

today. To show you how senseless it was, I will read the headline: "The GOP uses its advice and consent power to beat HARRY REID."

Think about that, a major newspaper in this country has the audacity to say: "The GOP [Republicans] uses its advice and consent power to beat HARRY REID."

Reading the editorial, what they are talking about is that the Republicans were very smart in delaying Loretta Lynch to be confirmed. The reason she was delayed is because a very vital issue came up with the trafficking bill. It dealt with women's reproductive rights, and it took a long time to work that out. In fact, it took a long enough time to work it out until the Republicans capitulated to what we wanted.

We protected the women's right to choose. The Hyde language no longer allows, as was in the underlying legislation, the Hyde language to apply to nontaxpayer money. So for them to say they beat HARRY REID, they didn't beat HARRY REID. What they did was beat up on themselves.

To think that they beat HARRY REID, I repeat, all they did was beat up on themselves.

Later today, the Senate will do something it should have done months ago, confirm Loretta Lynch as the 83rd Attorney General of the United States.

She is as qualified a candidate as I have ever seen in this Senate, which is more than three decades—so qualified, in fact, today will mark the third time she has been confirmed by the Senate.

Twice before, Loretta Lynch was unanimously confirmed as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. By all accounts, Loretta Lynch's confirmation this time around should have sailed through the Senate. For a while, it seemed it would. We had Senators, Republican Senators, saying what a wonderful woman she is. She is great. They were very vocal in their support. The senior Senator from Utah, the senior Senator from South Carolina, the junior Senator from Arizona—but it soon became apparent the Republican leadership pressed these people a little bit, and suddenly they weren't as interested in moving the Lynch confirmation along, even though that is what they said they should do. Her nomination has dragged on for months.

In fact, I repeat, she has waited longer to be confirmed than the first 54 Attorneys General combined, longer than Attorneys General nominated by every President from George Washington to Woodrow Wilson.

What should have been a quick confirmation would be anything but that. Instead, Ms. Lynch became the first Attorney General nominee in history to be filibustered.

The editorial from the newspaper is very insulting. They said: "Mr. REID accused Republicans of racism and sexism."

I dare—I dare anyone to find a single word that I said dealing with race or

sex. I didn't do that, but maybe that is something the Republicans hoped I would do, but I didn't do that.

There was even a hunger strike. Now, listen to this, the depth of this editorial from the Wall Street Journal:

Al Sharpton's activist group vowed a hunger strike until Ms. Lynch received a vote. (Al, please go through with it.)

I guess I was naive in thinking my Republican colleagues would treat Loretta Lynch with the dignity she and her office deserved. Perhaps my mistake was forgetting that for Republicans, this isn't about Loretta Lynch, it is about President Obama because Republicans will do everything, anything they can to make President Obama's life more difficult. They said they would do that when he was elected, and they have stuck with it.

President Obama's Cabinet officials have been treated worse than any President in history. Today's vote on Loretta Lynch marks the seventh cloture vote the Republicans have forced on a Cabinet official during the Obama administration.

Forcing cloture, that is terminating the filibuster, was something that was rare in the entire history of this country. It used to be Cabinet officials were filibustered only in the most extreme circumstances, but once Ms. Lynch is confirmed, five sitting members of the President's Cabinet will have been filibustered by Senate Republicans.

To put that in contrast, it rarely happened before, rarely. Unlike today's Senate Republicans, Democrats showed restraint in our disagreements with the President's appointments. We showed great deference to his choices for the President, and by that I am talking about the last President, George W. Bush.

Some may say that is water under the bridge. There will be those Republicans who, after confirming Loretta Lynch today, will say all's well that ends well. They are wrong.

While I am pleased she will be confirmed as Attorney General, her nomination process is proof of all that is wrong with Republican Senate leadership. Senate Republicans made Loretta Lynch's nomination linger more than 10 times longer than the average Attorney General—and you have heard what I said before about that—just to spite Barack Obama.

The viciousness with which the majority leader's party has treated the President is unconscionable and is bad for our country. Republicans have become so blinded by their nastiness that they have even made filibusters of Cabinet officials the norm around here. The first time we had a Defense Secretary filibustered, they did it. The first time for an Attorney General, they did it.

How sad that in the future we can expect delayed and filibustered nominations such as Loretta Lynch to no longer be the exception but the rule. This is so unfortunate that this is how Republicans portend to govern.

Mr. President, what is the order of the day?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF LORETTA E. LYNCH TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Loretta E. Lynch, of New York, to be Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I didn't realize the time in the quorum call would be equally divided, so I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally charged to both sides.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we will be voting soon on confirmation of Ms. Lynch to be the Attorney General of the United States of America. That office is a part of the President's Cabinet, but it also is the office of the chief law officer for America. The Attorney General is the top official in our government who is required to adhere to the law, even to the point of telling the President 'no' if he gets it in his head, as Presidents sometimes do, to do something that violates the law—just as corporate lawyers sometimes do for the CEO of corporations. 'Mr. President, you can't do this. This is wrong. Don't do this.'

Some Attorneys General have been known to resign before they would carry out policies that violate the law.