

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2015, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, "Protecting the Internet and Consumers through Congressional Action."

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2015, at 10:30 a.m. in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Iran Nuclear Negotiations: Status of Talks and the Role of Congress."

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Fixing No Child Left Behind: Testing and Accountability."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on January 21, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Nominations."

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 21, 2015, at 10 a.m.,

in room SR-418 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

**ORDERS FOR THURSDAY,
JANUARY 22, 2015**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, January 22; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; I further ask that the Senate then be in a period of morning business for up to 1 hour with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; and that following morning business, the Senate then resume consideration of S. 1.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. We were able to process several amendments to the Keystone bill today, and there are now seven more in the queue and pending. Senators should expect votes related to amendments to this bill throughout the day tomorrow.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE for up to 15 minutes.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this week marks a somewhat dark milestone, which is the 5-year anniversary of the Supreme Court's, in my view, reprehensible decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. This was some fete of activism by the conservative bloc of the Supreme Court. It overturned the laws of Congress, it overturned the will of the American people, and it gave wildly outside influence over our elections to corporations and big-money interests,

creating what one newspaper in Kentucky called a "tsunami of slime."

Well, 5 years on and the evidence is in. The evidence is in our elections, where this dam burst of outside cash that has wiped out previous campaign spending records, and the evidence is in this Chamber, where we once had a thriving bipartisan conversation on climate change, and instead of that we have now been reduced to this Keystone XL Pipeline bill—a show of force from the fossil fuel industry and virtual silence from the other side of the aisle on climate change.

I will say that today marked an unusually bright spot in that darkness when 98 out of 99 Senators voting voted that climate change was real and not a hoax and when we came so close to an amendment that stated that climate change was real and caused by human activity that the sponsor of the amendment had to vote against his own amendment in order to keep the number under 60 because there were enough votes at one stage in the vote count for that bill to have passed even the filibuster threshold. So that made it an interesting day today. But normally we are in blockade.

The purpose of the effort that we have been on has been to fast-track the Keystone XL Pipeline—a tar sands pipeline that may, at the present oil price, be an economic zombie, basically a dead pipeline walking.

Canadian authorities say that the tar sands can't be extracted profitably at under \$85 a barrel. The report from the State Department said that the break price where they could take it out by train as an alternative to the pipeline was at \$75 per barrel, and the price today is around \$50 per barrel. So we really don't know whether this pipeline has an economic future. What we do know is that if it were to operate, it would pass enough tar sands through it to unleash additional carbon pollution equal to 6 million added cars on the road each year for 50 years.

If we take a look at this conversation here, other than the votes we forced today, the effect of *Citizens United* on our politics is pretty plain to see. *Citizens United* has not expanded debate in the Senate; it has crushed debate in the Senate. Why? Because since the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United*, the big fossil fuel polluters and their network of associated interests have become among the biggest spenders—relying heavily, by the way, on undisclosed, untraceable dark money.

According to the Center for American Progress, oil, gas, and coal companies and electric utilities alone reported spending more than \$84 million on the 2014 elections. And that is just what they reported. The industry's undisclosed spending in that election through groups not required to disclose their donors or on so-called issue ads that don't need to be disclosed—the total is estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Well, money talks, and in politics it talks plenty loud, and \$100 million has a lot to say.