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AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 19, 2013, at 9:30 a.m., in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Krishna Patel, a detailee on Senator JOHNSON's banking committee staff, be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Elise Mellinger, a State Department Foreign Service officer currently serving as a Pearson fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor for the duration of Senate consideration of H.R. 3304, the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act.

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

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Margaret Lawrynowicz on December 19.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that CDR Joe Carrigan, the defense legislative fellow assigned to my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 113th Congress.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, may I ask unanimous consent that a military fellow with Senator MURRAY's office, Major James O'Brien, be granted floor privileges for today's session of the Senate.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we all have various people from other departments and agencies in our government on occasion who help us in our offices. Being a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have had the pleasure to have a number of fine defense fellows serve in my office and help us prepare the Defense bill and deal with other issues of importance.

Commander Joe Carrigan is another one of these very fine fellows. He is one of the best we have ever had. He has a good strategic mind, he works extremely hard, he is always thoughtful, and he is a delight to have in the office.

We have been talking about our military personnel and their retirement benefits. Remember, unlike other government employees, they are on call anytime, any day, to be sent anyplace in the world at the very risk to their lives and physical well-being. In addition, they work long hours. They have no thought to object to being asked to work a weekend or a night or 24 hours without sleep to do some task they are called upon to do, and they get no overtime for it. It is just the way it is done in the military because when a challenge is out there, they act.

I know some point out the weaknesses in this large entity, the Defense Department, and some of the management problems that arise. But I have to say without any doubt whatsoever that the institution has quality people—people of integrity, men and women who love their country and serve their country and do whatever you ask them to do. I see that every day when we work with people such as Commander Carrigan. And he will be successful in whatever he does and in whatever his next assignment will be.

So as we wrap up this Defense bill, I would like to thank him for his service and to thank all of our men and women in uniform who do their work, and I hope that we in the Congress can be worthy of their trust.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, saner heads have prevailed. I think the news that we just received brought a much more reasonable way of moving forward rather than two more all-nighters with votes every 4 hours or so. It was not pleasing for anyone, particularly during the Christmas season. It was totally unnecessary to do this, had there not been some precipitating factors. I did not come down here to point fingers. There is frustration on both sides, frustrations on the Democratic side with Republicans—but I do not think it has been explained, what caused Republicans to become so concerned and so frustrated and frankly so angry over the way that the rules were broken to change the rules, something that has

been precious to this body for its more than 200 years, and that is the uniqueness of the ability of a minority to have a say in legislation, to amend or at least to offer amendments. They may succeed, they may not succeed, but to have a voice.

I think those who have not served here in the past and have never been in the minority cannot begin to appreciate that right. I started in the House of Representatives where the majority rules. That is the way the Founding Fathers established that body. But they said they wanted the Senate to be different, a place where the passions could be cooled, where debate could be held, where amendments could be offered, where laws could be changed or modified. Members were given a 6-year term so they would not have the pressure of running for election in just months out or a year out; so they could step back and simply say let's look at the longer view, the larger view.

In my first time here in the Senate, that practice was led by the Democratic leaders and Republican leaders. The majority changed. I came here with a Democratic leader who was eminently fair to the minority and insisted, as did many Members, none more vividly and with emotion and commitment than did Robert Byrd, the Democrat from West Virginia, who probably knew more about procedures and the history of the Senate than all the other Senators combined. Read his volumes.

We would listen to Robert Byrd, respecting how he respected this institution. I experienced under Robert Byrd, then Republican Bob Dole, and then Tom Daschle, Democrat, Trent Lott, Republican—I experienced respect for the rights of the minority even though I was in the majority. They were sacrosanct. No one stood up and said let's take those rights away. Those who did were shot down by their own party. Our party made an attempt at that. Sense and reason prevailed. It was imposed by those who had been here, saying you need to understand the unique role of the Senate that has been created by our Founding Fathers, enshrined in the Constitution, 225 years of tradition and history.

To have the majority leader, the Senator from Nevada, come here and say we are taking that away, what we had promised to do; that is, keep the rules—we are going to break them and we are going to impose on you because you are dragging out the time it takes to secure nominations. We are going to impose on you. We are going to take away your minority rights and we are going to rule by majority.

As I said, I understand the frustration that must have been felt on the other side of the aisle when Members would delay the confirmation of nominees. Why were Republicans doing that? They were doing that because the majority leader was using a technique to deny us amendments on any number of bills.