

and no ethics reform. That is nothing more than legislative blackmail, and I, for one, will not pay the price. No one should stand still when this Constitution, which I hold in my hand, is the hostage. No one should stand still, I repeat, when this Constitution, which I hold in my hand, is the hostage.

This line-item veto authority would grant tremendous and dangerous new power to the President. He would have unchecked authority to take from the Congress the power of the purse, a power that the constitutional Framers thought was absolutely vital to protecting the people's liberties.

It was just 8 years ago that the U.S. Supreme Court decided that the line-item veto was unconstitutional. Now our colleagues—some of them—on the other side of the aisle are threatening to hold up the ethics reform bill in an effort to hand the President another line-item veto authority. Are the memories around here so short?

Are the memories around here so short?

We have a President who already has asserted too much power. This is a blatantly gross attempt to take even more power from the President and strip away power from the people.

This President claimed the unconstitutional authority to tap into the telephone conversations of American citizens without a warrant or court approval.

This President claimed the unconstitutional authority to sneak and peek, to snoop and scoop, into the private lives of the American people.

This President has taken the Nation to a failed war based on faulty evidence and the misrepresentation of facts. And many Senators voted not realizing that was what was being done when we voted on the war resolution.

So I say, this President has taken the Nation to a failed war based on faulty evidence and an unconstitutional doctrine of preemptive strikes. More than 3,000 American sons and daughters have died in Iraq in this crazed Presidential misadventure.

And what is the response of the Senate? To give the President even more unfettered authority? To give him greater unchecked powers? We have seen the danger of the blank check. We have lived through the aftermath of a rubberstamp Congress. We should not continue to lie down for this President or any other President.

Of course, this President wants to take away Congress's power of the purse. When Congress has the sole ability to shut down these unconstitutional practices, when Congress is asking tough questions and demanding truthful answers about this war, when Congress is taking a hard look at finding ways to begin to bring our troops home, over the objections of this administration, the President's response is to demand that the Congress give away its most crucial power. Silence the Congress. Ignore the people. Strip away our constitutional protections

and one may just as well strip away the people's liberties lock, stock, and barrel. Strip away the power of the Congress, the power of the people, and amass all power behind the fences and secret doors of the White House.

No Senator should vote to hand such power to the President. No American should stand for it—not now, not ever.

If our colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to stop the Senate's effort to add transparency and accountability to the legislative process, that is their right and their choice. But I will not blink. I cannot look the other way. We should get on with the business at hand and pass meaningful ethics reform legislation. But we should never, never, hand away those precious constitutional powers—the last protections of the people's liberties, vested in the people's representatives in this Congress—to any President.

We have each taken an oath to protect and defend this Constitution of the United States. Here it is. I hold it in my hand. I say again, we have each taken an oath to protect and defend this Constitution of the United States. And it is about time we did protect and defend that Constitution of the United States.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I thank all Senators.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for a period of up to 10 minutes each.

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

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a great man who inspired ordinary African Americans to demand equal rights as American citizens. This year, we celebrate what would have been Dr. King's 78th birthday and his dream for equality and justice for all that remains our Nation's moral compass.

In honoring Dr. King on this particular anniversary of his birth, we remember that it has been a year since we lost his wife and indispensable partner, Coretta Scott King, who died on January 30, 2006. Mrs. King was a woman of quiet courage and great dignity who marched alongside her husband and became an international advocate for peace and human rights. She

had been actively engaged in the civil rights movement as a politically and socially conscious young woman and continued after her husband's death to lead the country toward greater justice and equality for all, traveling the world on behalf of racial and economic justice, peace and nonviolence, women's and children's rights, gay rights, religious freedom, full employment, health care, and education.

Much has improved since 1966, when Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ralph Abernathy organized marches and protests in Chicago. Today, 80 percent of African Americans older than 25 have earned their high school diploma, and there are 2.3 million African American college students, an increase of 1 million from 15 years ago. In addition, there are 1.2 million African-American businesses across the country that generate \$88.6 billion in revenues.

This important day calls us to recognize the challenges that remain and the work that still must be done to move closer to Dr. King's dream. If he were alive today, Dr. King would undoubtedly be dismayed by injustices large and small, including the violence in Iraq, the deepening divide between those who have and those who do not, and the prohibitive cost of higher education, which is now out of reach for many African-American and Hispanic families. In the wealthiest Nation on Earth, 37 million people live in poverty, 47 million people do not have health insurance, and millions more are underinsured.

Our Nation is a better one thanks to Dr. King and the sacrifices he and others made during the 1950s and 1960s. I remembered that as I walked in some of those same footsteps when I joined U.S. Representative JOHN LEWIS' pilgrimage to Selma and Montgomery, Alabama. Although there is much of Dr. King's dream that remains to be fulfilled, I have faith that we will continue to move toward the equality and justice that he sought. As a nation, we must and we shall.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, on January 15, our Nation commemorated the birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Every year we pay tribute to the life of this great American. But, in honoring Dr. King, we celebrate more than his life; we celebrate the legacy of his words and deeds, and the virtues that he embodied.

Today, we remember Dr. King because he represents the best of the American spirit: someone who is compassionate, devoted, courageous, and hopeful. His compassion drew him to the plights of the poor and oppressed, and his devotion led him to champion their cause. His courage led him to act on this devotion, countless times placing himself in harm's way. Indeed, it was because of his courage that he fell to an assassin's bullet in 1968. And, his hope sustained him, even in the face of bitter racism.

All of these virtues—compassion, devotion, courage, and hope—propelled