

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 29) to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and its associated forces.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the joint resolution on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the joint resolution will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CLEAN WATER RULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are 3 weeks into the new year, and already we are back to wasting the Senate's time to launch partisan attacks. Today my Republican colleagues have chosen to once again attack clean water protections that millions of Americans depend on.

On Tuesday President Obama vetoed the Republican attempt to roll back the clean water rule—a rule that basically restores important safeguards to shield our water sources from pollution and contamination. There are special interest groups who have tried to raise money based on this. Some of the groups who have tried to raise money on this with fallacious information are farm groups. They have gone out and said that this is terrible for agriculture. Agriculture is exempted, so anyone saying this is horrible for agriculture is simply wrong. Under the specific language of the legislation, agriculture is exempted.

The clean water rule resolves years of confusion and provides regulatory certainty for businesses, farmers, local governments, and communities. It creates no new permitting requirements and maintains all previous exemptions and exclusions.

Despite President Obama's veto, Republicans remain determined to undermine the environment. Safe water is critical to the health of our communities. One need go no further than Flint, MI, to find out that that is, in fact, the case. And it is important to our economy. At this very moment, as I have indicated, 100,000 people live in Flint, MI. All of those families—thousands of families—have been forced to worry about their children's health because of lead contamination in their drinking water. Their little brains are adversely affected by lead in the water. We have known that for a long time, but in an effort to save a buck, the Governor and others in Michigan decided they would try something else and in the process have really drastically damaged the lives of little boys and girls in Flint, MI.

Our country is the wealthiest country in the world. No American should have to worry about whether they are drinking safe water in America. It is unconscionable to think that we would waste valuable time in the Senate attacking a rule dealing with clean water designed to keep our Nation's water safe. And while we are doing this—wasting time here in the Senate today—Flint, MI, is in a state of emergency.

Republicans are so wedded to ideological purity, they have lost touch with reality. They have somehow failed to recognize that clean water is a basic priority for all Americans. The reality is that the Federal funding and reasonable protections are necessary to ensure public health and safety.

The Governor of the State of Michigan is an anti-government person. That is his mark. He especially wants Washington to stay out of Michigan's government. But what is the first thing he does when he finds out he and his whole government have messed up the State of Michigan? He calls Washington for help. He, along with many of my friends on the other side of the aisle, disparage the Federal Government every chance they get, but when a crisis strikes, whom do they call upon to help? The Federal Government.

Rolling back clean water protections is the wrong thing to do, and Republicans should refocus their energy on solutions to keep America healthy and safe.

ANNIVERSARY OF CITIZENS UNITED DECISION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, a flood of dark money has engulfed the American political system and perverted our democracy. The voices of ordinary citizens are being drowned out by billionaires seeking to rig the system in their favor.

Americans should know that Democrats are fighting to restore their voice, which is being overshadowed by the billions of dollars being spent to push the Republican Presidential nominees, and on every level of the government, this dark money is there drowning out the voices of average Americans. Over here, we stand united in our commitment to advance the interest of the middle-class and working families. It is important to remember how we got to this point.

Yesterday I saw that the junior Senator from Florida and the former Governor of Florida have spent about \$150 million so far running for President. One of them is at 10 percent in the national polls and the other is at 6 percent. But they have the money to slosh around and spend.

We got here because 6 years ago today, the Supreme Court of our great country erased a century of sound government regulations that protect the fairness and integrity of elections. It was determined during the Republican reign of Teddy Roosevelt that there

was too much corporate money in American politics, and so under his leadership, it was eliminated. But the Supreme Court changed that in a very narrow decision of 5 to 4.

The disastrous Citizens United ruling opened the floodgates for these shadowy billionaires to influence our elections. Most of the spending is done in secret by special interest shell groups who refuse to disclose their donors to the American people. These billionaire donors stop at nothing to buy a government that favors them and their special interests.

There are two brothers who I believe are determined to buy America, and we will find out come election time. Maybe they have been able to do that. Charles and David Koch are shrewd business people. Their wealth is nearly unmatched anywhere in the world. They have amassed a fortune from inherited wealth that they have magnified that has come from oil, chemicals, and a lot of different places. They originally inherited this from their dad and built it into a multinational corporation. No one really knows their net worth, but some say it is \$100 billion, \$150 billion. No one really knows. They have become two of the wealthiest men in the entire world.

They seek more wealth, but that is not all they seek. A new book by Jane Myer—a dignified and renowned author and journalist—she reports in her book that immediately after the election of President Obama, the Koch brothers wanted to double down on what they had done before. They had been working on this for a while. They didn't like this man, Barack Obama, being President of the United States, so they gathered like-minded billionaires—it is in her book—and plotted to spend however much money it would take to get rid of him for a new term and basically undermine our democracy. You can't make up a story like this. These are the facts.

Capitalizing on the Citizens United decision, the Koch brothers have poured over \$1 billion into our political system to create a country that protects the wealthiest one-half of 1 percent. The America they envision is drastically different from the vision most Americans have for our country.

I have a list of some of the things they have advocated for decades. It used to be just the fringe, but now we have people running for President who agree with him. They want to abolish Social Security, eliminate minimum wage laws, dismantle Medicare as we know it, dismantle our public education system, dismantle protections for clean air and water, create tax breaks for themselves, and they have done a pretty good job of that. They are prepared to use their enormous wealth to accomplish these goals. They really put their money where their mouth is. They spend it because they have it to spend. They have pledged to spend about \$1 billion this cycle, not counting all the money they have spent in years past.

They have been involved in years past to make sure the John Birch Society had a place in our society—the libertarians. They were libertarians for a while.

The Supreme Court has paved the way for greedy robber barons—robber barons like the Koch brothers—to create a government that works for the richest of the rich.

Democracy demands that every American has an equal opportunity to have his or her voice heard. It should not be dependent upon how much money one has.

I am sorry to say our Supreme Court has determined that your voice is going to be much louder if you have a lot of money. A democratic system should give every American a fair shot, but every time we have tried to make an effort to fix our broken finance system, the Republicans have said no.

We had a DISCLOSE Act. We brought it before this body. It would have passed the House at that time. There were 59 Democrats. We needed one Republican—one Republican—to make it more apparent so that the American people could see where this money was coming from. Not one Republican would join with us.

Now, I came to the House of Representatives with the senior Senator from Arizona. I admire him. He is an American hero, despite what Donald Trump says. He proved himself in battle and in the prison system set up in Vietnam. I admire JOHN MCCAIN. I can remember him working with Russ Feingold, the Senator from Wisconsin, and they passed the McCain-Feingold legislation. It became the law of this country. It was a really good, strong step forward. Citizens United wiped that out.

My friend, the senior Senator from Arizona, had an opportunity to help this bad financial system the Supreme Court has put forward, and he didn't step forward. He decided to take a pass on it. I am very disappointed. I have never forgotten what he didn't do or what he could have done with one vote. We only needed one vote. We had 59, and we only needed 1 more.

Rather than secret political spending, we should have immediate disclosure—some disclosure. Rather than corporations buying influence, we should restore laws that limit the power of special interests. Rather than empowering the wealthy, we should encourage small contributions.

We must make clear once and for all that the United States of America is not for sale.

We criticized and complained about the Soviet Union and how it was. We were so happy when the Soviet Union fell and Russia became a "democracy." Now people say that Russia is an oligarchy. What is an oligarchy? An oligarchy is a country run by a person who is controlled by wealth—the wealth of individuals and families. That is what we have in Russia, and that is what we are going to have in America if this is allowed to continue.

The Koch brothers and a few other billionaires will be in concert with—we see this line of characters running for President on the Republican ticket—it will be with them. It will be an oligarchy first class. It will match what is going on in Russia today.

We must make clear that the United States is not for sale. The Citizens United decision that we celebrate in a very adverse way today on its anniversary is bad for the country, and I hope the Supreme Court understands how bad it is for the country. It is one of the worst decisions in the history of the Supreme Court, if not the worst.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the veto message on S.J. Res. 22, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 22, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency relating to the definition of "waters of the United States" under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally between the majority and the minority.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, January 26, at 2:15 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 306; that there be 15 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action

or debate on the nomination; that if confirmed, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2012

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following morning business on Tuesday, January 26, the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 218, S. 2012, with a period of debate only until 3 p.m.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my Republican colleagues.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Thank you, Mr. President.

We are here today to vote in about half an hour on overriding the President's veto, a congressional action that would not have allowed the country to move forward with the so-called waters of the United States rule.

The waters of the United States sounds like a lot until you look at the map beside me. This is a map of the State of Missouri and of what would be covered under EPA jurisdiction, if this rule is allowed to go into effect.

This is a map from the Missouri Farm Bureau that nobody has taken issue with, and the red part of our State would be covered by Federal Government authority. So 99.7 percent of the State would suddenly be under the jurisdiction of the EPA on all things related to water: water running off the parking lot, water running off your driveway, water running off your roof, water falling into your yard, water falling into a vacant lot if someone wants to build a house on that vacant lot—all of those things in 99.7 percent of the State. I think that three-tenths of 1 percent may be some unusual seepage area where the water runs away in a way that the EPA hasn't yet figured out how to assert jurisdiction over.

The law passed in the early 1970s, the Clean Water Act, said that the EPA would have jurisdiction over navigable waters. So, if you believe the EPA and believe this rule and believe in the President's veto, navigable waters would apparently be every drop of water in 99.7 percent of Missouri.

If the President and the administration and the EPA want to change the law where it no longer says "navigable waters," but where it says virtually all the water, there is a way to do that: Introduce a bill, come to the Congress, and the Congress votes on that bill. If the House and Senate approve it—I know this sounds like it is a pretty pedestrian discussion. But apparently the President and EPA don't understand that it is the way to change the law. It is not just that somebody decides that all of the water in Missouri—or to be accurate, 99.7 percent of the water in our State, of the geography of our