

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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**OPINION | OUR VIEW**

## 'Nuclear Option': How We Got Here

The U.S. Senate's move Thursday to enact the so-called "nuclear option" on the filibuster rule — a rule change that now disallows the use of the filibuster block on judicial and executive branch nominees — was a sad day in congressional history.

But, it was a sad day because of how we got to that point, not because Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) had finally seen enough of the blocking tactics by a minority of lawmakers that had virtually brought business to a standstill in the body.

Frankly, the move, which passed the Senate 52-48 and really does not guarantee a great degree of progress forward, had been treated in predictably partisan terms. The Democrats and their allies are enthused by the refreshing show of backbone — even though Democrats have, to a lesser extent, used the tactic themselves in the past — while the Republicans and their defenders are damning it as a "power grab" and are vowing revenge, which they may well get after the 2014 mid-term elections and they are subsequently able to utilize the new rule.

The filibuster rule has allowed the minority in the Senate — indeed, just 41 senators — to effectively halt any legislation that the majority approved. That ability to essentially sabotage the democratic mechanics of the Senate chamber could also be interpreted as a power grab, if not blatant and constant obstruction.

The filibuster used to be a rarely used procedure in the Senate, but it has now become a commonplace occurrence. Nearly half of the almost 170 filibusters of presidential nominees in the Senate's 220-year history — most of them court nominations but there was also, for the first time ever, a cabinet nominee — have happened since President Obama took office in 2009.

The filibuster does genuinely serve a useful purpose in the legislative toolbox, but using it to virtually grind the wheels of government to a halt on myriad issues isn't one of them.

Now, there are 75 executive-branch nominees waiting in the pipeline to be confirmed. At least some forward progress can be made in that realm.

The filibuster's 60-vote threshold is still intact for legislative proceedings, so its debatable just how "nuclear" this option really is. But it must be clear the problem is what got us to this point, not the rule change that had to be resorted to in order to break this destructive, calculated bottleneck.

The object lesson here should be that maybe, just maybe, the best way to govern is for lawmakers to work together and cultivate legislation that allows the law to function, not shut everything down in the name of politics. We can hope it's a lesson learned; we surely aren't betting on it, however.

kmh

**ONLINE OPINION**

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

**LATEST RESULTS:**

**How much of your holiday shopping do you plan to do online?**  
Not at all . . . . .36%  
A little bit . . . . .30%  
Most or all of it . . . . .22%  
Almost half . . . . .12%  
**TOTAL VOTES CAST . . . . .211**

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

**CURRENT QUESTION:**

**Do you think the Obama administration will ultimately approve the Keystone XL pipeline project?**

To vote in the Press & Dakotan's Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

**ON THIS DATE**

**By The Associated Press**

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 26, the 330th day of 2013. There are 35 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** November 26, 1789 was a day of thanksgiving set aside by President Washington to observe the adoption of the Constitution of the United States.

**On this date:** In 1825, the first college social fraternity, Kappa Alpha, was formed at Union College in Schenectady, New York.

In 1883, former slave and abolitionist Sojourner Truth died in Battle Creek, Michigan.

In 1933, a judge in New York decided the James Joyce book "Ulysses" was not obscene and could therefore be published in the United States.

In 1941, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull delivered a note to Japan's ambassador to the United States, Kichisaburo Nomura, proposing an agreement for "lasting and extensive peace throughout the Pacific area." The same day, a Japanese naval task force consisting of six aircraft carriers left the Kuril Islands, headed toward Hawaii.

In 1942, President Roosevelt ordered nationwide gasoline rationing, beginning December 1st.

In 1942, the motion picture "Casablanca," starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, had its world premiere at the Hollywood Theater in New York.

In 1943, during World War II, the HMT Rohna, a British transport ship carrying American soldiers, was hit by a German missile off Algeria; 1,138 men were killed.

In 1949, India adopted a constitution as a republic within the British Commonwealth.

In 1950, China entered the Korean War, launching a counter-offensive against soldiers from the United Nations, the U.S. and South Korea.

In 1965, France launched its first satellite, sending a 92-pound capsule into orbit.

In 1973, President Nixon's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, told a federal court that she'd accidentally caused part of the 18-1/2-minute gap in a key Watergate tape.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan appointed a commission headed by former Senator John Tower to investigate his National Security Council staff in the wake of the Iran-Contra affair.

**Ten years ago:** Human rights activist Gao Zhan, who was freed from a Chinese prison after the U.S. government interceded on her behalf,

pleaded guilty in Alexandria, Va., to illegally selling American high-tech items with potential military uses to China. (Gao later received a reduced sentence of seven months in prison for her cooperation with authorities.) Hard-liners defeated moderates in Northern Ireland's legislative elections.

**Five years ago:** Teams of heavily armed gunmen, allegedly from Pakistan, stormed luxury hotels, a popular tourist attraction and a crowded train station in Mumbai, India, leaving at least 166 people dead in a rampage lasting some 60 hours. A Missouri mother on trial in a landmark cyberbullying case was convicted by a federal jury in Los Angeles of three minor offenses for her role in a mean-spirited Internet hoax that apparently drove a 13-year-old girl, Megan Meier, to suicide. (However, Lori Drew's convictions were later thrown out.)

**One year ago:** Minnesota homeowner Byron Smith was charged with two counts of second-degree murder in the shooting deaths of two unarmed teenagers during an apparent Thanksgiving Day break-in; investigators said he acknowledged firing "more shots than I needed to." Online shopping on Cyber Monday was up at least 28 percent from the previous year according to IBM Benchmark, which tracks online sales. New Jersey Republican Gov. Chris Christie announced that he would be seeking reelection, so he could continue to guide the state through a recovery from Superstorm Sandy.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Ellen Albertini Dow is 100. Impressionist Rich Little is 75. Singer Tina Turner is 74. Singer Jean Terrell is 69. Pop musician John McVie is 68. Actress Marianne Muellerleile is 65. Actor Scott Jacoby is 57. Actress Jamie Rose is 54. Country singer Linda Davis is 51. Blues singer-musician Bernard Allison is 48. Country singer-musician Steve Grisaffe is 48. Actress Kristin Bauer is 40. Actor Peter Facinelli is 40. Actress Tammy Lynn Michaels Etheridge is 39. Actress Maia Campbell is 37. Country singer Joe Nichols is 37. Contemporary Christian musicians Randy and Anthony Armstrong (Red) are 35. Actress Jessica Bowman is 33. Pop singer Natasha Bedingfield is 32. Country singer-musician Mike Gossin (Gloriana Rock) is 29. Ben Wysocki (The Fray) is 29. Singer Lil Fizz is 28. Singer Aubrey Collins is 26.

**Thought for Today:** "Any fool can make a rule, and any fool will mind it." — Henry David Thoreau, American author (1817-1862).

**FROM THE BIBLE**

But she answered Him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table set the children's crumbs." Mark 7:28. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

**Fili-baster.**



**Point Of View**

## A Tool Of Transparency

BY DAVID BORDEWYK

South Dakota Newspaper Association

Earlier this month, Gov. Dennis Daugaard used his weekly column to share information with citizens about moving state government toward more transparency and accessibility.

Specifically, he wrote about the launch of a new state government website that makes it easier for the public to learn about administrative rules and regulations that are proposed and implemented by various state agencies. The new website is rules.sd.gov.

Congratulations to the governor for creating a practical and useful website that will well serve the citizens of South Dakotans. And thank you to Gov. Daugaard for bringing more attention to the need for transparency in government.

"I strongly believe that the workings of government should be as transparent as possible," the governor wrote in his column. "As South Dakota citizens, you deserve the opportunity to know about and participate in your government."

Here, here! I couldn't agree more. That's a message newspapers have been promoting for decades and it's gratifying to see more and more embrace the ideals of transparency and open government.

Last month the 130 member newspapers of South Dakota Newspaper Association observed the first-ever Public Notices Month in South Dakota. It was an opportunity to bring attention to public notices such as school board minutes and delinquent property tax lists published in the local newspaper and to the role those notices play in our democracy.

Just like the point made by the governor in his column, public notices in the local newspaper create the opportunity for us as citizens and taxpayers to know about and participate in our government.

A key point to remember is that public notices published in the local newspaper provides an independent, third-party, authentication step in the process of delivering the public notices to the public. That third party is the newspaper.

The newspaper, as publisher of government public notices, provides an independent verification and delivery of government information. It is more powerful and more effective than government



Bordewyk

itself being the sole author, editor and distributor of information that we as taxpayers need to know.

And it's permanent. Public notices published in the local newspaper create a bonafide record that cannot be hacked, manipulated or deleted. It's ink on paper. In fact, an official notarized copy of every public notice published in newspapers is prepared as a legal document of that printed record of government action.

Newspapers in South Dakota recognize the role of the Internet for searching and accessing information. That is why the 130 newspapers in our state have cooperated to provide

www.sdpublicnotices.com, a searchable website that aggregates all of the public notices first published in the local newspaper. Newspapers provide that website at no charge to government or citizens.

But it all begins with the publication of a government notice in your local newspaper. We tagged our Public Notices Month observance with a "VIP" theme. Verifiable, independent and permanent. Or, valuable, important and public. Either way, these are all adjectives that describe the significance of public notices published in your local newspaper.

As the governor wrote in his column: "Even when information is open, however, it isn't very useful when it cannot be easily accessed. Putting information online, in one location, with appropriate explanation, allows the public to participate in government at a higher level."

I like to think that publishing public notices in the local newspaper that is complete with other local, relevant news and information and that is delivered to your doorstep or mailbox can take that public participation to an even higher level yet. It makes you — the citizen — a VIP.

David Bordewyk is general manager of South Dakota Newspaper Association, which is based in Brookings and represents the state's 130 weekly and daily newspapers with a total readership of more than 600,000.

**The Rez of the Story**

## Knowledge And Diabetes

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), Mary Louise Defender/Wilson was born Oct. 14, 1930, on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota. Mary is a storyteller, traditionalist, historian, scholar and educator from the Dakota/Hidatsa people who once wrote, "People noticed and respected families that included many old people, knowing that in those families must be industrious, wise, and spiritual women who gathered good foods, prepared meats properly and made daily offerings and prayers to the spirits."

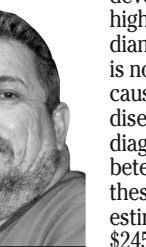
Casey and Vanceburg, co-authors of "The Promise of a New Day," tell us, "Until the recent past, the health of her extended family was a woman's responsibility. Perhaps the American Indians were unusually wise in appreciating the health-giving qualities of both good nutrition and spiritual practice. We sometimes forget how important a tranquil spirit is to our overall health."

"Health, as a positive quality, expresses how well we integrate with the world. It's measured by the success of our detachment from those things we can do nothing about, as well as by our engagement with those things we can. A healthy organism cooperates with natural processes and throws off insults."

"More and more, we are taking responsibility for our own health. If we live to a ripe old age, it won't necessarily be because our daughters-in-law or our nieces, but because we've learned to respect the balance of the body and spirit. "Daily offerings and prayer," that is, daily meditation and spiritual cleansing, is something we can all incorporate into our lives. Whatever our life span, it will be richer and happier if we nourish our spirit along with our bodies."

Words to the wise no doubt. If we listen and pay attention to such wisdom, we will have a better chance at living to be a healthy and wise elder, indeed.

The U.S. Congress established the "Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) in 1977 as a part of the Balanced Budget Act to address the growing epidemic of diabetes in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.



Vince TWO EAGLES

Here taken from the SDPI website is some old fashion FYI worthy of some attention I think:

"November (being designated) National Diabetes Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness of diabetes prevention and control. In the United States, more than 26 million people are living with diabetes and 79 million more are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, which has a high prevalence rate among American Indians and Alaska Natives. Over time, if it is not controlled, type 2 diabetes can cause serious health problems like heart disease, stroke and blindness. With early diagnosis and treatment, people with diabetes may prevent the development of these health problems. In 2012, the total estimated cost of diagnosed diabetes was \$245 billion, including \$176 billion in direct medical costs and \$69 billion in reduced productivity."

Growing up, I never heard of diabetes, let alone the epidemic proportions we hear about today in Indian Country. It wasn't until my parents' generation that diabetes became a major issue of conversation in Indian Country. Today it seems like a majority of my family members have contracted the disease. In my generation, I have seen a lot more amputations and — if the trending is toward type 2 diabetes being more prevalent among Native people — we are likely to see more amputations, heart attacks, strokes and blindness.

It doesn't have to be this way because diabetes can be prevented. This is not a message meant to be critical but to simply call attention to what's happening not only in Indian Country but in the whole country as well. Media sources tell us diabetes is on the rise in Euro-America, and Afro-America as well. I think we best heed the information that's being made available and adjust our choices accordingly.

Take care of yourself (your spirit), for no one else is going to. Be kind to yourself and gentle with yourself. Put good things into your body and put good information and truth into your mind. Acknowledge that you have feelings and what you feel and express it in respectful ways. Balance is possible with due diligence and attention paid to that which calls you to attention. It is up to you. Be well my relatives.

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

**YOUR LETTERS**

**Changing The Rules**

Roger Meyer, Yankton

United States Senate Democrats recently threw a temper tantrum and changed more than 200 years of Senate history to change the rules regarding filibusters. The Democrats voted to allow a vote of 51 affirmative to confirm any judge or indeed to pass any legislation. Now changed, the filibuster had been a part of the Senate rules since 1789.

Senate Democrats during the Bush administration were the first to use the filibuster to block judicial appointments by the president. They had less than 50 votes at the time so used the filibuster to work their way. No one other than they thought it a good precedent at the time, but it was set.

When Republicans, in the minority, decided to use the same tactic in the case of two — only two — judicial nominations, the Democrats became outraged. How dare Republican use against them what they had once used against Republicans. So they changed the rules and yet another dangerous precedent has been set. Republicans when again in the majority will be able to employ the same option and shut down Democrat filibusters — on appointments and on legislation. This is another example of Sen. Harry Reid and the Democrats governing by tantrum and not by rule. The hypocrisy of Harry Reid and President Obama were on full display as they who once opposed this rule change vociferously, are now in complete support when it serves their purposes.