

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
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Subject: Senate Democrats plan to drop nominations blockade if ACA repeal effort fails

By Seung Min Kim and Burgess Everett

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Senate Democrats have dragged out confirmations for even the least controversial nominees while the chamber remained mired in the health care debate. But they're pledging to drop their blockade if the GOP's Obamacare repeal effort fails, according to senior Democratic sources.

In recent weeks, the Senate has slowed to a crawl, taking days to process nominees such as a federal judge from Idaho and the second-ranking official at the Pentagon as a protest of sorts against the Republicans' secretive health care drafting process. The GOP also claims that Democrats aren't negotiating on a budget deal, veterans' legislation and FDA fees until the Obamacare debate is over.

But Democrats plan to work with Republicans for a deal on the dozens of nominations lingering on the floor once the GOP's partisan health push ends, according to Democratic senators and aides.

"Mitch McConnell put reconciliation on the table hours after the session started and it has really tainted all of our efforts," Minority Whip [Dick Durbin](#) said in an interview. "When he is prepared to return to regular order, I think we are going to have a much more cooperative Senate."

Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) delayed the start of August recess partly so the chamber could clear the deck of nominees lingering on the Senate floor, including Christopher Wray to lead the FBI.

McConnell has also teed up a debate over the National Defense Authorization Act to come after the health care bill. The defense measure would be led by [John McCain](#) (R-Ariz.), who is traveling back to Washington today after being diagnosed with brain cancer last week.

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