

should focus on wasteful and duplicative programs, not those with a proven track record of success. That is why a budget agreement is so critical. This year the Senate Appropriations Committee passed a bill that provided full funding for Meals On Wheels, but without a budget agreement, we have not been able to restore cuts to this very vital program.

We all know sequestration was designed to never go into effect. It was designed to be so harmful and reckless that we in Congress would find a better, smarter way to reduce our deficit. But because of sequestration, too many families and small businesses in New Hampshire have felt firsthand the dramatic effects of us failing to do our job. With the potential budget agreement coming from Senator MURRAY and Congressman RYAN, we will have an opportunity to reduce these impacts, to finally get to work replacing the harmful cuts from sequestration with a responsible plan that will grow our economy and create jobs.

Finally, it is my hope that a budget agreement will also include an extension of unemployment benefits for the millions of Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. In New Hampshire, our unemployment rate is lower than the national average and has been consistently throughout this recession, but that does not help if you are in a household where the breadwinners are unemployed. That household has a 100-percent unemployment rate. So despite the significant progress for our economy since the recession, the unemployment rate remains unacceptably high. For millions of Americans, finding a job remains very difficult in this market. Unemployment benefits remain a vital lifeline while they seek new work. So if we do nothing before the end of this year, about 1.3 million Americans will lose their extended unemployment benefits starting in January. Millions more will exhaust their benefits over the course of 2014. In New Hampshire, an estimated 8,500 individuals will be affected.

Failing to extend these benefits will not only hurt these families, but it will also affect our economic recovery because failing to extend unemployment for these Americans would result in 240,000 fewer jobs created in 2014. To put that into perspective, the recent jobs report showed that our economy gained 200,000 jobs in the month of November. Failing to extend unemployment benefits would be the equivalent of sacrificing an entire month of job creation.

At this fragile point in our economic recovery, we should not be letting this critical program expire for these Americans. I hope we can reach an agreement. I hope that agreement will begin to roll back those cuts from sequestration, will extend unemployment benefits for those families who really need them, and that we can get this done in a timely fashion so that the government continues to operate.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 44, 144, 189, 303, 334, 356, 358, 359, 361, 362, 367, 371, 372, 378, 379, 380, 387, 388, 390, 391, 403, 404, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 420, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, and 452; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Reserving my right, and I will make my remarks on this matter after the majority leader has completed his business today, I would note that on the last day we were here, November 21, there were only 16 nominations on the Executive Calendar that had been there more than 3 weeks, only 8 more than 9 weeks, and the Republicans were ready to confirm more than 40 who had been there only a few weeks. The Democratic majority changed the rules of the Senate in a way that creates a Senate without rules. Until I understand better how a Senator is supposed to operate in a Senate without rules, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am not going to respond in any detail to my friend, and he is my friend. There is no way of explaining how the Republicans could arbitrarily refuse to nominate four of the most qualified people, frankly, because they turned down one woman twice for the DC Circuit. This is, some say, a court more important than the U.S. Supreme Court. The Republicans, without any question about their integrity, their education, their experience, said no. Why? Because they don't want President Obama to have these people in this important court. They want to keep the court with the

majority of Republicans. That is wrong. It is wrong, and there were many reasons we did what we did, but it was the right thing for the country and it is the right thing for democracy.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 330, 347, 348, 349, 350, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 434, 435, 436, and 437; that the nominations be confirmed; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Reserving my right to object, again I will make my comments after the majority leader has completed his business, but all Senate Republicans wanted with the DC Circuit judges was to do what Democratic Senators insisted on doing in 2006, transferring judges from a court where they are not needed to courts where they are needed.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. That explanation is as flat as a bottle of beer that has been open for 6 months.

NOMINATION OF CHAI RACHEL FELDBLUM TO BE A MEMBER OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to consider Senate Calendar No. 378.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Chai Rachel Feldblum, of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Chai Rachel Feldblum, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Harry Reid, Sherrod Brown, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher Murphy, Robert Menendez, Christopher A. Coons, Angus S. King, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Amy Klobuchar, Dianne Feinstein, Tom Udall, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Bernard