The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, we are in session here on a Sunday in Washington for a rare Sunday session in the U.S. Senate so that we can confirm a terrific woman to be the next Justice of the Supreme Court.

There is an open seat right now that needs to be filled, and Judge Barrett, who is currently a judge on the circuit court, one level below the Supreme Court, has really impressed me and the American people with her performance.

I had a chance to meet with her this past week, and I was already impressed but even more so, having had a chance to spend some time with her. I had been impressed with her performance at the hearing because I thought she showed great patience and calm in the face of some really tough questions. To me, that is judicial temperament, and I think that will serve her well in her new role as Justice of the Supreme Court.

I have also been impressed with her qualifications. I don't think anybody can say she is not highly qualified. In fact, the American Bar Association, which does not always look favorably at Republican appointees, was, in her last confirmation, convinced that she was highly qualified, and again, in this one, they gave her their highest qualification. That is impressive.

As has been talked about on the floor tonight, she actually has been through this process before—and pretty recently. I think less than 3 years ago she was confirmed by this same body, and it was a bipartisan vote, and it was an opportunity for people to get to know her. So this is not as though we have brought somebody forward who isn't already known, who isn't already deemed to be very well qualified. In fact, I don't know anybody in this Chamber who doesn't think that she is well qualified and that she has done a good job as a judge and a lawyer.

She graduated first in her class at Notre Dame Law School, and then she went back there and taught. She won the Teacher of the Year Award three times when she was at Notre Dame, and, most importantly to me, she is just widely respected by her colleagues. These are professors. She is also widely respected by her former students. These professors and students, by the way, are representing the entire political spectrum from very liberal to very conservative. All of them say the same thing about her, which is that she is a legal scholar, that she is highly qualified, and that she is a good person.

In our meeting I got to see some of that. I saw in our meeting that she is a great listener. People talk about active listening. She was really interested in what the topics were and had very thoughtful responses.

She is also a legal scholar who understands very clearly what the role of the Supreme Court should be in our separation of branches in our governmental system here. I think that is really important. As I said to her in our meeting, I hope she will be an ambassador, and I think she will. In fact, I think she will be an extremely effective ambassador—as the youngest member of the Supreme Court and also as a former teacher—with regard to young people, to help them understand what it means to have a judicial branch and how it is different from the legislative branch or the executive branch for that matter. Judges are not supposed to be legislators. That is not what they are hired to do. Yet in some cases we have gotten the sense that judges ought to be deciding issues that are reserved for those who are elected by the people; that is, the legislators.

Judges have an important role, and that is to look at the laws and to look at the Constitution and to determine whether something is consistent with those. That is what she will do, and I think she will do it very fairly, with compassion and with a great understanding of the legal issues and precedent.

She explained before the committee that she was respectful of precedent. She also told me that in our meeting. I think she has the proper understanding of the role of the Court and her role as a Justice.

I am looking for the opportunity to finally vote. I guess we will do that tomorrow night, sometime in the evening, and I hope it will be a strong vote. I hope it can be even a bipartisan vote, as it was last time she was confirmed by this same body.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, while the Senate continues to work through this important process of the next Supreme Court nominee, I am also here on the floor today to remind all of us that we are still in the middle of an unprecedented healthcare and economic crisis caused by this ongoing coronavirus pandemic. I am here to express my frustration that the sense of urgency and compromise that we had for the first several months of this coronavirus seem to have disappeared as we have approached the election.

The Democratic leader today raised the seriousness of the pandemic. Something said on the other side of the aisle was that we shouldn't even be taking up a Supreme Court nominee because of the seriousness of the pandemic and the need to focus on that.

I don't understand why then, on Wednesday, the same Democratic leader and his colleagues blocked even taking action on the coronavirus or even having a debate on whether to take action because, once again, they blocked a legislative initiative to have a discussion about this issue.

By the way, it is a discussion about an issue that affects every single one of our States. Again, we are not out of the woods, so we should be not just discussing it but passing legislation on it.

The legislation that we have introduced might not be legislation that every Democrat can support. In fact, I think there were some things that were in our bill that some Democrats might not love. But for the most part, there were bipartisan proposals that everybody can support, and all we asked for was to be able to get on the bill to have a debate. Yet we had to have 60 votes to be able to do that. That is the supermajority that is required around here, and those 60 votes could not be found, even though last Wednesday the $500 billion package got a majority vote. There was a majority vote for this package but not the supermajority needed. It was blocked by the other side.

If we had gotten on the legislation and had the debate about what the PPP program ought to look like, how much money should be used for testing, what we should do with regard to liability protections, Democrats would have had the opportunity to put their own ideas forward, to offer their own amendments, and I would have strongly supported them in that process.

Also, some of us had some additional amendments we would like to have added and changes we would like to have seen. But, ultimately, if Democrats or Republicans found that they didn't like the final product that came out of that discussion, that debate, they would have had another chance because there would have been another 60-vote hurdle to get over before passage of the legislation.

I know this is sounding like a process issue, but it really is not. It is about doing our jobs as Senators. Both Republicans and Democrats care about this issue, yet we just can't seem to figure out how to get it unfrozen here and to be able to move forward. Having blocked, again, even having a debate on moving forward was very discouraging to me.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, the economy is still struggling. As I said, we are not out of the woods yet, particularly in the areas of hospitality, travel, and entertainment. We are not out of the woods on the virus yet, either, with many States seeing a third wave right now. That is what I would describe is happening in Ohio, my home State. I have watched the numbers every single day this week. Not only are the number of cases increasing, but the hospitalizations went up this week. The number of people in ICU went up and fatalities went up.

It is critical that this Congress provide additional relief to help the American people get through this healthcare crisis and economic fallout we have seen. We have done it before. Five times Republicans and Democrats on this floor and over in the House and working with the White House have passed coronavirus legislation—five times. In fact, most of the votes have been unanimous. It is unbelievable because here we are in this partisan atmosphere, but most of the votes have been unanimous.