then you shouldn't hold this nominee hostage to an artificial clock. This is what is wrong in Washington. We should use debate time on a nominee to debate the nominee, and if there is no more debate, then we should vote on that nominee and move on to the next one.

The Constitution guarantees the right to a speedy trial. As the body that confirms judges to make that constitutional right possible, we have a critical responsibility, and we need to do whatever it takes to fulfill this duty. In order to deliver swift justice throughout the country, these seats need to be filled.

I am ready and willing to work day and night, weekends and holidays, to do what Nevadans sent me to Washington to do and to accomplish. As the leader mentioned last week, we should work through the week of Thanksgiving. Hard-working Americans don't go home until their work is complete, and neither should we. That work also includes reforming our Tax Code, providing desperately needed relief to the middle class.

Today Chairman BRADY and the Ways and Means Committee released a draft of their tax bill, which is another enormous step forward in providing meaningful tax relief to Nevadans and other hard-working Americans across this country. Middle-class tax relief is particularly critical to the residents of my home State of Nevada. Whether it is the single mother from Gardnerville who doesn't receive child support, works full time, and is simply trying to make ends meet or the entrepreneur in Elko who is fighting hard to get his small business off the ground and wondering whether he will ever catch a break and be able to afford his first employee, I continue to hear from diligent, hard-working Nevada families and small business owners who are struggling to cover their expenses and get ahead in life.

For too many people, the American dream—previously achievable through hard work, sheer determination, and playing by the rules—feels as though it is slipping away. That is in part because, for too long, Nevadans and Americans across this country have faced stagnant wages and slow economic growth.

Under the failed economic policies of the previous administration, we have suffered through 8 years of historically

low economic growth. In fact, in those 8 years, we didn't have a single year in which the economy grew by 3 percent. As a result, wages and workers suffered. As a result, job creation suffered. And as a result, middle-class Americans like you and your neighbors suffered.

We still bear the scars of the Obama-era economic policies today. Median household incomes in Nevada are \$7,000 lower today than they were 10 years ago. Nevada families are more likely to be living paycheck to paycheck than families living in nearly every other State. It is fair to say—in Nevada at least—the recession has never really ended. To me, this situation is unacceptable. I am doing everything in my power to right the economic wrongs that have been committed by the previous administration.

Under the leadership of the new administration, however, we are starting to see our economy improve. There are positive signs everywhere. Last week, the Commerce Department announced that for the second quarter in a row, the economy had grown by at least 3 percent. This impressive growth occurred despite hurricanes that destroyed the homes and businesses of our good friends and colleagues in Texas and in Florida. Despite these natural disasters, if 3 percent economic growth is possible under the leadership of President Trump and a unified Republican government, just think about how much more we can add to this growth by passing comprehensive tax reform.

As a member of that tax writing committee, I have been working with my colleagues to craft a tax package that accomplishes three major goals: First, create more jobs; second, increase wages; and third, boost Americans' competitiveness worldwide.

What does tax relief mean to you, the average Nevadan who works hard and is trying to provide a better life for his or her children and save for a secure retirement? It means cutting your taxes so that you can keep more of your hard-earned money. It means a bigger child tax credit to help you confront the increasing costs of raising children. It means a simpler and fairer tax code that you yourself can understand. Lower rates for business mean more jobs, higher wages, and growth in our communities—all of which will benefit you. Taken together, all these things mean that you will have a profound increase in your take-home pay and your economic opportunities.

A recent study by the White House Council of Economic Advisers found that reducing the corporate tax rate by 15 percent alone would increase household incomes by an average of \$4,000. A similar study by a Boston University economist put the increase at \$3,500. I don't know about you, but I think the average American could do a lot with an additional \$3,500 to \$4,000 in his or her bank account.

As a son of a school cook and an auto mechanic, I understand the discipline

and the hard work that go into every dollar and every paycheck, and I am working to see that you have more of it in your back pocket. I am confident that we will fulfill these promises, but that will take a commitment from our colleagues to stay here and work.

In addition to overhauling the Tax Code and confirming judges, we have many other significant legislative responsibilities to complete. I believe we must spend as much time as necessary, including working through the scheduled November constituent work period, to fulfill our commitment to the American people.

I yield the floor.

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF STEVE GRASZ

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I rise on the floor with a simple message. We should completely dispel with the fiction that the American Bar Association is a fair and impartial arbiter of facts. This is a sad reality, but it is the reality.

Let's back up. We in this body have taken an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. Considering judicial nominees who have lifetime appointments is the most important thing this Senate will do over the weeks ahead. It demands the full attention of every single Member—Republican, Democrat, and Independent. This ought to be an opportunity for this body to pause and stand back from the frenzy of day-to-day media cycles and cable news shouting and recommit ourselves to basic American civics and some very basic American ideas: the idea that our three branches of government have three separate roles; the idea that we in the article I branch, the lawmakers, make the laws because we stand before the people and can be hired and fired—if the people are going to be in charge of our system, they need to be able to fire the people who make the laws—the idea that judges are explicitly not to make law; the idea that judges do not have R and D, Republican and Democrat, behind their names but rather that judges should be dispassionately ruling on the law and the facts; and the idea that all of us, temporary public servants, although the judiciary have lifetime appointments, can be upholding and defending a limited system of government, again, through our three differentiated roles.

Unfortunately, over the last few days in this body, it has become clear that some of us are attempting to outsource our constitutional duties to an outside organization. That organization, the American Bar Association, purports to