

OBAMA TO SHELBY (AND OTHERS): LET THOSE HOSTAGES GO



graphic: twolf1

Apparently, Obama told Mitch McConnell that if the GOP didn't start releasing their hostages, he would recess appoint the whole lot of them. And, as a result of a direct threat, McConnell and his buddies released 27 of their hostages.

But Obama is calling for the Republicans to release all their hostages.

Today, the United States Senate confirmed 27 of my high-level nominees, many of whom had been awaiting a vote for months.

At the beginning of the week, a staggering 63 nominees had been stalled in the Senate because one or more senators placed a hold on their nomination. In most cases, these holds have had nothing to do with the nominee's qualifications or even political views, and these nominees have already received broad, bipartisan support in the committee process.

Instead, many holds were motivated by a desire to leverage projects for a Senator's state or simply to frustrate progress. It is precisely these kinds of tactics that enrage the American people.

And so on Tuesday, I told Senator McConnell that if Republican senators did not release these holds, I would exercise my authority to fill critically-needed positions in the federal government temporarily through the use of recess appointments. This is

a rare but not unprecedented step that many other presidents have taken. Since that meeting, I am gratified that Republican senators have responded by releasing many of these holds and allowing 29 nominees to receive a vote in the Senate.

While this is a good first step, there are still dozens of nominees on hold who deserve a similar vote, and I will be looking for action from the Senate when it returns from recess. If they do not act, I reserve the right to use my recess appointment authority in the future.

Sure, it reads like a sternly-written letter. But with recess upon us in just over a week, ~~it may not be an idle threat.~~ I've asked for clarification, but the general read on this is that Obama is not going to recess anyone this time around.

So it is, indeed, a sternly-written letter.