

the 36th State to join the Union. As America has grown and grown up, so has my State in many different ways. America isn't the only one that has grown up; so has the State of Nevada. As America has changed, Nevada has evolved just as dramatically. Lands that were once frontier are now cities on the front lines of technology and industry. Where our land was once dominated by homesteads, it is now dotted by energy-efficient homes.

In these 145 years since the birthday of Nevada, which will be celebrated this Saturday, we have come a long way. But one thing has not changed since that Halloween in 1864: Forward-thinking Americans are still coming westward, calling Nevada home, and many of them are coming eastward from California, where we get a lot of new residents.

The State of Nevada was joined to the Union at the height of the Civil War. Just as Congress was voting on the 13th amendment that would abolish slavery, "Battle Born"—which is our motto—"Battle Born" Nevadans continued to fight for equality, freedom, and progress, including nearly 1,000 Nevadans who today serve bravely in our Nation's Armed Forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, around the globe, and here at home.

The day before yesterday, I called the mother of three children who had lost her husband in Afghanistan. I see in the morning news coming out of Nevada that I am going to have that same responsibility later today when I call the family of Josue Hernandez Chavez, who was killed yesterday in Afghanistan. He is from Reno, NV, just like the soldier's family I called the day before yesterday was from Reno. These two men died following a long, strong tradition of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who have defended America in both war and peace.

Nevada is honored to be the home of some of our most important and premier military installations in the world, and certainly in the United States, including Nellis Air Force Base, Creech Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Fallon, which is the home of Top Gun, and the Hawthorne Army Depot, as well as many National Guard armories and Reserve readiness centers.

Outside of Nevada, much attention is paid, of course, to the entertainment capital of the world, Las Vegas. That attention is deserved, as Las Vegas has built itself from a desert outpost to the entertainment capital of the world as well as the city on the vanguard of the clean energy revolution. But every corner of the State is playing a critical role in leading our Nation toward energy independence. It is a revolution fueled by Nevada's boundless innovative spirit and its unlimited natural resources.

Indeed, Nevada is an outdoor enthusiast's dream. A lot of people think of Nevada as a desert, but it is not. We are the most mountainous State in the Union, except for Alaska. We have

more than 300 mountain ranges. We have 32 mountains over 11,000 feet high. We have one mountain about 14,000 feet high. We have some of the most beautiful wilderness areas in all of the Nation, Alpine Meadows, mountain sheep. A lot of places don't have—we have mountain goats in Nevada; Sheldon Antelope Range set forward by Theodore Roosevelt, the most sparsely populated area in all of the United States except for Alaska; and, as Mark Twain said, Lake Tahoe, the fairest place the whole Earth affords. It is a beautiful lake shared by California. There is only one other lake like it in the world, and that is in Russia, Lake Baikal. It is a beautiful lake. It is really the gem of the Sierras. So from its snowcapped peaks to its searing desert, the Nevada landscape is as diverse as the backgrounds of those who helped settle it, those who live and work there today.

It is also a wonderful place to raise a family. I know that firsthand because I was born and raised in Nevada, as have been all of my five children. My wife is like so many people—in fact, the majority of people; she was born in California and worked her way into Nevada with her family.

When we ensure that all Nevadans can afford quality health care and can count on a good-paying job, it will be even better. That is why I come to work each day, to make life easier for my neighbors back home. That is why I am working to help our country prosper, our economy be raised up as it once was. That is why I am working to protect our State's natural beauty. That is why I fought to end the plan that would have made Nevada the Nation's nuclear dumping ground.

I am really proud to be a Nevadan. I am humbled that the people of Nevada have asked me to represent them in various capacities for a long time. I am proud that the Senate has recognized the 145th anniversary of our State's ratification of the Constitution.

Nevada is going to recover economically. It remains open for business. In the words of the State song, it will always be home to me. Home means Nevada, home means the hills, home means the sage and the pines. That is our State song.

STOPPING PROGRESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to shift gears a little bit here this morning and focus on a problem we have here in the Senate. The problem is caused by our Republican colleagues.

The Republicans have become the party of no. What we want to question is this: We have back here the breakdown of the 85 times they have stopped progress in America today, some in the form of filibusters, others in the form of various ways of objecting to things—just objecting to things. For example, with health care, there is an article in the New York Times today where one Senator said his main goal is to defeat health care. One Republican Senator

said they want health care to be President Obama's Waterloo. Eighty-five times, taking not hours of the Senate's time but weeks and months, the American taxpayers' money being wasted.

I came to the floor yesterday and talked about what has happened with nominations. Every one of these nominees is a human being, a person who has decided to devote their life to public service.

Yesterday, I came to the floor and talked about Dr. Benjamin, a woman who is a medical doctor from Alabama who has devoted her life to taking care of the poor and the oppressed. President Obama selected her to be Surgeon General of the United States a long time ago. It wasn't until last night, after months, that somebody decided over here: Well, maybe that is a little too much. We have an emergency declared with the swine flu. Maybe we should let her go.

I received a call Monday from the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, indicating that a woman by the name of Jeanne O'Toole—I ran through her resume yesterday. There might be somebody better educated than she and who has written more on matters relating to what Janet Napolitano knows is needed, but I don't know who it would be. Dr. O'Toole is a well-educated medical doctor, having written numerous pieces on bioterrorism, all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, Anthrax, the plague. She has written about all that in some detail. Janet Napolitano said the Department of Homeland Security needs someone as Under Secretary to work on bioterrorism, to work on the swine flu that is sweeping the country.

No, it is held up. We were told yesterday, when I offered her name, by the Republican leader that we need to work on this a little longer. What is going on here in the Senate some day will be written about—a time like no other time in the history of the Senate. A minority party has held up progress for so long for so many unnecessary reasons. In fact, there are no reasons, except—I guess I have to change that a little bit. One of the important nominees of President Obama being held up is someone to be a Trade Representative. We have all kinds of problems dealing with trade around the world. There is a hold on that. We know that the hold isn't based on a law that one of the Republican Senators doesn't like; it is not a law being discussed in the House of Representatives here. It is not a law being discussed in the Senate or in one of our capitals around the country; it is a law dealing with tobacco that is being discussed in Canada. He is holding up this important job for a person waiting to go to work, who served in two Republican administrations, one Democratic administration previously, and he is being held up because of a tobacco debate taking place in Canada. We have no control over that.

We have the General Services Administration. They take care of all Federal

property. This is the Administrator. That name has been submitted by President Obama, and it is being held up over a building in Kansas City—somebody wants a building built in Kansas City, one of the Republican Senators. He is holding up this nominee.

There is a hold on two State Department officials, who are extremely important. One is to be the person working with Secretary Clinton to take care of Mexico, Central America, and South America. That will be his responsibility someday—if he can ever get cleared. It is being held up because they don't like what is going on in Honduras. I guess they will be really upset today, because the problem has been solved. What they want over there is the international community, which is totally against the coup having taken place in Honduras—one took place and they say it was the right thing to do, even though the Organization of American States and the whole international community opposes what has taken place. I guess they are going to be upset now because the problem was solved last night. That person who was illegally taken from that country was brought back—he has been in hiding in the Swiss Embassy for more than a month—and he is now going to take office again. We have the person who is going to be handling Central America being held up, in addition to an Ambassador to one of those countries down there, for the same reason.

This isn't a single problem. Take, for example, President Bush—the second President Bush. At this time during his Presidency, there were five nominees on the Senate calendar. One had been reported out of committee in September, and four were reported out in October. We are still in October. They had five. President Obama has 52 nominees on the Senate calendar and another 175 pending in committee. That is 52 compared to 5. Some of these have been out for a long time. Some have been reported out in March, May, June, July, and August. They are being held up for reasons about as ridiculous as I have told you already.

Sadly, many of these holds are women and minorities. Republicans have been stalling President Obama's nominees for months on end. There is a backlog of good, qualified nominees who are awaiting confirmation. These are people who have decided they are going to spend time in the Federal Government, giving up, in many instances, professorships at major universities, leaving law firms and accounting firms, medical schools, giving up private practice, and they are waiting, waiting until the Republicans decide they are going to let them through.

Some may say, why don't you move forward on them? Let me give those within the sound of my voice a little explanation. We have had to file cloture motions on nominees to stop filibusters. During the same time during

President Bush's Presidency, not a single one. We have had eight or nine now. Each one of those takes a long time. You move to it, you wait 2 days, and there is 30 hours, and then 2 more days, 30 hours. With these 53 they have held up here, there aren't enough hours in the day to do this—working weekends and all night. It is a real disappointment.

We have a situation here where the only response we have from the minority is to stop everything. They have become the party of no. If that is what they feel they should be known as, that is what it is going to be. We are going to remind the American people what is taking place here. This never happened before, where they are opposed to everything, whether it is somebody who has an unfortunate situation in their life where they can't work because there is no job—150,000 people have been deprived, by their stalling, of a simple check to pay their rent, or to make a payment on their car.

I hope that Republicans around the country—and there are so many people of good will who are Republicans around the country, just like Democrats and Independents. I have a little bit of experience. When I came to the Senate, I didn't know how things worked. It has only gotten this way this Congress, to the degree that it has. When I came here, we had so many moderate Republican Senators who would work with us and we would work with them—Hatfield, Packwood, Danforth, Heinz from Pennsylvania, D'Amato from New York, and Senator Warner from Virginia was always somebody who would work with us. There were lots of different Senators. But I am sad to say we don't have that now. They are going to have to sell themselves to the country as the party of no. That is not the party I know in Nevada and around the country. Republicans are good, law-abiding people, who believe in good government. They have a political philosophy that is not in keeping with the Democrats, but that is OK. We work together on issues. I hope they will see the light and become the party of working with us. That is what they should be—not the Senate Grand Old Party, the party of no.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

FLOOD MITIGATION EFFORTS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, last week I was in Findlay, OH, and toured

the banks of the Blanchard River with the Northwest Ohio Flood Mitigation Partnership, a nonprofit organization comprised of elected officials, business leaders, and community foundations.

Mayor Pete Sehnert, former mayor and current president of the Flood Mitigation Partnership Tony Iriti, and other community leaders briefed me on the flood mitigation efforts in the aftermath of one of the worst floods in northwest Ohio history.

Two years ago, a torrential downpour resulted in the massive flood of the Blanchard River and its tributaries, wreaking havoc in Findlay, Shelby, Bucyrus, and Ottawa in northwest Ohio.

Shortly after the flood, I traveled to the region with Governor Ted Strickland and officials from Homeland Security and FEMA.

While we saw the flood's devastation, we also saw the communities of northwest Ohio work together to clean up debris and rebuild the homes, schools, and businesses that suffered terrible damage.

Today the partnership is working to put into place a flood control plan in 3 years, when nationally similar plans have taken 5 years to develop. I saw that work in action last week in Findlay, where they advanced or accelerated their efforts much faster than almost any other community in the country has been able to do after natural disasters.

Implementing a plan so efficiently saves taxpayer money, while spurring economic development earlier and protecting community safety if another flood occurs. It is an example of how a bipartisan and a public-private effort among local, State and Federal governments, businesses, and community foundations is making a difference for Findlay and other communities across northwest Ohio.

In Findlay, we are establishing a national model in flood prevention planning. The Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA have worked closely with my office and Senator VOINOVICH, Congressmen BOB LATTI and JIM JORDAN, and other local officials. Corporations, community foundations, and county commissioners are working to develop flood control strategies to protect neighborhoods and businesses alike.

Local leaders are working to attract new businesses and create jobs once the cleanup is completed—and they have come a long way from my fairly regular visits to the community and seeing what happened, strengthening the economy's tax base to keep taxes lower in the future.

Working together, we have secured a \$1.5 million FEMA grant to continue recovery and flood mitigation efforts. This grant matches the \$1.5 million national emergency grant that Findlay was recently awarded.

NEG funding in northwest Ohio will help provide job training and increase opportunities for permanent employment for more than workers in the region. These workers earn good wages