

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 435, Walter Counts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Walter David Counts III, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Walter David Counts III, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, John Barasso, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, James M. Inhofe, Johnny Isakson, Mike Crapo, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Michael B. Enzi, James Lankford, Lindsey Graham, Pat Roberts, Todd Young.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls be waived and that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motions filed during today's session of the Senate ripen at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, January 8.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, due to family commitments, I missed today's vote. Senate leadership was aware of my absence, which would not impact today's confirmation vote.●

TRIBUTE TO MATT MARTIN

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, today I wish to recognize Matt Martin and congratulate him on his investiture as the U.S. attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina.

Matt earned his law degree and undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, both with the highest honors. Listed as one of North Carolina's "Super Lawyers," Matt has extensive legal experience. Matt was an associate at Covington & Burling here in DC before moving back to Raleigh, NC, where he became partner at Smith Anderson. Most recently, Matt worked as the associate general counsel for Duke Energy.

In addition to a sterling career in private practice, Matt exemplifies what it means to be a community servant. He has served on the board of directors for a number of philanthropic organizations, including the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, Meals on Wheels of Wake County, the Youth Life Foundation of the Triangle, and the Marbles Kids Museum. Additionally, he served as chairman of the Wake County Planning Board in Wake County, NC.

Finally, Matt is actively engaged in leading the next generation of attorneys. As a member of the North Carolina Bar Association's professionalism committee, Matt works on legal education programs and coaches law students and junior attorneys through internship programs and formal and informal mentoring.

It was an honor to join Senator BURR in recommending Matt Martin to President Trump. He is a dedicated professional who has extensive legal knowledge and expertise. In addition, he is widely respected in the legal profession and the North Carolina community at large. I know that Matt will excel in leading the U.S. attorney's office.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING MARY ANN RITTER ARNOLD

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, today I wish to remember the life and service of Mayor Mary Ann Ritter Arnold who served as mayor of Marked Tree, AR, in Poinsett County. Mayor Ritter passed away Thursday, December 21, at the age of 90.

Mary Ann was devoted to the town of Marked Tree and loved it as much as anybody. Her family has been a part of the town from its inception, and she would fondly remark about how she loved "this little ol' town" any chance she got.

Earlier in life, she studied at the University of Missouri, where she graduated in 1948 with a degree in home economics and fashion design. She married her husband, Sidney, and later, they moved back to Mary Ann's hometown of Marked Tree. In 1976, Mary

Ann became president of E. Ritter & Company, one of the most successful family owned businesses in Arkansas.

A trailblazer in many respects, Mary Ann was the first woman elected mayor of Marked Tree when she won the job in 2013. She gave back to the community in so many ways, both through the business she helped lead, as well as through her own personal engagement and involvement with her neighbors and fellow citizens.

Among her many notable accomplishments and activities, she was president of the Arkansas Telephone Association, president of the Arkansas Agricultural Council, was a longtime member and former president of the Marked Tree Rotary Club, served as a justice of the peace, and was on the Poinsett County Quorum Court for 22 years. She also served on the St. Francis Levee Board and with the Crowley's Ridge Girl Scout Council. In 2015, she was inducted into the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame.

A devoted wife and mother, an astute and successful businesswoman, and a dedicated public servant, Mayor Ritter is truly missed and admired. Her legacy lives on through her family and by way of the tremendous impact she had on so many in Marked Tree. I send my condolences to her loved ones and the community and join them in celebrating her remarkable life.●

TRIBUTE TO LINDA CLOUTIER-NAMDAR

• Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, today I would like to recognize and honor a remarkable Vermonter, Linda Cloutier-Namdar, who is the recipient of Vermont's 2018 Teacher of the Year Award.

Linda Cloutier-Namdar has taught ninth grade core at Essex High School since its inception, helping set a supportive tone during the critical transition period into high school. She is also a class adviser, serves on a number of school committees, partakes in school literacy initiatives, and is a member of the districtwide English Language Arts Vertical Team.

Linda's love of teaching extends outside of the classroom as well, through her work with the Flynn Theater for the Performing Arts as a teacher leader, the Essex Westford Education Association, and the Vermont Writing Collaborative.

The 2018 Teacher of the Year Award is a fitting testament to Linda's efforts in and out of the classroom and to her dedication to her students' academic success. She has had an enormously positive impact on countless young people in our State and has earned the respect of her colleagues, students, and community through her unwavering commitment to students' personal and intellectual growth.

I would like to offer Linda Cloutier-Namdar my warmest congratulations on this well-deserved award. Vermont is honored to have Linda represent our