

Smith	Udall	Warren
Stabenow	Van Hollen	Whitehouse
Tester	Warner	Wyden

Rounds	Shelby
Rubio	Sullivan
Sasse	Thune
Scott	Tillis

Toomey
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth	McCain
-----------	--------

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Hassan
Bennet	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Heitkamp
Booker	Hirono
Brown	Jones
Cantwell	Kaine
Cardin	King
Carper	Klobuchar
Casey	Leahy
Coons	Manchin
Cortez Masto	Markey
Donnelly	McCaskill
Durbin	Menendez
Feinstein	Merkley
Gillibrand	Murphy
Harris	Murray

Nelson
Peters
Reed
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Smith
Stabenow
Tester
Udall
Van Hollen
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth	McCain
-----------	--------

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 48.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill 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 JAMES BRIDENSTINE, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Johnny Isakson, James Lankford, Steve Daines, Mike Crapo, John Kennedy, John Barrasso, John Thune, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, James M. Inhofe, Richard Burr, Mike Rounds, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, Cory Gardner.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of JAMES BRIDENSTINE, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 78 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Daines	Isakson
Barrasso	Enzi	Johnson
Blunt	Ernst	Kennedy
Boozman	Fischer	Lankford
Burr	Flake	Lee
Capito	Gardner	McConnell
Cassidy	Graham	Moran
Collins	Grassley	Murkowski
Corker	Hatch	Paul
Cornyn	Heller	Perdue
Cotton	Hoeven	Portman
Crapo	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cruz	Inhofe	Roberts

Mr. Muniz graduated from the University of Virginia with high honors. He earned his law degree from Yale, where he was an editor of the Yale Law Journal. After law school, he served as a law clerk to two Federal judges, one on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and the other for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. In other words, he is exactly the kind of person that we hope would serve in public life.

I am delighted that he chose to accept the President's nomination and that we will have a chance this afternoon to confirm him.

As general counsel, he will have the important job of providing legal assistance to the Secretary concerning the programs and policies of the Department and making sure that these policies follow the law, which given his background, he has the experience to do.

He testified in his confirmation hearing that he is committed to advising the Secretary to follow the law as Congress wrote it.

I am glad we are having this vote today. I support his nomination. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas for his courtesy in allowing me to speak before him.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Carlos G. Muniz, of Florida, to be General Counsel, Department of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 1 hour of debate on the nomination, equally divided between the Senator from New York or her designee and the Senator from Tennessee or his designee.

The majority whip.

REMEMBERING BARBARA BUSH

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is with sadness that I come to the Senate floor to speak about former First Lady Barbara Bush on her passing yesterday. Of course, she was the wife of our 41st President and the mother of our 43rd President.

My wife Sandy and I have wonderful memories of Mrs. Bush flying around the State of Texas with us during my campaign for attorney general. That the former First Lady of the United States was so willing to embark on this long day of campaigning speaks to her generosity and her devotion to causes she believed in. With her, we always felt like we were flying in first class.

Many kind things have already been said about the First Lady's sharp wit and her sense of humor, her efforts to improve child literacy, and her faith and loyalty to family and friends; and all of those are true. I will not try to top those statements. I will simply say what all of us are feeling today: sad

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of JAMES BRIDENSTINE, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

NOMINATION OF CARLOS MUNIZ

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, later this afternoon, the Senate will finally vote to confirm Carlos Muniz—a well-qualified nominee—to be general counsel at the U.S. Department of Education.

I came to the floor last week to ask for this vote because I believe Mr. Muniz has been subject to unreasonable delays. For example, Mr. Muniz was nominated by the President on June 6th of last year—316 days ago. He has been pending on the floor since we reported him out of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee on October 18, 2017—182 days ago. In other words, he has been waiting for 6 months, following his approval by the relevant committee, for the Senate to consider this nomination. So it is time to confirm him. It is time to give Secretary DeVos an attorney and a general counsel.

Mr. Muniz has extensive experience as an attorney and in government. From January 2014 to February 2018, he was a partner at the law firm of McGuireWoods in Florida.

Prior to that, from January 2011 to 2014, he was Deputy Attorney General for the State of Florida and Chief of Staff to Attorney General Pam Bondi. There, he managed a 400-lawyer agency and oversaw all functions, including litigation, policy development, legislative affairs, and communications. He was also General Counsel for Florida's Department of Financial Services and Deputy General Counsel for Governor Jeb Bush.

and a little bit emptier as a nation, missing her honor, dignity, and respectability.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. President, later today I have the honor of meeting with the Director of the CIA, Mike Pompeo, who has been nominated by the President of the United States to become America's chief diplomat, the U.S. Secretary of State. I am looking forward to catching up with the Director about several global challenges and his priorities as the next Secretary of State.

What confounds me as I stand here today is that many of our Democratic colleagues have made his nomination a partisan wedge issue. Diplomacy, which is what the State Department does, is supposed to be about bringing people together, not driving them apart. But sowing discord is what some partisans seem content on doing when it comes to Director Pompeo's nomination, and it is a shame.

With the growing number of threats around the world, with heightened tension in North Korea and Syria, it is clear that we need an intelligent, qualified person in that position. It is time to put partisan politics aside and to confirm this nomination. There is no good reason why we shouldn't be able to do that. After all, the editorial board at the Washington Post argued persuasively that Director Pompeo should be confirmed. Fourteen Democrats supported him when the Senate voted last year to approve his nomination to lead the CIA.

Back then, our colleague, the senior Senator from Virginia, said that he believed Pompeo would be an "effective leader of the CIA at a time when the Agency is facing many challenges."

The junior Senator from Virginia added that Pompeo "has a keen understanding of the CIA's role" and was "knowledgeable about our Nation's cyber threats."

Those seem like pretty nice compliments and pretty accurate assessments to me.

But now some Democrats are saying they oppose Pompeo's nomination for the State Department. On what grounds? Is the CIA any less important a job than the State Department? To be for Director Pompeo as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and against him for Secretary of State seems to be unreconcilable.

Some have attempted to justify their opposition saying that he is somehow anti-diplomacy, but that claim is frankly false.

We just heard last night of the news of Director Pompeo's trip to North Korea. Two Democratic Senators from Connecticut praised the groundwork that was being laid, saying they were "glad" that preparations were being made for upcoming negotiations on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and that this is the sort of diplomatic effort on the part of Pompeo that is undoubtedly welcome.

I agree with those comments. It is important to make sure that we ex-

haust all efforts to a diplomatic resolution on the Korean Peninsula, rather than see an armed conflict with so many innocent lives lost and so much bloodshed. So I applaud Director Pompeo and this administration for taking the diplomatic avenue so seriously and making that trip, laying the groundwork for the President's negotiation with Kim Jong Un.

That raises the question: How possibly could Director Pompeo, in light of this news, be the warmongering, anti-diplomatic caricature that some Democrats have painted him to be? It is just not true. The Director's trip is not the only thing that established his diplomatic credibility.

I have spoken about Director Pompeo's credentials on several occasions in the past. As we know, he graduated first in his class at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he was an engineer. He served in the U.S. Army, earning the rank of captain, and he served as a cavalry officer in various parts of the world.

When he went to law school, he graduated at the top of his class and practiced at a prestigious law firm. Then he went into business, founding an aerospace company, and later ran for the House of Representatives from his home State in Kansas.

Those that know Mike know that "brash," "impulsive," and "reckless" are not words you would ever use to describe him. He is not somebody looking to pick a fight with dangerous regimes or to flex military muscle unnecessarily.

Actually, Director Pompeo is careful, thoughtful, and deliberate. He listens, he studies, and he gets along with people. Above all, he has the sort of experience we need in our next Secretary of State.

It is true that he has military experience, but that doesn't predispose him to military conflict as the best way to resolve our disputes with other countries—to the contrary. And he has much more than just that experience.

He served honorably on the House Intelligence Committee, and he has now served at the CIA for more than 1 year. So he has that vital intelligence background.

As I said, he worked in law and business. So he understands the role of civil society and public institutions and building the durable rule of law in countries unlike our own.

I hope our colleagues will remember these qualities in the days ahead, and I hope Director Pompeo will be confirmed on the floor in short order. It would be a grave mistake for this body to fail to confirm the next Secretary of State, particularly leading up to the important negotiations with regard to the nuclear weapons capacity of the North Korean regime. The likelihood that it could be resolved short of armed conflict should encourage all of us to continue to support those diplomatic efforts and to support Director Pompeo as the next diplomat in chief.

TAX REFORM

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to speak again about tax day, which, of course, was yesterday. I know so many Texans are saying: Thank goodness it is over.

We heard a collective groan across the country as people jumbled together all the paperwork and mailed their returns or delivered them to the IRS.

The good news is that the worst is behind us. As the majority leader wrote recently, there is "a silver lining—simply put, it is 'out with the old and in with the new.'"

Yesterday is the last time American families will have to file under the unfair, convoluted, and outdated Tax Code that Congress and the President got rid of a few months ago.

Unfortunately, none of our Democratic colleagues supported the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—none. All of them voted no in lockstep. Every single Democrat in the House and every single Democrat in the Senate voted to block tax cuts for working families. They voted against doubling the standard deduction. They voted against doubling the child tax credit. They voted to maintain the U.S. corporate rate as the highest business tax rate in the industrialized world—all to our detriment and all to contribute to slow economic growth and a lack of hope for so many people looking for work and hoping to pursue their dreams.

Well, some of our colleagues yesterday met on the stairs out in front on the Capitol, and they said that not only did they vote no when it came to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, but now they want to repeal those tax cuts. That is right. They came together unanimously and said: We want to raise your taxes, killing the nascent economic recovery we have seen, which has gotten people so excited and has caused consumer confidence to be at an all-time high.

We have seen what has happened to the stock market and to people's 401(k)s, pensions, and retirement savings. People have a spring in their step once more when it comes to their job prospects and bringing home more take-home pay.

Our colleagues across the aisle voted against a \$2,000 tax cut for a family of four making \$73,000. They simply have ignored the fact that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act doubled the standard deduction, making sure that for a married couple, their first \$24,000 of income earned was tax free. They ignored the fact that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act doubled the child tax credit from \$1,000 to \$2,000, allowing many more parents to claim it and helping working families.

Our Democratic colleagues who voted no ignore the fact that the law eliminates the individual mandate tax, which disproportionately hits low-income families. Worst of all, our colleagues who insist on voting no to

these reforms seem so driven by ideology and by a devotion to big government that they aren't actually listening to the American people.

Well, I have listened to my constituents, and every time I do, I learn something new. Every week I hear from Texans who explain how they are putting the new savings from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to good use.

One retired and disabled soldier named William Alderman says he lives on a fixed income and has seen it go up under the changes made to the Tax Code. He said he thinks the law will have "lasting impact," and he said "thank you." He said: "God bless Texas and America."

Another Texan, a retired Air Force colonel from Brownsville named David Teigen said the benefits sure felt like a lot more than just "crumbs" to him.

A third, Donnie Connell, from San Antonio, my hometown, said the tax law will result in close to \$4,000 worth of savings this year. Donnie is trying to make a better life for his family, and he called the reforms a "HUGE DEAL." When he said "HUGE DEAL," it was in all caps, I might add.

Our Democratic colleagues are so quick to dismiss or ignore normal, hard-working people like Donnie with the same old tired talking points and ideology because doing so is easier than actually doing the hard work of coming together on a bipartisan basis and passing legislation.

When they do this, they like to talk about corporations. According to their rationale, the 505 companies that have announced pay raises, bonuses, 401(k) match increases, cuts to utility rates, and other benefits aren't really helping the average worker; they are just somehow lining their own pockets. They seem to ignore that our old Tax Code ranked among the highest in the developed world and was an impediment to investment and the return of money earned abroad here to create new jobs and to build companies here so people could work and provide for their families and pursue their dreams. Instead, they say that stock buybacks, for example, which some companies have opted for, in part, reward corporate executives and well-off shareholders rather than workers.

The Senator from New York, the minority leader, has made those comments a number of times, which reflects a basic misunderstanding. Our colleague from Massachusetts has said that buybacks "create a sugar high for corporations." But none other than Warren Buffett—one of the most famous investors in the world and a Democrat—disagrees. He and others understand that it is oftentimes irresponsible for companies to sit on large amounts of cash. They need to put it to work for their shareholders, grow the business, improve stock values.

If companies buy back stock, shareholders can then go and invest the money in another company that might have had something better to do with

it, a company that has something greater to build or innovate and needs money to get the project off the ground. As one economist said, when it comes to buybacks, the money "doesn't go into a black hole. It goes into a financial market somewhere . . . [and then] a chain of events" leads to higher wages and higher productivity.

So as we hear and continue to spread the true stories about tax reform, let's remember men and women like Donnie Connell for whom the savings are literally a huge deal, and let's ignore the delusional, ideological arguments that have already been disproved. Let's keep finding ways to make the economy stronger and more dynamic, one characterized by more jobs, higher wages, and falling unemployment.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on the Muniz nomination occur at 4:30 p.m. today.

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

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote against the nomination of Carlos Muniz to be the Department of Education's general counsel.

The Department of Education's primary responsibility is to help schools educate our students and prepare them to be successful in life. A good education can open doors of opportunity for children who may not have thought that their dreams were possible, and a good education can lift millions of families out of poverty and into the middle class. That is certainly what a good education did for me and for my family.

As many working families are struggling today, we should be working to make sure every child can attend a good public school in their own neighborhood. We need to do more to ensure that every student who wants to attend college can afford it, graduate, and find a good-paying job and is not saddled with a mountain of debt. It is critical that every student, no matter what age, learn in a safe environment, free from discrimination, harassment, and violence.

This should be at the core of our Nation—that everyone has the right to a high-quality education, no matter where they live or how they learn or how much money their parents make.

As general counsel to the Department of Education, Mr. Muniz would be responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to Secretary DeVos. Her first year in office has shown how much she needs it.

Secretary DeVos continues to push her extreme privatization agenda even though millions of students, parents, and teachers have stood up and rejected it.

Despite bipartisan agreement in Congress on our Nation's K-12 law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, Secretary DeVos is approving State plans that do not comply with all of ESSA's guardrails—guardrails that were agreed to

by Republicans and Democrats in Congress to help ensure that no student falls through the cracks.

Secretary DeVos has rolled back protections for students and student loan borrowers, making it easier for predatory, for-profit colleges to take advantage of students.

Time and again, she has failed to uphold civil rights protections for students. She has tried to scale back the Office for Civil Rights, opened the doors for schools to once again discriminate against transgender students, and rolled back guidance for schools on how to investigate campus sexual assault. Especially in this moment when more and more women are coming forward and sharing their stories of harassment and assault, there is no excuse for those in power to attempt to sweep their stories under the rug. By rolling back this guidance, Secretary DeVos allowed schools to put the burden back on survivors. By making it harder for them to trust they will be believed, I am concerned that fewer women will come forward.

Mr. President, it is clear that Secretary DeVos needs an independent general counsel who will stand up to her when laws are being bent or broken. I am afraid Mr. Muniz has failed to convince me that is the kind of general counsel he would be.

He worked for a for-profit college company that preyed upon students and cheated them out of their education and their savings. He has a record of putting politics before students. He worked for the Florida attorney general, who came under fire for accepting a political donation from President Trump at the very time she decided against investigating Trump University—a sham university that defrauded countless students by promising them everything and leaving them with nothing.

Although Mr. Muniz and the Florida attorney general didn't stand up for students who were misled and defrauded by President Trump, many other States sued. Just last week—8 years after Trump University closed its doors—the \$25 million settlement the President agreed to pay to his victims was finalized, meaning some of those cheated by the President will now start seeing relief. However, Mr. Muniz's involvement in the Trump University case gives me great concern that at the Department of Education, he will once again not stand up for student loan borrowers defrauded by other predatory for-profit colleges.

I am afraid Mr. Muniz at the Department of Education will only be more of the same. For those reasons, I will be voting against his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

#### NOMINATION OF JAMES BRIDENSTINE

Mr. President, while I am here, I want to briefly comment on another nominee who is being considered today

by the Senate, and that is Representative BRIDENSTINE. Since he was nominated to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, I have been expressing very strong and very serious concerns, and I wanted to come to the floor today to once again call on my colleagues to reject this nomination and to call on President Trump to send us a nominee who is worthy of the great legacy and incredible potential of our civil space program.

My deep concerns with Representative BRIDENSTINE fall into two categories. The first is his fitness for leadership of an agency that is steeped in science, given his clear lack of understanding of basic scientific issues, and the second is his ability to lead an inclusive and forward-looking agency, given his history of hateful, demeaning, and divisive comments and positions.

First, let me talk about his fitness to lead this agency. NASA is an agency that is committed to science, exploration, technology, and innovation. Over the years, it has employed some of the most brilliant scientists in the world focused on the most cutting-edge research, with an eye toward exploring new frontiers, expanding human knowledge, and increasing our understanding of this world and beyond. It was this commitment to science and innovation that allowed NASA to catch up with the Russians and launch a satellite into space. It was this openness to innovation that allowed NASA to cast humanity's eyes with greater clarity than ever before far beyond our solar system with the launch of the Hubble telescope. It was this focus on innovation and exploration that allowed NASA to put a man on the Moon—12 of them, in fact. The list goes on.

Without a commitment to science, NASA would not have succeeded, and if that doesn't continue, it will fail. That is why I am very concerned that Representative BRIDENSTINE not only is not committed to science, he flat-out rejects clear scientific consensus. As I have said before, in a June 2013 speech he delivered on the floor of the House of Representatives, Representative BRIDENSTINE repeated the debunked claim that "global temperatures stopped rising 10 years ago," and a March 2013 tweet from him failed to recognize the difference between local weather conditions and the broader planetary climate. That is a basic scientific concept.

Those are just a couple of examples. This may be just one issue, but it is very telling. I believe that Representative BRIDENSTINE's failure to accept fundamental scientific truths about Earth's climate will make him an ill-suited and dangerous choice to lead an agency with science at its core.

Second is my concern about his ability to lead an inclusive and forward-looking agency, given his history of hateful, demeaning, and divisive comments and positions. I have noted this before, but it bears repeating.

Representative BRIDENSTINE has openly expressed his opposition to the rights of LGBTQ individuals, of immigrants, and of women. In May 2013, he gave a speech and suggested that LGBTQ people were immoral. He said: "Some of us in America still believe in the concept of sexual morality." In response to the Supreme Court's marriage equality ruling in 2013, he stated that he would keep fighting for "traditional marriage." Representative BRIDENSTINE has a history of supporting anti-Muslim groups and has consistently defended a number of President Trump's discriminatory policies on immigration, including the Muslim travel ban. He even defended President Trump's comments about sexually assaulting women, saying they were "locker room talk." He has gone on shows and stages to stand with bigots and racists—not to debate them but to agree with them. And that list goes on.

Representative BRIDENSTINE is not someone who should be put in charge of NASA's diverse workforce. In 2016, NASA announced that for the very first time, fully half of their new astronaut trainees were women. I mentioned before that NASA has sent 12 men to the Moon. Well, we may be on track for a woman to be the first American to plant her feet on Mars.

At a moment in our history where we want every student in this country—every one of them—to dream big dreams and to strive for high goals and explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and math, regardless of where they are from or whom they love or what color their skin is, sending someone like Representative BRIDENSTINE to lead our Nation's space agency would send the absolute wrong signal and move our country in the absolute wrong direction. So I will be voting against that nomination, and I will be strongly encouraging our colleagues to do so as well.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

(The remarks of Mr. MERKLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2708 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. MERKLEY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF JAMES BRIDENSTINE

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise to support the upcoming confirmation this week of my friend JIM BRIDENSTINE to be Administrator of NASA.

We are now in our second year without a Senate-confirmed Administrator

of NASA. Not only has that been bad for the United States, but it is also bad for the commercial space industry, NASA, and all of us who prioritize restoring and strengthening America's leadership in space. NASA needs a strong leader, and it will have that strong leader in JIM BRIDENSTINE.

I serve as the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee's Space Subcommittee, and I am proud and deeply gratified that President Trump chose to nominate Representative JIM BRIDENSTINE to lead NASA. I can think of very few people I know who are more inspirational than Jim. Unfortunately, throughout Representative BRIDENSTINE's confirmation process, we have seen cynical politicians attempting to malign his character, despite the fact that he has spent his entire adult life in public service.

JIM BRIDENSTINE is a veteran and a war hero. He is a man of deep character and deep integrity. Having served our Nation in combat as a fighter pilot, he earned the respect of the men and women who served under his command.

Representative BRIDENSTINE's combat missions included airborne battlefield command and control and tactical air control flights in support of the liberation of Iraq, controlling over 180 kill box interdiction and close-air support missions, resulting in the destruction of countless tanks, armored vehicles, and time-sensitive fixed targets.

Representative BRIDENSTINE later transitioned to the F/A-18 Hornet while on Active Duty, serving at the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center, TOPGUN command, where he flew both the E-2 and F28. There, he received fitness reports from his commanding officers, which rated him as "the number one Hawkeye pilot and weapons and tactic instructor" and "the most tactically skilled pilot in the E-2 community." That is a remarkable record, and it is one that has been followed by honorable and distinguished service in the U.S. Congress.

Throughout my time in the Senate, I have been blessed to meet with a number of astronauts. It is worth noting that quite a number of those astronauts at NASA have backgrounds very similar to that of Representative BRIDENSTINE. He will be able to lead them as one who has served in missions similar to the ones they have served in and are serving now. I have no doubt he will be an effective leader of NASA and will work to ensure the safety of the men and women who step forward to save our country; that he will work to lead NASA in a way to ensure that America continues to lead in space, and, in particular, that NASA and the commercial space sector, working hand in hand, will move forward to implement the bipartisan commitment this Congress has made that man will go back to space and go to Mars and that, in particular, the first foot that sets on the soil of Mars will be an American astronaut landing to explore that next frontier.

I urge my colleagues to put aside partisan politics. If this vote were on the merits, Representative BRIDENSTINE should be confirmed 100 to 0 on the merits. I urge my colleagues to come together so we can have a strong leader of NASA, an honorable war hero, and a leader who will lead space exploration going forward.

## ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. President, I also rise to join Israel and the Jewish people to celebrate Israel Independence Day.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel. On Friday, May 14, 1948, Israel's founding father, David Ben-Gurion, brought together members of the Jewish People's Council in the Tel Aviv Museum. By then, the Zionist movement to rebirth the Jewish state had been at work for decades.

Ben-Gurion stood underneath a portrait of the pioneer of that movement, Theodor Herzl, and described the historic right of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.

The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spirit, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

That writing had been recognized by the international community, he said, and declared the founding of the modern State of Israel. He also said:

We, members of the People's Council, representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist Movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel to be known as the State of Israel.

Eleven minutes after Ben-Gurion made his declaration, and over the objection of many of his advisers and the State Department, President Harry S. Truman courageously recognized the State of Israel. I am sorry it took us a full 11 minutes to do so.

Meanwhile, armies from five Arab States declared war and invaded, in an attempt to destroy the new state. Despite being outgunned and outnumbered, Israel would prevail.

The Israeli victory might not have happened without heroic soldiers who had recently returned from World War II, including Jewish Americans volunteering to go and help. Some volunteers provided badly needed weapons, others offered military experience, and some fought.

In 1951, then serving as Israel's first Prime Minister, Ben-Gurion established Israel's Memorial Day, which takes place the day before Israel Independence Day and which commemo-

rates those killed in the wars and the terror campaigns waged against Israel.

From Tuesday to Wednesday evening, Israel came to a complete standstill in honor of the 23,646 Israelis who have fallen in wars, and the 3,134 terrorist victims since 1860. I stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel in commemoration.

It has been seven decades since Prime Minister Ben-Gurion made his historic declaration of independence and President Truman gave his historic recognition, and I am proud to say that America continues to stand unshakably with our allies.

On December 6, 2017, President Trump rightly recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announced that the U.S. Embassy would be moving to Jerusalem, implementing the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 that was adopted overwhelmingly by Congress. I have long advocated and supported the United States to take these two actions which are required to rectify a historic injustice.

Jerusalem has been the eternal capital of the Jewish people for over 3,000 years and the capital of the Jewish state since its founding in 1948.

I recently introduced a resolution reaffirming the deep connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem and denouncing efforts at UNESCO that have attempted to rewrite historic truth and to erase from history undeniable facts. I am also proud my home State of Texas adopted legislation on Israel Independence Day last year to combat the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, the BDS movement. On May 14, 2018, exactly seven decades since President Truman recognized Israel, the United States will finally and formally recognize as much and open our Embassy in Jerusalem.

I, along with many millions across our Nation and across the world, look forward to that day, and we stand in alliance and solidarity with the people of Israel, celebrating the great friendship, the great national security alliance between two great nations.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

## REMEMBERING JOHN A. WILLIAMS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, the Senate is a great place. It is a great honor to be able to speak here, whether you are discussing your beliefs on an issue of major importance, honoring a friend, or, on rare occasions but all too often when you get to be my age, paying tribute to someone who has given so much and passed away.

Such happened in my State this past Monday, on the 16th of April, when John A. Williams died. He was 74 years old.

John Williams was a giant in every way in our State. He was a giant entrepreneur. He founded two great companies, one of them called Post Properties, the largest apartment REIT on the New York Stock Exchange. He started it in 1993 and built it to new heights.

Most recently, a few years ago, he started PAC, Preferred Apartment Communities, a REIT also, and he did the same with it—employing thousands of people, building thousands of units for housing in America.

He set the pace of housing in his career. I don't know how many people have noticed that in the suburbs of all major cities today, office parks and apartment complexes of any size are now some of the most beautifully landscaped places in the community. Thirty years ago, nobody planted a stick. Nobody planted a shrub. Nobody planted a flower.

John Williams became the largest importer of Holland bulbs in the United States of America. Every spring, tulips blossomed at Post Properties apartment buildings. In fact, he changed the advertising mode for apartments. Instead of calling them apartments, he called them apartment homes because he wanted his apartments and all the rental units to be looked upon by the people who lived there as their home. He sold that concept and built that concept and replicated it over and over, and it became the standard in Georgia. I have traveled the country, and it has become the standard all over the country in terms of apartment houses and landscaping for major commercial properties.

He was a great entrepreneur, building two great companies and helping thousands of other people in many other ways to build their companies.

He was a great father, a great husband, and a great family man. His wife Nancy is a wonderful "first lady" in our community. Parker, Sarah Brook, and Jay, his children, are all great contributors to our community. They all know how lucky they are to have had such a great father.

He was a great sportsman. When I say a great sportsman, I mean a great sportsman. He built Ranger, a replica of the 1937 America's Cup winner, one of the biggest yachts in the world, and sailed the world on that yacht and won races all around.

Also as a sportsman, he was a minority owner of the Atlanta Falcons. He invested with Arthur Blank in the Atlanta Falcons. They almost got to the Super Bowl—they got to the Super Bowl; they just couldn't finish the drill with the Patriots. One day we are going to figure out a way to do that, and I hope, in memory of John, we will be able to do it for him.

John was a community man. Who have you ever heard of in your lifetime who, in the same lifetime, was president of two different competing chambers of commerce, next door to each other? He was twice the president of

the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce. While running Post Properties and PAC communities, while doing all of the things he did with his family, while racing his boat and owning the Falcons, he built two great chambers of commerce and sought others to come to the communities where he was prospering and helped build their businesses. Then he became president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. The Atlanta and DeKalb County Chambers of Commerce are the one and two largest chambers in our State. Instead of fighting each other, he brought them together.

He was a builder, he was a giant, but also a broker of common interests. He found the good in every opportunity and tried to sell the good and forget about the bad. He tried to bring out the best in everybody. I never made a deal with John Williams or saw a deal that he had made—I never saw anybody leave the closing table who didn't feel good. His knack was to be sure that if you left the closing table and you had a check, you felt good about it, and if you had just written a check, you felt good about it. He wasn't a win-lose person, he was a win-win person, and that is why he was such a great businessman and such a great entrepreneur.

He was a great friend and a giant of a friend to me. I met him 50 years ago next month.

This may sound funny, but it is a great story. He worked for the Georgia Power Company, and I worked for a small real estate company called Northside Realty Associates. Our first two jobs—his with Georgia Power and mine with Northside—were to hold open the total electric house of the year in 1967. That meant that we drew the last straw, and every night, from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m., we held the houses open in hopes that someone would come to look at them. The electric utilities hoped someone would build a totally electric house. It was a marketing tool. It was the first time they had ever done it, and we enjoyed doing it and I got to know John.

I remember the nights when John talked about what he wanted to be, how he wanted to build a company, how he wanted to be an entrepreneur, how he wanted to be a real estate developer, and how he wanted to make things better. We got to be good friends. In fact, I sold him a 4-acre piece of land where he built the house he lived in for years before he built the home he was in today. I participated with him in another real estate transaction he did and helped him with some of the properties he put together. I always found him to be a win-win guy.

He was my friend, he was my supporter, and he was my confidante. He was also my greatest critic. Every politician in America should be lucky enough to have a John Williams, because John will tell you what you want to hear, but he tells you what you don't want to hear. When you are on the wrong track, he will straighten you out.

Sure, he could write checks all day long. But the Presiding Officer and I know that it is not just the checks that they write. It is the advice they give, and it is the passions they have. When you find somebody who has a passion for their family, a passion for building businesses, a passion for their community, and a passion for everything that is good about America, you have found somebody you want to keep close to you. For 50 years, I stayed close to John Williams.

When I got the news about John Williams before I boarded a plane on Monday to come up here, I started crying—that is how close he was to me—but so did everybody else I ran into that day or have talked to on the phone since being back home. Everybody misses John and was shocked by his going. But realizing the troubles and the difficulties that he had had in recent years—back surgeries and things of that nature—and realizing, like all of us do at that age, when you are 74, which I am, that you know time is running out. You just don't know how fast it is running out. But it is a good example of how you always want to be ready whenever that day comes and know the legacy you left was a better legacy than the one you inherited.

John was a man of modest means at his birth. When he graduated from high school in the public schools of Georgia and went to the Georgia Institute of Technology—better known as Georgia Tech—he graduated with debt and a modest means but with great values and great principles.

The story about the flowers was all because of his mom, who wanted to landscape everything and make it look pretty and beautiful—proof that it didn't take a lot of money to make things look good; it took a lot of heart.

I am sad today, and all of Georgia is sad today, and they will be even sadder on Monday when we say good-bye to John Williams. But all of us should hope and all of us should pray that all of us have the time in our lives to know somebody as good, as decent, as honorable, and as compassionate for their community and as a lover of their country as John A. Williams of Atlanta, GA, my good friend.

God bless you, John, and God bless the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

#### NOMINATION OF JAMES BRIDENSTINE

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I am here to join Ranking Member NELSON and my colleagues to voice my opposition to JAMES BRIDENSTINE, who has been nominated to be the next Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

NASA is an agency that has been at the center of our Nation's modern history and impacts the daily lives of millions of Americans. The world watched in awe as Neil Armstrong took that first step onto the surface of the Moon in July of 1969, wearing a NASA patch

on his spacesuit. Today, we marvel at photos of Pluto's surface, captured by NASA's New Horizons mission in July of 2015. From the closest to the farthest reaches of our own solar system, NASA is always there.

NASA is at a critical point in its history, and that is because the United States is poised to unleash the next great feat of human innovation as we look to unlock the true possibilities of space. To accomplish these goals, we need a solid foundation, and that starts and ends with the science conducted at NASA every single day. NASA's mission involves not just revealing far-away worlds but investigating the realities of our own. In order to truly do that, we need continued scientific research of the highest caliber.

The scientists working at NASA today are among the very best in the world. NASA, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, produces and analyzes the most robust data we have on our planet's changing climate. The OCO-3 program monitors Earth's atmospheric carbon levels. The CLARREO Pathfinder mission measures Earth's atmospheric heat. The Deep Space Climate Observatory satellite provides our scientists comprehensive data sets that are crucial to understanding the vast changes that are underway on our own planet this very second.

On NASA's website right now, there is a web page entitled "Scientific Consensus: Earth's Climate is Warming." On this web page, based on NASA's vast collection of data, it continues, "The impacts of climate change are already occurring. Sea levels are rising, and snow and ice cover is decreasing. . . . The warming climate likely will cause more floods, droughts and heat waves. The heat waves may get hotter, and hurricanes may get stronger." Those are NASA's words, and we know them to be true because science has proved it.

NASA's science is the gold standard. Its scientific work is crucial to our understanding the threat that climate change poses to our Nation, our economy, and the health of all Americans and people around the world. But Houston, we have a problem. NASA's science, NASA's missions, and American leadership will all be in serious jeopardy if JAMES BRIDENSTINE is confirmed to be the next Administrator of NASA. Under his leadership, NASA would come to stand for "not accepting scientific advice."

Congressman BRIDENSTINE's record is one of questioning climate change and undermining science. He has repeatedly questioned the scientific consensus and the threats of climate change. Before changing his website, it stated: "Global warming theories should not drive national energy policy without clearer evidence." Global warming isn't theory; it is based on science. Unfortunately, Mr. BRIDENSTINE's words do not reflect the accepted science behind climate change, including the very

science that NASA has been collecting and needs to continue to collect.

Under President Trump, we know that fear is rampant across the Federal Government among scientists. It is no surprise that the environmental and scientific communities across the country are asking that we vote down Congressman BRIDENSTINE's nomination based on his voting record and his clear denial of accepted science. If Mr. BRIDENSTINE is confirmed as the Administrator of NASA, he will bring that fear to its scientists at a time when we need them more than ever.

It is not only his views on science that make him unsuitable to lead NASA. NASA's workforce is comprised of more than 18,000 workers who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer. NASA has officially stated that "diversity and inclusion are integral to mission success." In a 2013 speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman BRIDENSTINE declared: "Marriage exists to bring a man and a woman together as husband and wife, to be a father and mother to children." He has stated repeatedly that he would support a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

Congressman BRIDENSTINE's personal views and voting record against people who identify as LGBTQ should immediately disqualify him from consideration for leading this diverse agency. NASA is an agency of inspiration, an agency that showcases the very best of American ideals: scientific integrity, innovation, diversity, fearlessness, resolve, and hope. Mr. BRIDENSTINE puts these ideals at risk and is not qualified to lead this agency.

I urge my colleagues to oppose his nomination. I urge a "no" vote.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### COMMEMORATING VAISAKHI

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to recognize and celebrate with my Sikh friends, my constituents, and friends from the Sikh community of Pennsylvania and beyond.

I start with the acknowledgment that my pronunciation of certain words may be off, and I hope I will be forgiven.

I am delighted to have so many wonderful representatives of the Sikh community here with us in Washington. I thank them. I thank Raj Singh and all of the members of the Sikh community of Pennsylvania who made this trip down to Washington, DC, to participate in a celebration for an important holi-

day and to raise awareness about the Sikh community.

Sikhism has been around for nearly 600 years and originated in the Punjab region of India in the 15th century. Today, there are about 30 million Sikhs who live in countries all around the world, making it one of the world's largest religions. Sikhism is rooted in the belief that every single person—every individual—regardless of race, gender, sex, or creed, is equal before God. Sikhism was introduced in the United States in the 19th century. Today, there are about 700,000 Sikhs who live in the United States, and a large number of Sikhs reside in Pennsylvania. In fact, there are several Sikh places of worship, known as gurdwara, and they are located throughout Pennsylvania—in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Allentown, and Erie.

In my many travels across Pennsylvania, I have had an opportunity to meet with and get to know hard-working Sikh constituents. I can tell you they are close-knit, vibrant communities, deeply committed to their families—fully American while, at the same time, preserving some wonderful and often very old traditions. The Sikhs constitute a part of the rich, cultural fabric of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and I am grateful to them for what they add to my State.

A few years back, I was proud to join the American Sikh Congressional Caucus. As a member of this caucus, we honor and recognize the Sikh holiday of Vaisakhi. The holiday itself is usually celebrated on the first day of the month of Vaisakhi, which just occurred last week on Saturday, April 14. Vaisakhi is a special occasion for Sikhs to remember the founding in 1699 of the Khalsa Panth. The Khalsa were a fellowship of devout "saint-soldier" Sikhs who played an important role in shaping the religion's history and its identity.

The holiday also recognizes the spring harvest. Sikhs recognize this important holiday with parades, with dancing, with singing, and with other festivities, as well as with volunteer service, especially volunteering meals to those in need and other forms of community service.

This year, the Sikh Coordination Committee East Coast, with the support of the U.S. Congressional Sikh Caucus, has organized a parade in Washington on May 19 to commemorate Vaisakhi as National Sikh Day. The theme of the parade is the Sikh identity, the Sikh culture, the Sikh way of life, and thousands of Sikhs from all over the United States will be participating.

I am proud of the Sikh communities of Pennsylvania, and I wish the Sikh community much luck in the parade and a very joyous Vaisakhi.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### REMEMBERING BARBARA BUSH

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, yesterday, our country lost a bright, caring, independent lady, and my wife, Honey, and I lost a good friend. Barbara Bush set a wonderful example as mom, wife, First Lady, and advocate for adult literacy. We express to the Bush family our sympathy and great respect for the life of Barbara Bush.

Jon Meacham wrote the biography of George H.W. Bush, Barbara Bush's husband, to great acclaim. He had access to the diaries of President Bush and Barbara Bush that was almost unparalleled in any Presidential biographer's experience. So it was a plain and unvarnished biography that told us a lot about those two individuals. I thought a better name for Jon Meacham's book—it was named "Destiny and Power," and it must have been properly named because it sold a lot—would be "The Last Gentleman." If I were to make a really accurate suggestion about the title for the book, I would call it "The Last Gentleman and His Lady" or maybe "The Last Gentleman and His Very Independent Lady" because Barbara Bush was a very independent lady.

I remember it was 1991. It was a sunny day, and we were walking on the south lawn of the White House. I was the Education Secretary, and I was walking with the President and Mrs. Bush to the announcement of his GI Bill for Kids, which was a school choice program for low-income children. As we walked along, Barbara Bush turned to President Bush and said, "George, you've got on the wrong pants." He had a suit coat on from one suit, and he had pants on from another suit. So she said to the President "You go on back in and change clothes, and Lamar and I will wait here for you," which we did and he did.

On another occasion, President Bush invited my wife and me to join Barbara and the President at Ford's theater. Of course, the President traveled with great security in a big car. As the protocol goes, he got out first, and as she was about to get out, she said, "I'll get the door, George."

On still another occasion, I was sitting next to Barbara and George Bush, and the President was called on to make some remarks. He leaned over to his wife and said, "Barbara, what should I talk about?" And she whispered very loudly, "About five minutes, George."

Barbara Bush was quite a woman. She said what she thought. When the second one of her sons decided to run for President, she was reported to have said, "We've had enough Bushes."

When I ran for President in 1999 against her other son, I made what I thought—certainly by today's standards—some very mild comments disagreeing about something, and I heard

from Barbara Bush about what I had said about her son, George W. Bush.

Not many of us think how difficult it must be to be the spouse of a President of the United States with all that one goes through, but think how much harder it must also be to be the mother of a President of the United States and the mother of another distinguished son who was Governor of a large State and who ran for President of the United States. Barbara Bush was the anchor of her family, and a very successful and remarkable family it was.

I was Education Secretary for President Bush in 1991 when the National Literacy Act was enacted. Let's use Barbara's own words to define the event. She wrote in her memoir, "I must say I got more credit than I deserve."

I don't agree with that, but she continued:

I heard that George was going to give the pen to me, but before he could, Senator Simon spoke up and said, "That pen ought to go to Barbara." I donated it to the George Bush Presidential Library Center. In the end, however it's not pens and pictures that count; it's the National Literacy Act that really counts. It was the first piece of legislation—and to date, the only one—ever enacted specifically for literacy with the goal of ensuring that every American adult acquires the basic literacy skills necessary to achieve the greatest possible satisfaction professionally and personally. But even more than that, the act seeks to strengthen our nation by giving us more productive workers and informed citizens.

In his biography of President George H.W. Bush, John Meacham wrote of a "generational controversy," in his words, that Barbara Bush endured in May of 1990. She was invited to Wellesley College to speak at graduation and receive an honorary degree, but she was being criticized by Wellesley's young women, as President Bush put in his own diary—these are President Bush's words—"because she hasn't made it on her own—she's where she is because she's her husband's wife. What's wrong with the fact that she's a good mother," President Bush wrote in his diary, "a good wife, great volunteer, great leader for literacy and other fine causes? Nothing. But to listen to these elitist kids there is."

Meacham writes:

Mrs. Bush invited [Mrs.] Gorbachev along with her to Wellesley. There, [she] confronted the issues of work versus family and the role of women head-on, delivering a well-received commencement address.

She put the audience at ease early on by saying: One day, I am sure that someone in this audience will grow up to become a spouse of the President of the United States, and I wish him well.

Meacham continues:

"Maybe we should adjust faster, maybe we should adjust slower," she told the graduates. "But whatever the era, whatever the times, one thing will never change: Fathers and mothers, if you have children—they must come first. You must read to your children, and you must hug your children, and you must love your children. Your success as a family, our success as a society depends

not on what happens in the White House, but on what happens inside your house."

Barbara Bush said that to the Wellesley graduates in 1990.

The country is expressing to the Bush family, as I am trying to today, our great respect for Barbara Bush's life.

President Bush, George H.W. Bush, has sent a response to those of us who sent our condolences, and I would like to close with the President's own words about his wife Barbara. This is what George H.W. Bush said:

I always knew Barbara was the most beloved woman in the world, and in fact I used to tease her that I had a complex about that fact. But the truth is the outpouring of love and friendship being directed at The Enforcer is lifting us all up. We have faith she is in heaven, and we know life will go on—as she would have it. So cross the Bushes off your worry list.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays on the pending nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Muniz nomination?

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 79 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Gardner	Nelson
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heitkamp	Risch
Capito	Heller	Roberts
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rounds
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Corker	Inhofe	Sasse
Cornyn	Isakson	Scott
Cotton	Johnson	Shelby
Crapo	Jones	Sullivan
Cruz	Kennedy	Thune
Daines	Lankford	Tillis
Donnelly	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	Manchin	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fischer	Moran	
Flake	Murkowski	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Klobuchar
Bennet	Durbin	Leahy
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Markey
Booker	Gillibrand	McCaskill
Brown	Harris	Menendez
Cantwell	Hassan	Merkley
Cardin	Heinrich	Murphy
Carper	Hirono	Murray
Casey	Kaine	Peters
Coons	King	Reed

Sanders	Stabenow	Warren
Schatz	Tester	Whitehouse
Schumer	Udall	Wyden
Shaheen	Van Hollen	
Smith	Warner	

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth McCain

The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, over the past 24 hours we have learned of a high-level meeting between Director Pompeo—Mike Pompeo, the President's nominee to become Secretary of State—and Kim Jong Un, the leader—the tyrant leader—of North Korea, who has threatened to use nuclear weapons not only against our allies but against the United States and has a growing capability in his efforts to do just that.

We have also seen incredible partisan obstruction threatened on his nomination. The absurd levels of partisanship in this Chamber are a stain on our institution. We see it at every level of nominations, from ambassadorships to commissions to boards. Now we see it at the level of the Secretary of State, a position that will be instrumental in denuclearizing the North Korean regime.

Director Pompeo had his confirmation hearing last week before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We now know that his testimony at this committee hearing took place after he had visited Kim Jong Un, and in this committee hearing, he made it very clear that our goal remains the complete and verifiable irreversible denuclearization. That is the stated goal, confirmed by Director Pompeo: the complete and verifiable irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. Yet we now have people threatening to stop this nomination at a critical time when we face a nuclear threat that is the greatest this country has seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would decide to deny this country its top State Department diplomat.

Let me describe what some of our colleagues have said who have claimed now that they are going to vote against Mike Pompeo for Secretary of State but who, just a few months back, voted to confirm Mike Pompeo. One of my colleagues who is voting against Director Pompeo for Secretary of State has admitted that Director Pompeo has been a "solid manager" of the CIA, saying:

I voted for him to head the CIA and don't wish I had that vote back. I think he has a background in intel and has been a solid manager there.