

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I appreciate the interest my colleague from Louisiana has on this very important issue. I agree with him that we want to expand VA health care, that we have run into a bureaucratic morass, and there are 27 facilities in 18 States that can and should be approved. If the Senator from Louisiana is prepared to join with me, we can pass his concern today or within the next couple of weeks, along with many other provisions the veterans community is deeply concerned about.

During the last government shutdown, it is not widely known but the truth is that we were 7 to 10 days away from a situation where veterans—disabled veterans, veterans who have pensions—were not going to get their benefits. The comprehensive bipartisan legislation that received 56 votes here on the floor—unfortunately, not the vote from my colleague from Louisiana but 56 votes, and we are working to get the 60 votes we need to overcome a Republican point of order, and we are going to get those 60 votes—makes sure we do have advanced appropriations so no disabled veteran will not get a check in the event of another government shutdown.

My colleague from Louisiana may or may not think that is an important issue. I don't know. I think it is an important issue. And I can tell him the reason the legislation I introduced has the support of the American Legion—and, by the way, 500 of them were here this morning at a very interesting hearing—has the support of the VFW, the DAV, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Gold Star Wives of America, and virtually every organization is because they understand that the veterans community has very serious problems we have to address.

My friend from Louisiana may or may not have concerns about making sure that every veteran gets their benefits in an expedited way and that we don't have this backlog. Our legislation addresses that. My friend from Louisiana may or may not be concerned that there are veterans who want to take advantage of the post-9/11 GI bill—which over 1 million people are now having advantage of—and are having problems with getting instate tuition. Our legislation addresses that. Our legislation for the first time makes sure dental care will be part of VA health care. Our legislation addresses the reprehensible situation faced by many women and men in the military who had to deal with sexual assault. We think they should get the care they need. And on and on and on.

So we have a comprehensive piece of legislation which is supported by virtually every veterans organization in this country. We received 56 votes—1 person was absent who would have voted for it—57 votes, and we are now working with some of our Republican

colleagues to make sure we get the 60 votes. And I say to my colleague from Louisiana, work with us. Bring some of your other colleagues on board. Please don't tell me this is too expensive. If it is too expensive to take care of our veterans, then let's not go to war in the first place.

So I give my colleague from Louisiana the opportunity now to do something really extraordinary, to do something the veterans' committee wants.

I object to the proposal from my colleague from Louisiana, and in its place I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 297, S. 1950; that a Sanders substitute amendment, the text of S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

If we pass this right now, we deal with the Senator's concerns and a lot of other concerns.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the request of the Senator from Louisiana.

Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Vermont?

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I object on behalf of 43 Senators, including myself.

Reclaiming the floor and reclaiming my time, I would say we all want to work very hard to help veterans. We all acknowledge that the health care and work claim backlog issues are extremely important. That is why I am very involved in all of those issues across the board. That is why, for instance, I am an active member of the claims backlog working group, working with the VA to improve that situation and proposing focused legislation. We all care very much about that.

But right now Senator SANDERS' comprehensive bill has significant concerns in opposition—43 Senators, over 40 percent of the whole body. I do object on behalf of myself and the rest of those folks. I do commit to continuing to work on those issues, but I also express real regret that when this body is very divided on the important details of that bill—and the details do matter—we don't come together on something we agree on, and we can't accomplish a few important steps at a time.

Perhaps Senator SANDERS thinks that if we do this, somehow it takes away momentum for his larger bill. I think that is nonsense. These 27 clinics in 18 States are important, but they are a trivial part of that broader bill. They are a trivial part of all of the proposals in that broader bill. I don't think it takes away any momentum in any way, shape, or form for that broader bill. I will continue to be just as committed and just as interested in VA health care issues and working down the claims backlog and everything else. These clinics are a tiny part of

that. So he doesn't lose any advantage. He doesn't lose any momentum. We could move forward on something we do agree on and build from there. I think that is more reasonable and more constructive.

There is literally no disagreement among any of us in this body about these clinics. I have worked hard with several other colleagues to address every question and every concern out there. The amendment at the desk erases some of those concerns. We have covered the waterfront on this clinics issue in particular.

I am very disappointed that we can't move forward as a first step and agree on what we agree on. We disagree on enough. Let's agree on what we agree on. Let's move forward on what we agree on and pass these 27 clinics and start that progress and certainly continue to work on important compromise on the much bigger piece represented by the Sanders bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use leader time for a few minutes.

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

#### HEALTH CARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the junior Senator from Wyoming has come to the floor several times recently talking about the fact that examples he and other Republicans have given dealing with ObamaCare, examples they think are bad, I call lies. That is simply untrue. I have never come to the floor, to my recollection, and said a word about any of the examples Republicans have given regarding ObamaCare and how it is not very good. But I have come to the floor—I think my friend, the junior Senator from Wyoming, must be getting mixed up about what I have said about the Koch brothers and what they have done regarding health care. But it is easy to get mixed up because I think it is hard to separate the Koch brothers from the Republican caucus, anyway.

Mr. President, I have asserted and I will continue to assert that the Koch brothers are trying to buy America, and they are doing it in a number of different ways. They don't believe in Social Security. They don't believe in minimum wage. They don't believe in benefits—unemployment benefits. They don't believe in environmental laws. As you know and read in the paper, they have a chemical plant. They were fined about \$400,000 over the last week or 10 days and ordered to pay about \$50 million to bring it up to standard because it was deleterious to the health of people in the area.

The Koch brothers are running false and misleading ads all around the country against Democratic Senators dealing with health care. Do they care about health care? Of course not. These are false and misleading ads, and they have gone so far as to have actors there pretending they are from the States,

and they not only have done that in one State; they used the same actor in different States. So the record should be very clear. Yes, I have called many, if not most, of the anti-Obama ads by the Koch brothers false and misleading because they are.

#### VOTE ON COOPER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to a vote on the Cooper nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 84 Ex.]

#### YEAS—100

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murphy
Ayotte	Graham	Murray
Baldwin	Grassley	Nelson
Barrasso	Hagan	Paul
Begich	Harkin	Portman
Bennet	Hatch	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Heller	Risch
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Inhofe	Rubio
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Coburn	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Lee	Toomey
Corker	Levin	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Markley	Vitter
Cruz	McCain	Walsh
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Fischer	Mikulski	Wyden
Flake	Moran	
Franken	Murkowski	

The nomination was confirmed.

#### VOTE ON HARPOOL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Harpool nomination.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri?

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) would have voted “yea.”

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 85 Ex.]

#### YEAS—93

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Ayotte	Graham	Murphy
Baldwin	Grassley	Murray
Barrasso	Hagan	Nelson
Begich	Harkin	Paul
Bennet	Hatch	Portman
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Pryor
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Heller	Reid
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Inhofe	Rubio
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Landrieu	Thune
Coons	Leahy	Toomey
Cornyn	Lee	Udall (CO)
Cruz	Levin	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Manchin	Vitter
Durbin	Markley	Walsh
Enzi	McCaskill	Warner
Feinstein	McConnell	Warren
Fischer	Merkley	Whitehouse
Flake	Mikulski	Wicker
Franken	Moran	Wyden

#### NAYS—5

Coburn	McCain	Shelby
Crapo	Risch	

#### NOT VOTING—2

Corker	Menendez
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The nomination was confirmed.

#### VOTE ON MCHUGH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the McHugh nomination.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I yield back time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 86 Ex.]

#### YEAS—59

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Rockefeller
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Coats	Manchin	Toomey
Collins	Markley	Udall (CO)
Coons	McCain	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

#### NAYS—41

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Pryor
Boozman	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hoeven	Roberts
Chambliss	Inhofe	Rubio
Coburn	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johanns	Sessions
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Landrieu	Vitter
Cruz	Lee	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

The nomination was confirmed.

#### VOTE ON SMITH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Smith nomination. Who yields time?

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 87 Ex.]

#### YEAS—69

Alexander	Enzi	Lee
Ayotte	Fischer	Levin
Barrasso	Flake	Manchin
Bennet	Graham	McCain
Blunt	Grassley	McCaskill
Boozman	Hatch	McConnell
Brown	Heitkamp	Moran
Burr	Heller	Murkowski
Carper	Hirono	Murphy
Casey	Hoeven	Nelson
Chambliss	Inhofe	Paul
Coats	Isakson	Portman
Coburn	Johanns	Pryor
Cochran	Johnson (SD)	Reed
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Reid
Coons	Kaine	Risch
Corker	King	Roberts
Cornyn	Kirk	Rubio
Crapo	Klobuchar	Scott
Cruz	Landrieu	Sessions
Durbin	Leahy	Shelby