

Once we vote on the 3 Democratic nominees, I expect we will consider the 2 Republican nominees by consent.

The first Republican nominee, Harry Johnson, is a partner at a Los Angeles law firm and practices labor and employment law.

Mr. Johnson received his Bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University and his law degree from Harvard.

The other Republican nominee, Philip Miscimarra, is a partner in a Chicago law firm, where he also practices labor and employment law.

Mr. Miscimarra received his Bachelor's degree from Duquesne University, and his M.B.A and J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

These nominees will be responsible for ensuring fair compensation and working conditions for American workers.

Look at the résumés of these people. They are pretty impressive.

They are experienced and dedicated public servants, and I have no doubt that they will perform their duties on this crucial board with distinction.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today, the President will continue his campaign road tour in Chattanooga. We hear he plans to make an announcement about corporate taxes. And while I understand he is looking for headlines here, reports indicate that the policy he intends to announce doesn't exactly qualify as news. It is just a further-left version of a widely panned plan he already proposed 2 years ago—this time with extra goodies for tax-and-spend liberals.

The plan, which I just learned about last night, lacks meaningful bipartisan input, and the tax hike it includes is going to dampen any boost businesses might otherwise get to help our economy. In fact, it could actually hurt small businesses. And it represents an unmistakable signal that the President has literally backed away from his campaign-era promise to corporate America that tax reform would be revenue neutral to them.

Not only is this a rebuke to one of his party's most senior Senators—the Finance Committee Chairman—it also represents a serious blow to one of the best chances for true bipartisan action in Washington. I truly hope the President reconsiders this plan and consults with Congress before moving any further.

Two summers ago, Republicans and Democrats came together to agree on a set of spending caps for the following decade. President Obama agreed to it, as did the leaders of both parties in the Senate and the House.

It was essentially a promise made to the American people that Washington would reduce spending by \$2.1 trillion, and I was happy to help lead the effort.

Well, 2 years later Democrats are now trying to find ways to walk away from it.

They are pressing to abandon the 2011 agreement in favor of higher spending, as evidenced by appropriations bills like the one we're considering this week—which hikes up spending by double digits. And the President is now actually threatening to veto bills that live up to that commitment we all made.

Let me repeat that: The President of the United States who, during the campaign, took credit for the very savings Democrats now want to walk away from, is threatening to veto spending bills that would actually follow the law and live up to the commitment he himself signed.

This represents a stunning shift for Democrats, who just recently were warning against breaking the agreement. The Chairwoman of the Budget Committee said last year that we have to be able to count on agreements that have been made, instead of threatening a Government shutdown. Yet that is just what she and her party are now threatening to do—to shut down the Government unless an agreement we all made is torn up and thrown away.

So if Democrats want to shut down the Government because they can't wiggle their way out of a deal they agreed to, I guess there is not much we can do to stop them. But Republicans intend to stick by the commitments made to our constituents.

That said, there is also this to remember: Republicans have always said that there may be more effective ways to achieve comparable spending reductions. If Democrats want to propose smarter spending cuts that achieve the same kind of savings they committed to in 2011, we are ready to listen. Comprehensive Government spending reforms would be a good place to start.

Because Republicans understand that America's largest fiscal challenges stem from the fact that programs our fellow Americans hope to rely on in their most vulnerable years are going bankrupt. And Republicans are saying that the only way to avert the kind of panicked, poorly thought out spending cuts and tax increases we have seen in Europe is to implement forward-looking reforms today. That is why it is always so amusing when the President and his allies try to brand the kind of innovative government spending reforms we favor as "European-style austerity," as he implied again this weekend.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, what the Europeans are doing in response to the threats from their creditors is essentially the opposite of the approach favored by Republicans. The type of long-term spending reforms we envision are often the only antidote against the kind of austerity we see in Europe. Because European austerity is not about protecting future generations from spending cuts, it is about staying afloat today. And the

tax increases Europeans enact under duress—and the kind of pain Detroiters experience under bankruptcy—these are exactly the things Republicans aim to avoid. And we aim to avoid those things by acting intelligently today, while we still have time.

Unlike Democrats, Republicans are not looking for some colorless discussion about raising taxes here or sniping there or moving numbers around on a budget chart. We would rather have a more holistic, forward-looking conversation, one about modernizing Government to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Where we ask questions like:

How do we modernize entitlement programs so they'll actually be accessible to Americans when they need them?

Which government programs should be reformed, updated, or no longer make sense in a 21st Century economy? How can services be delivered in the most efficient and technologically savvy way?

And what structural reforms can we implement to ensure the most robust economic growth and job creation for this generation and those to come?

By addressing the big questions now—by identifying and implementing forward-looking reforms today—we can do a lot more than just reduce the deficit in the short term. We can also create jobs now, grow the economy now, make Government work better now, and eliminate the threat of a debt crisis everyone knows is coming, a debt crisis that would usher in the very kind of European-style austerity Democrats claim not to like, but keep accelerating towards.

But in order for this to happen, Democrats need to work with us.

As a first step, they should step back from the brink with their plan to shut down the Government. And they need to stop threatening to tear up agreements we all previously assented to. The Budget Control Act might not be perfect, but at least we were able to secure important spending control for the American people. And if Democrats want to trade some savings for innovative reforms that can serve our country even better over the long term, then there are policymakers ready to talk.

But Republicans are not going to just give up on the commitments made to our constituents. Not only would that be a betrayal of a promise we all made, but we have already seen where the Democrats' left-leaning policies and European-inspired ideas lead.

More of that is the last thing our country needs right now.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KENT YOSHIHO HIROZAWA TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Nomination of Kent Yoshiho Hirozawa, of New York, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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 Kent Yoshiho Hirozawa, of New York, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board.

Harry Reid, Tom Harkin, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher A. Coons, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Patrick J. Leahy, Joe Manchin III, Elizabeth Warren, Debbie Stabenow, Carl Levin, Angus S. King, Jr., Richard J. Durbin, Charles E. Schumer, Amy Klobuchar, Richard Blumenthal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Kent Yoshiho Hirozawa, of New York, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years, expiring August 27, 2016, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CHIESA).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 64, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 189 Ex.]

YEAS—64

Alexander	Coons	King
Ayotte	Corker	Klobuchar
Baldwin	Donnelly	Landrieu
Baucus	Durbin	Leahy
Begich	Feinstein	Levin
Bennet	Flake	Manchin
Blumenthal	Franken	Markey
Blunt	Gillibrand	McCain
Boxer	Graham	McCaskill
Brown	Hagan	McConnell
Cantwell	Harkin	Menendez
Cardin	Heinrich	Merkley
Carper	Hirono	Mikulski
Casey	Johnson (SD)	Murkowski
Collins	Kaine	Murphy

Murray	Schatz	Warner
Nelson	Schumer	Warren
Pryor	Shaheen	Whitehouse
Reed	Stabenow	Wicker
Reid	Tester	Wyden
Rockefeller	Udall (CO)	
Sanders	Udall (NM)	

NAYS—34

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Chambliss	Hoeben	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Coburn	Isakson	Sessions
Cochran	Johanns	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Crapo	Kirk	Toomey
Cruz	Lee	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Chiesa	Heitkamp
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 64, the nays are 34. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Cloture having been invoked, pursuant to S. Res. 15 of the 113th Congress, there will now be up to 8 hours of postcloture consideration of the nomination equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I understand we are now in postcloture debate on this nominee. I understand there is up to 8 hours that can be consumed for that purpose, if I am not mistaken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. HARKIN. I certainly hope we don't have to take that much time. For this nominee and the other four to follow, I am hopeful we can get through them today and get the nominees to the President before we leave here this evening.

Today is a day that I and many of my colleagues have long waited for. Because of the bipartisan deal reached on the President's nominees, it looks as though we finally have a path forward to confirm a full slate of nominees to the National Labor Relations Board. A fully confirmed, fully functional board will be a huge step forward for workers and employers in our country, and this will be the first time in over a decade this has happened.

Over 75 years ago Congress enacted the National Labor Relations Act, guaranteeing American workers the right to form and join a union and to bargain for a better life. For both union and nonunion workers alike, the act provides for essential protections. It gives workers a voice in the workplace, allowing them to join together and speak out for fair wages, good benefits, and safe working conditions. These rights ensure that the people who do the real work in this country see the benefits when our economy grows and aren't mistreated or put at risk on the job.

The National Labor Relations Board is the guardian of these fundamental rights. Workers themselves cannot enforce the National Labor Relations Act; the Board is the only place where

people can go if they have been treated unfairly and denied the basic protections the law provides. Thus, the Board plays a vital role in vindicating workers' rights. In the past 10 years the NLRB has secured opportunities for reinstatement for 22,544 employees who were unjustly fired. It has also recovered more than \$1 billion on behalf of workers whose rights were violated in the last decade.

The Board does not just protect the rights of workers and unions; it also provides relief and remedies to our Nation's employers. The Board is an employer's only recourse if a union commences a wildcat strike or refuses to bargain in good faith during negotiations. The NLRB also helps numerous businesses resolve disputes efficiently. For example, when two unions picketed Walmart in 2012, Walmart filed a claim with the NLRB, and the NLRB negotiated a settlement. So by preventing labor disputes that could disrupt our economy, the work that the Board does is vital to every worker and every business across the Nation.

Earlier this year I received a letter from 32 management-side and 15 union-side labor attorneys from across the country who made this point particularly well. It urged the swift confirmation of a full package of five NLRB nominees and said:

While we differ in our views over the decisions and actions of the NLRB over the years, we do agree that our clients' interests are best served by the stability and certainty a full, confirmed Board will bring to the field of labor-management relations.

I could not agree more. Confirming these nominees swiftly is vitally important because the National Labor Relations Board must have a quorum of three Board members to act. If there are less than three Board members at any time, the Board cannot issue decisions and essentially must shut down. Although the Board currently has three members, Chairman Pearce's term expires on August 27—next month. At that point the Labor Board would be unable to function unless we confirm additional members. Now, that is more than just an administrative headache. It would be a tragedy that denies justice to working men and women across the country. So it is imperative that we act to avoid this and keep the Board open for work.

Up until recent times, all of us in Congress agreed that the Board should function for the good of our country and our economy, but in the last few years that understanding has broken down. As I said, it has been a decade since the Board has had five Senate-confirmed members. It is not that qualified people have not been nominated, because they have. The problem is that a few of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—I am not saying everyone, but a very vocal minority—have been trying to use the nomination process to undermine the mission of the National Labor Relations Board.

They, first of all, do not like the National Labor Relations Act, but they