cloture. Once that time has elapsed, the debate would automatically end unless the minority could assemble 40 senators to continue it.

An even better step would be to return to the old ''Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'' model—in which a filibuster means that the Senate has to stop everything and debate around the clock—by allowing a motion requiring 40 votes to continue debate every three hours while the chamber is in continuous session. That way it is the minority that has to grab cots and mattresses and be prepared to take to the floor night and day to keep their filibuster alive.

Under such a rule, a sufficiently passionate minority could still preserve the Senate's traditions and force an extended debate on legislation. But frivolous and obstructionist misuse of the filibuster would be a thing of the past.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Let me finally say to the Senator from Oregon, the Presiding Officer, that I very much appreciate his support both in working with me on the constitutional option and sorting out the details and making sure we have things right and also for his incredible work in terms of pulling together the talking filibuster part of this. I was here today when he showed his charts, and he took our five ideas and, in the most simple form so the American people could understand it, capsulized those in those five charts.

I have been telling my staff—and you need to do this by the end of the debate—we need to find a way to shrink those and put those in the RECORD also because here we are sitting on the floor and we have these charts and we need to somehow have those be a representation also.

So with that, I yield the floor.

RULES REFORM

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I rise today in support of reasonable efforts to reform the Senate Rules. The American people expect us to work together to find solutions to the problems of the day. Yet anyone watching this body can plainly see that a few Senate rules no longer work.

I believe we should all be cautious and fair about respecting Senate tradition. But blindly adhering to tradition when the American people need us to take a fresh look helps no one. The rules have been changed before, when they needed to be.

Anyone watching this place over the last 2 years will tell you that a few of the rules no longer serve us. They need to be reformed.

We have seen consensus bills, supported by 80 or 90 Senators, get held up for many months because of a single Senator's secret objections.

And we have moved well beyond the intended use of the filibuster for exceptional circumstances and to provide for extended debate. In fact, the filibuster has been so corrosive to this body that we rarely ever even have debate during filibusters. The average American turns on their TV and only sees endless live quorum calls.

The American people are counting on us to get past the tired partisan bickering. This is not about Democrats and Republicans. It has to be about the American people, what is in their interests. Whether one Senator secretly holding up a nominee's career for a year is in their interests. Whether promoting filibusters that stifle, rather than promote debate, is in their interests. Whether we have to waste valuable Senate calendar days watching time run in silence, on bills everyone knows are going to pass, because the rules require it, is in the American people's interests.

In my short time in the Senate, I have offered a number of reforms which would improve the ability of this body to function and help fix our broken politics.

I introduced a rules reform proposal and have testified before our Rules Committee to explain it to colleagues on the Committee. My proposal would eliminate the filibuster on motions to proceed, that are used to stifle, rather than promote debate. I am all for extended debate, yet filibustering motions to even proceed to measures has the result of actually preventing the Senate from even addressing the important issues of the day.

My resolution would also eliminate secret holds and place a time limit on all holds by individual Senators.

And it would require filibustering Senators to actually show up and vote in order to continue to block legislation. As it is now, if you want to obstruct Senate business, you can just go home. How does this promote debate? My commonsense proposal only requires you to stand up and be counted if you want to filibuster a bill or a nomination.

I don't have a monopoly on good ideas for reform. We have colleagues who have been here for many years with a lot to add to this discussion. And it is also healthy that so many new Members are introducing their own ideas. I am hopeful that we can achieve some consensus for the good of the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

RUSSIA

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I am speaking today on a very important international foreign policy issue. That will be the subject of my address today. I wanted to come down here the first day of this legislative session, this 112th Congress, and talk about the deteriorating situation with regard to oppression and the rule of law in Russia. I have come to this floor a number of times to share my concern on this subject. I wish to begin this Congress by once again expressing my deep concern for what we see happening just in the recent days in Russia.

I remember looking back in 1990 and 1991 at the hope we had, the optimism we in the West had as we watched the Iron Curtain fall, as we watched the wall tumble in Berlin, and we watched with hope that this would be a new day for people behind the Iron Curtain and a new opportunity for freedom and openness in that society. Unfortunately, year after year, month after month, we have seen since the fall of the Soviet Union a very regrettable and disturbing deterioration in the rule of law in Russia and a move back to the authoritarian rule of old we all remember so well. Recent events in Russia once again cause us to believe this problem is escalating and have caused me to come to the floor today on this subject.

Last month, the leadership of this Senate pushed through, I think in haste, the New START treaty with Russia. I had concerns over the treaty, and I ultimately voted against it. We had a lot more debate that needed to take place. We had dozens of amendments that went undebated and unconsidered and not voted upon by this body, and I regret that. I always thought nuclear arms policy and treaties with regard to our nuclear stockpile should be based on the security of the American people and that the primary issue should be what is in the best interests of the United States. What we saw a lot of in the debate last month was instead an emphasis on New START as the centerpiece of this administration's effort to reset relations with Russia. I certainly support the resetting of our relations with Russia, but I do not believe the New START treaty was the best way to advance this.

But it should concern all of us, it should concern everyone within the sound of my voice, regardless of how we voted on New START that within 2 weeks' time of this body approving the New START treaty, a Russian court issued a second spurious guilty verdict against Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev. Almost simultaneously, authorities in Russia arrested prominent Russian opposition figure, former Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov. These events took place within days of each other.

What do these recent events mean? To me, they are two other examples of the way the current Russian leadership does not respect universal values such as the rule of law or freedom of expression and assembly. The Russian Government does not share our commitment to international norms or fostering modernization. Resetting U.S.-Russian relations will be exceedingly difficult while these differences persist.

During the last Congress, I spoke several times on the trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev. I concluded my most recent remarks by saying that I hoped Russia would choose the right path and somehow justice would prevail in that case. Sadly, it did not. A Russian court issued another politically motivated guilty verdict against these two Russian dissidents. This disturbing verdict reveals that the Russian judiciary lacks independence and that Russian authorities