

for themselves. We should all be warned: The videos are as difficult to watch as they are easy to find, but the price of self-government is self-awareness.

The American people need to know the truth about what actually goes on in America's abortion clinics, what lies are being told, and what crimes are being committed in their name and with their own money. The truth about human life and dignity has the power to set us all free, but first, we have to tell it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week, I spoke about Senate Republicans' virtual shutdown of the judicial nominations process since they took over the majority. Their refusal to respond to the urgent needs of our independent third branch is threatening to harm our justice system and rob the judiciary of outstanding public servants.

One glaring example of this harm is the unnecessary delay of Judge Luis Felipe Restrepo, who was nominated last year to fill an emergency vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Pennsylvania. Judge Restrepo was unanimously confirmed 2 years ago by the Senate to serve as a district court judge. During his tenure as both a Federal district court judge and as a Federal magistrate judge, he has presided over 56 trials that have gone to verdict or judgment. He is superbly qualified, and I have heard no objection to his nomination. Despite his outstanding credentials and experience, it took the Republican majority 7 months just to schedule a hearing in the Judiciary Committee for this qualified nominee.

Judge Restrepo has bipartisan support from both Pennsylvania Senators and was voted out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously by voice vote. Once confirmed, Judge Restrepo will be the first Hispanic judge from Pennsylvania to ever serve on this court and only the second Hispanic judge to serve on the Third Circuit. He has the strong endorsement of the nonpartisan Hispanic National Bar Association. At his confirmation hearing in June, Senator TOOMEY stated that "there is no question [Judge Restrepo] is a very well qualified candidate to serve on the Third Circuit." Senator TOOMEY described Judge Restrepo's life story as

"an American Dream" and recounted how Judge Restrepo came to the United States from Colombia and rose to the top of his profession by "virtue of his hard work, his intellect, his integrity." I could not agree more.

Given his remarkable credentials, wealth of experience, and strong bipartisan support, you would think the Senate would have confirmed Judge Restrepo months ago. Instead, he was nominated for a judicial emergency vacancy back in November 2014, and for 10 months since his nomination, he has been denied a vote on his confirmation. No Senate Democrat opposes a vote on his nomination. The only ones who are holding up his nomination are the Senate Republicans. I have heard Senator TOOMEY indicate his strong support, and that he would like to see Judge Restrepo receive a vote. I know Senator TOOMEY can be a fierce advocate for issues he cares passionately about, and I hope he will get a firm commitment from the majority leader to schedule a confirmation vote this week.

In addition to Judge Restrepo's nomination, there are 12 other noncontroversial judicial nominees pending on the Executive Calendar waiting for a vote. All of them were approved by voice vote by the Judiciary Committee. There is no reason for Republicans to block these nominees. More than 8 months into this new year, Republican leadership has allowed votes on just six judicial nominees. By this time in 2007, when I was chairman of the Judiciary Committee, we had confirmed 29 judges nominated by President Bush. That is nearly five times more nominees than what this Republican majority has accomplished so far this year. Because of the Republicans' virtual shutdown of the confirmation process, judicial vacancies have increased by more than 50 percent—from 43 to 67. This demonstrates an astounding neglect of the needs of our independent Third Branch.

Instead of confirming Judge Restrepo and the 12 other noncontroversial judicial nominees on the Executive Calendar, Republicans are talking about another doomed vote on harmful legislation to block women's health care choices. Republicans had already forced a failed "show vote" to defund critical health services for women, spending 2 days on that unnecessary political exercise. Although Senate Republicans campaigned last year on the promise that they would govern responsibly if they won the majority, they continue to prioritize divisive issues that play only to their political base and yield no results for the American people.

I am urging Republican leadership to reverse course. Confirm Judge Luis Felipe Restrepo without further delay, and then confirm the other 12 noncontroversial judicial nominees pending on our Executive Calendar.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the United States has a proud and unique history as a nation of immigrants. Ever since our founding, we have been a beacon of hope for those seeking opportunity. Generation after generation, our Nation has greatly benefited from the entrepreneurial spirit that these newcomers bring with them. That is as true today as it was 200 years ago.

Our Nation's history with immigration has not always been a story of acceptance. Newcomers have often faced resistance, isolation, discrimination and even racist opposition. Many of us here in this body know those painful stories from our own immigrant families—others here have felt the stinging words of bigotry themselves. My grandparents faced signs telling them to not bother applying for work because of their ancestry but those old stories are hard to imagine today.

That is why it is so shocking to hear the steady rise in racist, xenophobic rhetoric coming from the Republican field of Presidential candidates. These statements are offensive and have no place in our national dialogue. Those who use such rhetoric are fear mongering for political gain. Even in today's hyped up political theater, this kind of language is unacceptable. It is hurtful, harmful, and just plain wrong.

It is incumbent on all of us to speak out against this dehumanizing discourse. A topic as important as immigration is worthy of debate, but in an informed and thoughtful manner. This weekend, Steve Case, a co-founder of America Online, took a powerful stand in an opinion piece in the Washington Post titled "Business Leaders Must Speak Out Against Trump's Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric." Two years ago, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I invited Mr. Case to testify before the committee when we were considering comprehensive immigration reform, and he has continued to be a leader on the issue. He is right to stand up, speak out, and call on all Americans to reject the ugly words we are hearing from too many political actors on one of the most pressing matters facing our country.

The growing partisan rhetoric that attempts to equate immigrants with criminals and suggests we deport them en masse is both irrational and dangerous. It is time that they stop. The characterization of immigrants as criminals here to harm us and our communities is not just beneath the dignity of anyone who seeks to lead this Nation as President, it simply is not supported by the evidence. Anyone who listened to the extensive testimony that the Senate Judiciary Committee collected 2 years ago will know that immigrants commit crimes at lower rates than those born in the United States. Many become job producers and the vast majority are hard-working members of our communities who support our economy and strengthen our neighborhoods. No less than Grover