

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 13, 2012

Senator Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Charles E. Schumer
Chairman, Senate Rules and Administration
Committee
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Chairman Schumer:

I write to ask that you consider a resolution (S. Res. 9) I have introduced in this Congress during your deliberations on potential Senate rules reform for the 113th Congress. This resolution would increase transparency in the Senate through use of a "talking filibuster" and prevent unnecessary delay during the intervening day between filing cloture on a measure and voting on cloture, as well as during the 30 hours that can currently be required post-cloture. My proposal would not alter the voting threshold for ending debate on a measure.

S. Res. 9 is simple: once cloture is filed on a motion, nomination, or legislation, the senators wishing to prolong debate would be forced to actually engage in debate. If, at any time after the first degree amendment filing deadline has passed, debate ceases and senators conducting the filibuster give up the floor, the Majority Leader would be able to move for an immediate vote. The same would hold true for the thirty hours of post-cloture time attached to motions to proceed and executive nominations.

I first introduced the idea of a "talking filibuster" in the 111th Congress, and I have been advocating for its implementation ever since. By requiring filibustering senators to defend their position to the American people, this reform would ensure that the rights accorded to the Senate minority are not abused, while maintaining the integrity of those rights. It would also end much of the needless delay that has prevented consideration of important issues in recent years.

With Senate minority obstructionism at unprecedented levels and public opinion of Congress suffering as a result, a number of senators have been calling for reform of the Senate rules when the 113th Congress convenes in January 2013. I urge you to keep my "talking filibuster" proposal in mind when considering these potential reforms.

Sincerely,

