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THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker

Wicker: Senate Rules Changes Could Break Legislative Logiam

Wicker Votes to Expedite

Consideration of President's Nominees

well-qualified the American people.

A Pattern of Historic Obstruction

More than two years into how long nominations are Donald Trump's presidency, debated on the Senate floor. Senate Democrats continue A cloture request from any to abuse the Senate confir- senator can add up to three mation process and delay days of debate for a nominominees. nee's consideration but This pattern of partisan ob- rarely changes the outcome struction has required the of the vote. In the past, this Senate to burn weeks of time consuming procedure valuable legislative time, has been used mainly for which has consequences for bills and resolutions and hardly ever for nomina-However, during tions. President Trump's first two Democrats have exploited years in office, the Senate a Senate procedure called was forced to perform this "cloture," which governs process on a total of 127

Barack Obama's first Congress and four in President George W. Bush's. Since floor time is the

most limited resource in the Senate, this obstruction of the nominations process has impeded our ability to consider important legislation. It has also left the United States without the administrators it needs to carry out basic functions. For example, the Justice Department remains without an associate attorney general and has no permanent director for either the Drug Enforcement Administration or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Nearly 60 percent of the most important positions at the Department of the Interior and the

nominations. By contrast, Department of Labor are there were only 12 such still vacant. According to cloture votes in President the Partnership for Public Service, over 270 of 709 key positions in the Trump administration are unfilled, and this gap is unlikely to change any time soon.

> As the Wall Street Journal editorial board lamented, the Senate failed to confirm 384 pending nominations before the end of last year. The President was required to resubmit these nominations, and they will endure another round of consideration by committees before a floor vote can be held. At the current rate of confirmation, it would take 11 years for a new president to fill the executive branch.

> In plain terms, this means that the President is not being allowed to put his team in place to do the job he was elected to do. Career

bureaucrats, who have little and won no support from accountability to the public, Democrats on the Rules are in control of the levers Committee. The Demoof government.

Rules Committee Takes Action

nominations process cannot previous bipartisan efforts be allowed to continue. That to reform the confirmation is why I voted in the Rules process. Supreme Court justices and change. Cabinet-level officials.

passed on a party-line vote the same consideration.

cratic opposition comes despite efforts by Sens. Blunt and Lankford to create a This distortion of the proposal that would mirror

Committee for a resolu- In response to an intion authored by Sens. Roy creased number of cloture Blunt and James Lankford votes at the beginning of to reduce the debate time President Obama's second for most Executive Branch term, then-Senate Majority positions and district court Leader Harry Reid struck judges from 30 hours to two a deal with Republicans hours. These nominees are in January 2013 that sigtypically non-controversial nificantly reduced debate and are usually confirmed time for most of President by large margins. The pro- Obama's nominees through posal would maintain the the end of 2014. Thirty-five 30 hours of debate for high- Democrats who serve in the level nominees, including Senate today supported that

Ι believe This reasonable proposal Trump's nominees deserve

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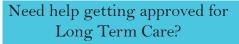


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