of Indiana. He is joining Hoosiers to celebrate the new jobs and prosperity our Republican agenda is delivering to communities in Indiana and all over the country. After years of Democratic policies that made life harder for job creators, the United States of America is officially open for business once again.

Surveys show that since President Trump and this Republican Congress were elected, the percentage of small and independent employers feeling confident about expanding their businesses has nearly tripled. The amount that employers spend on wages, salaries, and benefits for American workers grew more in 2017 than in any calendar year of the Obama administration. The number of Americans receiving unemployment benefits is the lowest—the lowest—since 1973. Let me say that again. The number of Americans receiving unemployment benefits is the lowest it has been since 1973. Richard Nixon was in the White House back then. Republicans have focused like a laser on getting Washington out of the way. More job opportunities, higher pay, and greater prosperity are already reaching middle-class Americans.

My colleague Senator YOUNG has been sharing some of the great news that awaits the President when he gets to Indiana. He has heard from constituents like Donald from Noblesville. Donald said:

I don't consider myself rich, but applying next year's tax changes to this year's income, I'll pay over $1,000 less in taxes next year. Everyone benefits with the new tax cuts.

A Bloomington resident named Cathy said this about her husband's tax reform bonus:

We have never had this happen. It was much appreciated.

First Farmers Bank & Trust is raising wages, writing employee bonus checks, and investing more in development for the communities it serves, with 34 branches all across Indiana.

There are stories like these being written all over the country—largely because Republicans rolled back job-killing regulations and cut taxes significantly for working families and for small businesses.

Oddly, our Democratic colleagues can't bring themselves to admit this is a good thing. Even when the facts show our growing economy is making life better for middle-class Americans, they try to shrug off the facts and fall back on the same old class warfare rhetoric. Even when people like Donald and Cathy explain how tax reform is helping them, Democrats scoff at their household finances, saying multi-thousand-dollar tax cuts are just ''crumbs.''

Crumbs? Maybe in New York or San Francisco, but in Kentucky, where I come from, working families don't see their tax cuts, bonuses, and pay raises as crumbs. I have a hunch it is the same in Indiana.

It is curious that only one of Indiana's Senators voted to give Hoosiers these tax cuts and these new job opportunities. Indiana's senior Senator voted in lockstep with Democratic leaders to block tax reform from ever taking effect. Instead of working with Republicans and the President to keep the new prosperity coming, he and his colleagues have chosen to obstruct and resist on nearly every subject.

Just the other day, the Democratic leader in the House declared she plans to campaign on repealing the tax reform—that is, the Democratic leader in the U.S. House—campaign on repealing the tax reform. Tax cuts versus tax hikes, that is about as clear a contrast as you can imagine. Fortunately, for Hoosiers, Kentuckians, and all the other communities that are finally growing again after years of atrophy, Republicans will defend the American people's tax cuts and defend their new jobs.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael B. Brennan, of Wisconsin, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, later today the Senate will vote on the confirmation of Michael Brennan to the Seventh Circuit over the objections of one of his home-State Senators, Ms. BALDWIN, who has not returned a blue slip on his nomination.

It is an abject breach of senatorial courtesy that both parties have long respected. In fact, the seat Mr. Brennan will fill on the Seventh Circuit has been held open for 6 years by the senior Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON, via the same process, the blue slip. When Barack Obama was President and when PATRICK LEAHY was chairman of the Judiciary Committee, we Democrats obeyed the blue slip, and it led that seat to be vacant for 6 years. Now that the shoe is on the other foot, the Republican majority will ignore the blue-slip rights of the Democratic Senator even though it fervently believes that we ought to listen to the rights of the Republican Senator from Wisconsin. The actions of the Republican leader erode one of the few remaining customs in the Senate that forces consultation and consensus on judicial nominations.

In the grand scheme of things, the vote may seem to some of my colleagues on the other side like a small one—one judge for one circuit court. But in truth, the vote on Mr. Brennan is a death by a thousand cuts of the grand tradition of bipartisanship and comity in the U.S. Senate. I know all too well that there is plenty of blame to go around on both sides of the aisle, but if we don't take a step back now, the Senate will soon become a rubberstamp or graveyard for Presidential nominees, rendering our advice and consent nearly meaningless.

I understand the pressure on the leader from the hard right. They want judges who are not bipartisan. They wanted a judge in this case who did not go through a bipartisan judicial panel, composed of both Democrats and Republicans, who have always sent us judges from Wisconsin. Two were sent, but, instead, Brennan, who couldn't get through the panel, was sent.

This is so wrong. This goes beyond what we have seen done before. When Leader MCCONNELL changed the rules on the Supreme Court—which we didn't—many on the other side, I understand, said: Well, that is tit for tat because Democrats changed the rules on the lower courts. But the blue-slip tradition has always been obeyed. We didn't change that. We could have. We could have stuffed through our nominees with no Republican support, but we didn't.

I hope for the sake of comity that one or two of my Republican colleagues will stand up and vote against Mr. Brennan's nomination, not because of his beliefs—which they may agree with, for all I know—but for the sake of the Senate, for the grand tradition of the Senate, for the right afforded to every Senator to consult on judges from their State, minority or majority, and most of all, for the traditions that have held this body together for more than two centuries and separated it from the more partisan Chamber on the other end of the Capitol.

RELEASE OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN NORTH KOREA

Madam President, on another matter—North Korea—early this morning, the three American hostages who were being held in North Korea were returned home. It was great to see them come home, back in America, back with their families.

It is a wonderful thing, but the exultation by the President and others of the greatness of North Korea doing this evades me. We can't be fooled into giving the North Korean regime credit for returning Americans who never should have been detained in the first place. American citizens are not diplomatic bargaining chips. While we celebrate the return of the three Americans, for the sake of their freedom and their families, we should not feel as if we need to give Kim Jong Un anything in return.

It is troubling to hear President Trump say that Kim Jong Un treated the Americans excellently. Kim Jong Un is a dictator. He capriciously detained American citizens, robbed them of their freedom, and didn't let them go home to their families. Their release should not be exalted; it should be expected. It is no great accomplishment of Kim Jong Un to do this.

When the President does this, he weakens American foreign policy and puts Americans at risk around the world. If our adversaries look at what the President has said in reaction to Kim Jong Un, why shouldn't they detain American citizens and get a huge pat on the back when they release them?

It is like so many of the President's foreign policy actions—quick, not thought through, related to show and to ego. If our adversaries from Iran to China who already wrongfully hold Americans think they can get something—praise, standing, diplomatic concessions—by unlawfully detaining Americans in their country, you can bet they will try. These are bad people, the leaders of these dictatorships like Iran.

So I caution the administration. We are all rooting for diplomacy to succeed on the Korean Peninsula, but we cannot sacrifice the safety of American citizens around the world in exchange for an illusory veneer of peace. I worry that this President, in his eagerness to get acclaim and a photo op, will strike a quick and bad deal, not a strong and lasting one. President Trump and Secretary Pompeo must seek strong, verifiable, enduring commitments from North Korea to disarm.

NUCLEAR DEAL WITH IRAN

Madam President, now on oil prices and Iran, earlier this week the President exited the Iran deal. We all know that. Even as someone who opposed the deal—which I did because I thought it was flawed; I thought President Obama and Secretary Kerry should have waited longer and given more time for the sanctions to bite, and we would have gotten a stronger and better deal. I still believe that. But once the deal is in place, it seems to me that we should not be focused on undoing this deal. We don't want a nuclear Iran. That is one of the reasons I opposed the deal. But there is no report from anybody, including our own intelligence, that Iran is violating that part of the deal.

In the meantime, Iran is doing some very bad things. It is not a country we should admire or respect in any way—the leadership, anyway. They are trying to develop an ICBM. They are creating havoc with the Houthis in Yemen. Worst of all, in my opinion, the greatest immediate danger is that there are Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops in Syria, right near Israel's border, and hundreds, if not thousands, of deadly rockets that Iran gives to Hezbollah, a militant terrorist organization. They placed them in Lebanon where they have hegemony in certain areas. That is the greatest danger to Israel. That is the greatest danger to peace in the Middle East. Down the road, it will be the greatest danger to the United States, at least in the next several years.

What we should be doing is not undoing this deal right now but creating new sanctions and telling Iran that if they continue giving missiles to Hezbollah, if they continue sending troops to Iran, if they continue their activities with the Houthis and the placing of additional missiles, we will put on additional sanctions. That is the smartest thing to do, and that is what is most in need now, given America's and the world's security needs. But we need our allies to do it.

Sanctions don't work when they are unilateral. We learned that in South Africa years ago with apartheid. Only when the sanctions became broad and enacted by many nations did they have an effect. It is the same situation here.

The United States, by pulling out of the agreement and getting our European allies' noses way out of joint, makes it far harder to enact new sanctions on what I perceive to be the greatest dangers we face.

There is one other thing Americans should realize about pulling out of the Iran deal, and that is it affects gasoline prices across the country. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, gas prices will rise over the summer, and the average American family can expect to pay $200 more this driving season than last. The Iran deal is certainly some part of that. For middle-class families, $200 this summer is more than the tax break they will get, if they get one at all.

When President Trump makes rash decisions without consideration of the consequences and no coherent strategy, which is what has happened with Iran, the American people pay the price in many different ways: security, the declining ability to find and go after the greatest dangers we face with Iran, and money out of our own pocketbooks with an increase in gasoline prices. One of the ways Americans will pay for President Trump's unthought-out decision to exit the Iran deal will be at the gas pump this summer.

So again, to repeat, I didn't think the deal was a good deal; still, I am proud I voted no. But at this time, in this place, and for so many reasons, pulling out precipitously without our allies involved does not achieve anything, does not achieve the goals we need to achieve, and hurts Americans in different ways.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

Madam President, finally, on prescription drugs, tomorrow the President will give a speech on another important topic in American healthcare: the high cost of prescription drug prices. He is right to give that speech. Americans suffer from the highest prescription drug costs in the developed world. On average, Americans pay over $850 a year on prescription drugs, compared to an average of $400 across 19 other industrialized nations. Remember, that is on average.

If you are sick and need one specific new drug on the market for your condition, you could be paying in the tens of thousands of dollars per month for that drug. Sometimes that new drug isn't much different from one already on the market and hasn't been proven to be more effective. Sometimes pharmaceutical companies intentionally corner the market on the drug and raise prices by absurd percentages. We saw that with Mr. Shkreli, and there is no cop on the beat to stop the Shkrelis of the world. It is outrageous, venal, and hurts seniors, the infirm, and regular middle-class families every day.

We ought to do something about it. That is why Democrats make lowering the cost of prescription drugs a central pillar of our Better Deal agenda. We propose that there should be greater transparency from companies when they are proposing to increase the prices of their drugs. We propose allowing the government to negotiate for lower drug prices and to establish an office that would go after the most egregious companies and actors who are raising prices on drugs for no reason—price-gouging enforcement. If we were in the majority, these policies would be our top priorities.

Hopefully, President Trump will get on board. In fact, I agree with a lot of what President Trump has already said on the issue. He said that the drug companies are ''getting away with murder'' and in the State of the Union Address he said:

> One of my greatest priorities is to reduce the price of prescription drugs. Prices will come down.

President Trump's rhetoric focuses on a problem that we have to address, and we hope sincerely that tomorrow he will follow through on that rhetoric with a tough and detailed plan to achieve what we both wish to achieve. But so far, President Trump has taken little action to downgrade the price of prescription drugs. He installed a former top executive of a pharmaceutical company, Alex Azar, to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Now, 6 months before the election, without consulting Democrats or Republicans on the Hill, he will give a speech tomorrow on his plan to bring down the cost of prescription drugs.

We welcome the newfound attention. We sincerely hope the President outlines a clear, strong plan in detail

about how to tackle this incredible problem. Another ''all hat and no cattle'' speech will not get the job done. More rhetoric, more half measures will not move the needle.

We need to do something bold and effective to bring down the outrageous cost of prescription drugs, and we Democrats have a good, strong proposal. We hope he will embrace it.

I yield the floor.

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. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, let me just say, as a personal matter, this is the first time I have seen you presiding in the Senate. It is a nice sight, and I welcome you.

I am here today to talk about the eroding and perhaps even vanishing tradition that we refer to in the Senate as the blue slip. People don't necessarily know what a blue slip is, but there has been a tradition with respect to U.S. attorneys, local U.S. district judges, U.S. marshals, and the seats on the U.S. circuit courts of appeals that are by tradition associated with a particular State. With respect to all of those nominations, there has been a tradition that they require the approval of the home State Senators. The mechanism for that approval is called a blue slip, and there actually is a blue slip.

The tradition in the Senate Judiciary Committee that was very rigorously enforced most recently by Chairman LEAHY, when he was chairman, is that a nominee for one of those offices does not get a hearing and cannot proceed without the blue slip of the home State Senators. I commend the ranking member on the Judiciary Committee, Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN, on the great work she has done on the minority report she led that describes the history of the blue slip and the extent to which what we are doing today is a break with that tradition.

What provokes this is the nomination of Michael Brennan to proceed without a blue slip having been returned by his home State Senator, Ms. BALDWIN. Obviously this signals a disrespect to the local Senators with respect to the office for which they heretofore had a blue slip. It also represents a very significant shift of power in Washington from this body, from this Chamber, to the Oval Office, which is a little bit unusual. Politics come and politics go, but it is rare for a political body like the Senate to willingly and willfully emasculate itself to some degree and transfer all of that power down to the executive branch and to the Oval Office. I think there is a quite significant price to be paid for this choice.

Representing Rhode Island, we are on the First Circuit Court of Appeals. There is one seat—we are not a very big State; we have just one seat—on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, more properly, that is denominated as the Rhode Island seat. It is now occupied by a terrific judge, the Honorable Rogeriee Thompson, whom Senator REED and I had a very significant role in getting appointed to that position. Should she step down, that vacancy would ordinarily be seen as the Rhode Island seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, and we would expect that we would be consulted and that our blue slips would be honored with respect to a nominee the President—whichever President—wished to push through.

Without divulging too many confidences, I will say that there was some considerable back-and-forth with the Obama administration in order for Senator REED and me to get the assurances we needed that judges we approved of would be appointed.

What I can't figure out is how the tradition of circuit courts of appeals seats having an affiliation with a particular State survives this decision to stop honoring blue slips for circuit courts of appeals. Every single Senator in this Chamber represents a State that lays claim to a certain seat—or a certain number of seats for the big States—on our circuit courts of appeals, but the only thing that undergirds that is the blue slip. The notion that there is a Rhode Island seat on the First Circuit or a Texas seat on the Fifth Circuit or New York seats on the Second Circuit or California seats on the Ninth Circuit or an Alaska seat on the Ninth Circuit doesn't exist in the Constitution. It doesn't exist in law. It exists by virtue of traditions of the Senate, and the only tool that gives that tradition any teeth at all is the blue slip.

So what happens if we, on a categorical basis, decide that circuit court of appeals nominees are no longer subject to the home State blue slip?

(Mr. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)

At that point, there is no method for assuring that there is any home State affiliation for that seat whatsoever. A future President could choose to put a New York judge, a Tennessee judge, or an Alaska judge into the so-called Rhode Island seat on the First Circuit. Contrarily, if a so-called Alaska seat on the Ninth Circuit opened up, a future President could put a Rhode Islander into that seat because the only mechanism preventing that from happening is the fact that we honor each other's blue slip. That is the only mechanism that protects this long tradition that the seats on the U.S. circuit courts of appeals are associated with particular home States.

So in this mad rush to get circuit judges confirmed—a rush that has completely overwhelmed this body and that has just completely stampeded the tradition of the blue slip—one of the prices that we will pay is that there is no longer any mechanism to enforce that any seat on any circuit court of appeals in this country has any association with any State.

I have been joined by my distinguished colleague from Massachusetts on the floor. Massachusetts is a bigger State than Rhode Island. Massachusetts has several seats that the Massachusetts delegation would claim as the Massachusetts seats on the First Circuit if and when an opening should occur in those seats. But with no blue slip, how does that stay a Massachusetts seat? How do we have any voice in this whatsoever if there is no blue slip?

We could easily end up in a situation in which all of the circuit courts of appeals have essentially been nationalized. I think there are a great number of lawyers who would more than happily pull up stakes and travel to another location. The distinguished Presiding Officer from Alaska and I have had conversations about the enormous reach of the Ninth Circuit. That already takes quite a lot of traveling. For a lawyer to have the distinction of being able to be a U.S. court of appeals judge—let's say that I have to pull up stakes and move from Texas to Rhode Island—there are plenty of lawyers who would do that.

I urge my colleagues—as we undo this blue slip—to think about where this road ends, because a few years from now, if there is a President of a different party and there are circuit court nominees who come up, our Republican colleagues who have supported the abandonment of the blue slip will have no objection and no complaint—no legitimate objection and no legitimate complaint—if seats that are nominally the Alaska seat, the Massachusetts seat, the Rhode Island seat on the circuit get simply given to somebody else. There is no mechanism to prevent that if we don't honor the blue slip. That entire tradition falls right behind the collapse of the blue slip for the circuit courts of appeals.

Of course, it is a massive transfer of power from this body to the Oval Office, which is obviously fine with our Republican friends now, given the identity of the person who is in the Oval Office, but that is not forever. Changes like this are forever. So we need to think this through.

I will close by saying this. Why is it that we would behave in such a peculiar way with respect to the institution that we love and serve, as to basically disable ourselves with respect to local control over circuit court of appeals nominees and transfer that entire power down to the Oval Office? Why would we do that? That is peculiar behavior.

When you look to the heavens and you see peculiar behavior from heavenly bodies, you look for an explanation. One of the reasons we know that dark stars and black holes exist is because they create peculiar behavior

in the heavenly bodies around them. What might be the dark star that is causing the peculiar behavior of the Senate in willfully disabling its own power and authority with respect to nominations for circuit courts of appeals? What could explain the otherwise inexplicable dismantling of our own tradition and our own authority in this area?

I submit that there is a $17.9 million donation that was brought to bear on the nomination of Judge Garland—the obstruction of that nomination—and the subsequent nomination of Judge Gorsuch from one donor. One anonymous donor put nearly $18 million into an effort to manipulate that process. That is not what has gone wrong with the Courts of Appeals, but it is a signal of powerful political interests out there seeking control over judicial nominees. For what other reason would an individual donor anonymously spend nearly $18 million? That is just one donor. There is plenty of anonymous money flowing into operations that seek to get specific types of people into robes.

My concern is that it is the power of special interests that is the dark star that is causing the Senate to undergo this deformation of its traditions—this relinquishment of our individual power as Senators and our group power as a branch of government.

It is special interest power that is driving this. There are special interests, such as the gun lobby, that would like to be able to go into a court and know that they have a judge who is predisposed in their favor. There are special interests, such as anti-choice groups, that would like to go into court and know that they have a judge who is predisposed in their favor. The actual very dark money forces that are meddling in our politics are desperate to show up in court when the question of dark money is litigated and have a judge who they know is predisposed in their favor.

There are business interests that seek to disable, diminish, and hobble courts and juries, and provide people home cooking arbitration alternatives to their constitutional right to go to court and to face a jury of their peers. They are very interested in seeing to it that when they appear in court on those issues, they have a judge who they believe is predisposed in their interests.

I cannot think of another reason why the Senate, as an institution, after all this time, would unilaterally disable itself, would unilaterally emasculate itself with respect to the role of the selection of our circuit court of appeals nominees.

I think this is a day that we will come to regret because that first step to get Judge Brennan confirmed may seem very attractive and appealing to a great many of my colleagues, but once you have crossed that Rubicon with that first step, there is no path that I can see that protects the right of individual Senators to assert an interest in a specific seat or a number of seats on the circuit courts of appeals.

I think we have more or less taken an irrevocable step toward nationalizing the appointments of all circuit court of appeals nominees, and we will look back on this day and say: What fools we were.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking my colleague from Rhode Island for both his powerful analysis of the influence of money on the selection of our judicial nominees and also for his point about the blue slip and the implications of what this means for an independent judiciary.

He has been a strong voice on this for a long time, and I think his speech on it was extraordinary and something that I hope everyone listens to and pays attention to.

We are facing an unprecedented attack on our courts. This week, once again, Senator MCCONNELL has scheduled confirmation votes on a slate of extremist judicial court nominees—nominees who have demonstrated that they are not committed to the principles of equal justice under law. In this administration, Senate Republicans have been working at breakneck speed to jam our courts with pro-corporate, narrowminded elitists who will tilt the scales of justice in favor of the rich and powerful and against everyone else. They are willing to bend and break and change every rule in the book to do it.

Their latest strategy is to ignore the blue slip. For over a century, home-State Senators have played a critical role in the judicial confirmation process by using something called a blue slip to determine whether a judicial nomination should move forward. The Senate Judiciary Committee has historically refused to move forward on a nomination without a blue slip from both home-State Senators. In fact, during the Obama administration, Senate Republicans insisted on maintaining that rule, refusing to move forward on any judicial nominee who did not secure blue slips from both home State Senators. They even stretched the rule beyond all reasonable bounds to stop fairminded, mainstream nominees from being confirmed. But now that Donald Trump is in the White House, Republicans have changed their tune. In order to force extremist nominees onto our courts, they are willing to toss the blue slip right out the window.

Michael Brennan, President Trump's nominee to serve on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, is just the latest example. Even though Mr. Brennan did not receive a blue slip from both home-State Senators, Senate Republicans moved forward on his nomination. Perhaps the ultimate irony is that when President Obama nominated another candidate to fill this very same seat, Mr. Brennan penned a strong defense of Senator JOHNSON's decision to withhold his blue slip. Now that the shoe is on the other foot, those principles have magically disappeared.

Let's be clear here. There are plenty of reasons for any Senator to be concerned about Mr. Brennan's fitness to serve on the Federal bench. I will just mention a few.

Mr. Brennan has mocked millions of hard-working women who have faced sexism and obstacles to advancement.

He has dismissed the idea of a glass ceiling.

Mr. Brennan has defended a Wisconsin law that added unnecessary barriers to women who were seeking access to abortion, even in the case of rape or incest.

Mr. Brennan supports criminal sentencing policies that slap low-level offenders with long jail sentences and exacerbate the problem of mass incarceration in America.

And it gets worse. Mr. Brennan believes that it is A-OK for judges to refuse to follow binding court precedent when the judge just thinks it is incorrect. Now, that is extreme.

But Senate Republicans have shown that they just don't care. They are willing to do whatever it takes to hand over our courts to moneyed interests.

NOMINATION OF THOMAS FARR

There are many other radical nominees who are also in line. I want to take some time to talk about one of them, but I think it is important to explain just what is at stake here.

In 2015, I was honored to join thousands of marchers to commemorate the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. On that chilly March morning 53 years ago, hundreds of nonviolent voting rights advocates, including many poor and rural African Americans who had been systemically shut out of the political process, joined together to march 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery to demand equal access to their constitutional right to vote. As they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the marchers, including my friend Congressman JOHN LEWIS, came face-to-face with a wall of State troopers armed with billy clubs. The troopers had one message for the marchers: Turn back. Don't fight this fight. It is not worth it.

Fully aware that they were putting their lives on the line, the protesters decided it was worth it. They held their ground. As the protesters fell to their knees to pray, they were brutally attacked by the State troopers.

As television footage and pictures of the brutality that day ricocheted across America, the country was forced to grapple with an ugly truth: In a country that is supposed to be a beacon of democracy, many citizens had systematically been stripped of the fundamental right to vote.

The march set in motion the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965—a landmark law that banned racially discriminatory voting practices. I wish I could say the fight for voting rights ended that day—the day President

Johnson signed that law—but it didn't. Even today, powerful forces combine to strip Americans of their lawful right to vote. States have passed restrictive voter ID laws, purged voting rolls, limited opportunities to register, and erected other barriers to the political process, all with the same goal—to make sure that people who wouldn't vote for them wouldn't get a chance to vote at all.

Federal courts have been on the frontlines of that battle. Citizens have sought justice by asking the courts to strike down laws that make it harder for people of color, low-income people, the elderly, disabled, or others to vote. The judges who sit on those courts have one duty—to uphold equal justice under law.

The Senate must determine whether Federal judicial nominees are prepared to meet that obligation. Thomas Farr, the nominee for the Eastern District of North Carolina, clearly fails that test. Instead of standing up for the rights of all people to vote, Mr. Farr has been the go-to lawyer for powerful interests who have worked to stop people of color and marginalized groups from exercising their right to vote.

Among the most appalling parts of Mr. Farr's resume is his work for Jesse Helms, the former U.S. Senator and shameless bigot. Helms made his views on civil rights and equal treatment clear. He opposed renewal of the Voting Rights Act. He led opposition to commemorate the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., as a holiday. He called LGBTQ individuals ''disgusting, weak, and morally sick wretches.'' He supported the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Senator Helms led some of the most blatantly racist political campaigns in modern history. For example, to drive down Black turnout, his campaign mailed over 100,000 postcards to homes in predominantly Black neighborhoods threatening that those individuals could be criminally prosecuted if they voted. Helms's most infamous campaign ad was a television spot that showed White hands crumpling up a job application, with an announcer saying that the person needed that job, but it was taken by a minority.

These ugly appeals to racism were a core part of Helms's campaign, and Mr. Farr was right by his side, serving as Helms's campaign lawyer. But Mr. Farr's troubling record doesn't end there. In recent years, he has played a central role in resisting anti-discrimination efforts in North Carolina.

In 2013, the Supreme Court dismantled a key part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act in its Shelby County v. Holder ruling, making it easier for States to enact discriminatory voter laws. After Shelby County, North Carolina's Republican-led legislature wasted no time in restricting voting rights, searching for ways to make it harder for African Americans in the State to vote.

North Carolina legislators requested data about voting practices broken down by race, identified laws that helped African Americans vote, and went about gutting each one of them. In just 3 legislative days, the State legislature rammed through an omnibus voter suppression bill. The bill included a voter ID provision that specifically excluded IDs that African Americans disproportionately used. It eliminated the first week of early voting. It ended same-day registration. It eliminated out-of-precinct voting. It stopped preregistration for 16- and 17-years-olds. These were all—every one of them—practices that helped boost African-American voter turnout.

The bill was challenged in court by faith groups, by civil rights groups, and by the U.S. Government. Where was Thomas Farr? Where was he? He was on the other side, defending the discriminatory law. The Federal appeals court rejected Mr. Farr's argument. It concluded that the North Carolina Legislature had intentionally discriminated in passing its voting laws, targeting African Americans with ''surgical precision.''

That case represents just one of many times Mr. Farr has defended powerful interests who discriminate against and harass those who are less powerful. I will mention a few more.

When North Carolina redrew its district lines in a way that diluted the votes of African Americans, Mr. Farr defended it. When Avis, a car rental company, was sued for discriminating against African-American customers, Mr. Farr was there once again defending discrimination.

Time after time, Mr. Farr has defended racial discrimination. He has also defended discrimination against workers, discrimination against women, and discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. For example, Mr. Farr defended an employer who created a toxic work environment for female employees, instructing them to wear skirts to attract clients, commenting that women belonged in the home instead of the workplace, and telling one woman that he would help her pick up her panties from the floor. He defended the discriminatory North Carolina law that prevents transgender men and women from using the bathrooms that reflect their gender identity.

Anyone paying attention to judicial nominations knows that powerful interests are working to capture our courts. They have been having a field day in this administration. I have come before this Chamber on many occasions to oppose radical, pro-corporate nominees handpicked by those powerful interests. Thomas Farr is one of those radical, pro-corporate nominees. He is one of them, but he has set himself apart even from the many terrible nominees the Trump administration has forced through the Senate because Mr. Farr has directly worked to dismantle one of the most precious and fundamental rights of our democracy—the right to vote.

In a State that is over one-fifth African American, the Eastern District of North Carolina has never had an African-American Federal district judge—not a single one. The Senate held up two thoroughly qualified African-American women for this same seat—two women who would have sailed through the Senate if they had gotten a vote, but they were held up so that a Republican President could fill the vacancy. And now President Trump has nominated someone who has spent much of his career defending discrimination against African Americans. Talk about rubbing salt in the wound.

Equal justice under the law is a cornerstone of American democracy, but that promise cannot be fully realized if we allow individuals like Mr. Farr to secure lifetime positions on our courts. Someone who thinks that States should be able to make it harder for Americans to vote based on the color of their skin or the likelihood that they will vote for a particular political party should be automatically disqualified from a Federal judgeship.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on Mr. Farr's nomination. The integrity of our courts is at stake.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1551

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise today to fulfill a promise to continue to advocate for a solution that will address the critical issues of securing the border and protecting young immigrants impacted by an uncertain future—those who are part of the DACA Program.

Last month, I again offered legislation to extend the DACA Program for 3 years and to provide 3 years of increased funding for border security—a so-called 3-for-3 program. I think this is a way we can reach a compromise on this issue that will do two important things—one, provide much needed funding to secure the border. Being from a border State like Arizona, I can certainly understand that. We need a more secure border. We need additional resources, including barriers, technology, and manpower, and this legislation would provide that. At the same time, it would provide protection for those kids—numbering about 800,000 and many more eligible as well—who face an uncertain future because we haven't been able to extend or to make permanent this program.

By the way, these are kids who were brought across the border through no fault of their own when their average median age, I think, was about 6 years old. It is not their fault that they were brought here this way. For all intents and purposes, they are American—everything without the papers. Many of them have now graduated from college and face an uncertain future in the job market. Many of them are in school looking to continue that education. Many of them serve in our military. We have to do right by them and do what is good for the country, as well, and I think this legislation would do that.

Unfortunately, some of my colleagues have repeatedly chosen to block the measure. I am the first to admit that this solution is far from perfect. We need to do a lot of other things with immigration reform. We need to address long-term labor needs, as well as a more permanent solution for those who are here illegally who weren't brought across the border as children. But this is a compromise that can pass.

Given the action over the last couple of days in the House, where there was a group of House Members—Republicans and Democrats—looking to force that body to finally take action on this, it is again time to have the Senate make another attempt. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 300, H.R. 1551. I further ask that the Flake substitute amendment at the desk be considered agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, a couple of weeks ago, I started the first of what will be a weekly speech to bring attention to what I think is a travesty of justice occurring in Turkey.

I wish to speak about a pastor, a Presbyterian minister from North Carolina, who has lived in Turkey for about 20 years and who has done his very best to respect the laws of Turkey and to bring the Word to people who want to hear it.

Unfortunately, he has been swept up in a coup. He has been swept up in the emergency powers of Turkey. He has been in prison for 580 days.

I went to Turkey about 6 weeks ago to visit Pastor Brunson in prison because I heard that after being in prison for about a year and a half—and for much of that time in a cell that is designed for 8 people and had 21 people in it—he was then indicted. I heard he was afraid the American people were going to read that 62-page bogus indictment, with some of the flimsiest charges we could imagine—charges that wouldn't keep someone overnight in an American jail—that have kept him in prison for 580 days. About 2 months ago, he was indicted, but he said to his wife and friends, he was afraid the American people would read that indictment and turn their backs on him.

So it was important for me to travel over there and tell him face-to-face in that Turkish prison that is the last thing that is going to happen. We are going to continue to work every day he is in prison. I am going to come to the Senate floor, and other Members are, every week for as long as he is illegally in prison, and we are going to make sure the American people and the Turkish people know what is going on and send a very clear message to the leaders of Turkey that this is an unacceptable way to deal with a NATO ally. It is a horrible way to deal with somebody who is only guilty of standing up for a church in Izmir.

It is a small church. Actually, the seating area down below, maybe if it was packed, could hold 150 people. It opens up to a street. It is in a residential area. They let anybody come in. They open their windows. They actually talk with the police about security matters so they know what is going on, but it is just a small church, and all he was trying to do is provide aid and comfort for those who want to seek it.

Every once in a while, he would go to Syria or other parts of Turkey to try to provide aid and comfort to those who need it, Syrian refugees or anyone else. Part of the charges are actually related to that. If you provide aid and comfort, food, to a Kurdish person, in Turkey today, you may be considered a terrorist or a coup plotter. That is what he has been charged with.

In my second trip, I spent 12 hours in a Turkish courtroom to hear every word of the testimony from secret witnesses—whom Pastor Brunson didn't get to face—about the horrible things he did. One of the charges was that one night a witness saw for 4 hours a light on in one of the rooms in the church. Here is the problem with that charge: That is the room. It doesn't have a window. So unless they had x-ray vision, there is no possible way they could have observed that, but it became weighty testimony in the courtroom.

It is a kangaroo court. I want to continue to say, if you don't know ''kangaroo court,'' there is the definition. It is just a trumped-up theater that bears no resemblance to anything you would ever see in American jurisprudence.

Let me give another idea of the level of absurdity of the charges. Pastor Brunson's daughter posted how much she enjoyed a meal with friends. It turns out the prosecutor thought this particular meal was something that was enjoyed by people who participated in the Gulen movement, and therefore her father must somehow be associated with the coup attempt. These are actually serious discussions going on in a Turkish courtroom.

I wasn't able to make it back to Turkey on Monday. I understand that basically the same thing happened, but it got worse. On Monday, when Pastor Brunson and his defense attorney had asked that 10 other witnesses testify on his behalf, they weren't allowed to testify because they were suspects. They weren't convicted. They apparently have been charged or considered to be charged, but in Turkish jurisprudence standards, to be suspect is enough to prevent you from actually helping defend someone who is on trial for a 35-year sentence.

He has been in prison for 580 days. He has lost 50 pounds. He is struggling to keep his wits about him, and he and his wife are doing an extraordinary job. This is a miscarriage of justice.

I believe, today, as I said in a speech 2 weeks ago, and I will say it again: Don't travel to Turkey right now. If you are thinking about making a trip to Turkey, make sure you don't eat this meal—and, for goodness' sake, if you do, don't post how much you enjoyed it because you may be considered a Gulenist. Don't take a picture with friendly people on the street whose ethnic origins you don't know because they may have you associated with somebody who is suspected of plotting a coup. That is the reality of Turkey today.

I can't guarantee the safety of North Carolinians because I have yet to actually speak with people in their state department and their foreign ministry who actually understand the absurdity of what is going on in Turkey today.

I hope we can get back to a better position, but until this man is released, and others who have been falsely charged are treated fairly, I am going to have to come to the Senate floor each and every week we are in session to make sure the American people know what is going on in Turkey and to make absolutely certain that people like Pastor Brunson who are in prison know they have people in the U.S. Senate.

In fact, 66 Senate Members have signed a letter—that is a big lift in the U.S. Senate to get any 66 Members to agree on something—to send a very clear message that we are watching, and there will be consequences if this man is wrongfully imprisoned and could potentially spend the rest of his life in Turkey.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my friend and colleague from Oklahoma.

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

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, with that approval, I will pass it over and thank Senator LANKFORD for his hard work—he has been aware of this issue from day one—and collaboration on it.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I thank Senator TILLIS and the Presiding Officer for acknowledging our time to have this conversation. This is a serious conversation because this is a NATO ally.

Dr. Andrew Brunson has been in Turkey 24 years. For 23 of these years, he served as a pastor in humanitarian work. He took care of providing food and clothing and pastoral ministry for anyone who would come, just like anyone does.

That has not been an issue in Turkey for decades because Turkey has been very open to all faiths, all religions, and they have prided themselves on

being a nation that recognizes all faiths, all backgrounds, and all religions and ethnicity. At least that was the old Turkey. Literally, under Dr. Brunson's feet, Turkey shifted from where they were to where we don't recognize them anymore as a NATO ally.

In October of 2016, Dr. Brunson was called by the police department there. Assuming it was an immigration issue, he and his wife went because they had gone multiple times to the police department to renew their visa and keep everything up to date. They had a great relationship with the local police department, with local individuals, and with all the authorities in the area because they had been there for two decades and had developed great friendships.

So they went to check in, but this time, instead just checking in again for an immigration issue, they took them into custody, without any charges, and held them for a year—with no charges—then, eventually, presented these trumped-up charges which they have laid out that are absolutely absurd.

How a Christian minister is somehow cooperating with a Muslim in a coup in Turkey is absurd on its face. All of the crazy accusations from secret witnesses who would appear by video with their faces blurred out, making accusations that they had seen or they had heard—allowing no one to actually ask them questions is absurd. Just as absurd is not allowing Dr. Brunson to bring any witnesses in his defense.

There have now been two hearings that have been just this style: Dr. Brunson not allowed to bring anyone to speak on his behalf; all of these trumped-up witnesses who come with blurred-out faces—this secret testimony that they can present—to come back and present something they would consider evidence that we would never allow in any court, and, quite frankly, no one would take seriously these accusations.

In 2016, after Dr. Brunson had been in jail for a few weeks, I went to Turkey and visited with the Minister of Justice there. The Minister of Justice at that time said: We have some information. We are going to work this out. We are going to allow the process to go through the court system, but we will rapidly go through this process. Now, a year and a half later, we are finding out there never was any evidence, there never was any issue—and we are still dealing with an American being held hostage by a NATO ally.

I thought I would never say this sentence, but I would like to see Turkey follow the example of North Korea and release the American hostages they are holding. Now, when Turkey—a NATO ally—is behind North Korea in how they are handling humanitarian issues, Turkey has moved to a very bad spot. It is not a place they need to stay.

Turkey has been a friend and an ally—we work together against terrorism; we work together on economics—but I join Senator TILLIS in the statement he just made: I discourage anyone I speak to, to do any business in Turkey or to travel to Turkey at this point. If you are doing business in Turkey, you cannot guarantee the safety of your employees any longer; if you are traveling to Turkey, you cannot be guaranteed safety anymore. Because of the emergency powers that are currently being used in their legal system, they can sweep up anyone for any accusation and hold them for any length of time. That is not just theory; that is being proven by a pastor being held for a year and a half in Turkey with false charges. I highly recommend no one does business in Turkey at this moment, just for the safety of your employees and the people you would work with.

Now, Turkey has not just done this. They have also turned toward Russia, pursuing Russia for their air defense systems. As a NATO ally, that is unheard of, to say they are going to have NATO equipment, but then they are also going to go to Russia. That shows the turning of President Erdogan and the leadership of the country.

Congress is not going to just sit back on this and should not. Senator SHAHEEN and I have already put language out for the foreign ops bill in Appropriations which would specifically identify those individuals—the judges in the court, the officials who are holding Pastor Brunson, the officials in the city jail and in their national government who are specifically holding those individuals—to apply sanctions directly to the individuals who are holding an American pastor hostage.

Senator SHAHEEN, Senator TILLIS, and I have already put forward a piece of legislation blocking Turkey from maintaining or purchasing the F–35. They are a NATO ally, and they should have access to that, but they are not acting like a NATO ally. We don't know where they are going, and it would be a mistake for the United States to give our best technology—somewhere that we don't know where it is going to go and how it is going to be used in the future.

Just this week, the House released their National Defense Authorization Act. In the base text of the NDAA coming from the House is a provision which would block all defense sales to Turkey until we get more information about what is happening in the future and what direction Turkey is going. That is a reasonable precaution to take in a nation that is rapidly shifting away from democracy, a free court, free speech, and freedom of religion. They are losing humanitarian values. We should address that and respond to that, and we are.

It is not just what we might do; it is what we are doing currently to try to respond to this issue. The State Department continues to apply diplomatic pressure, but we have moved past the time when diplomatic pressure needs to be applied. It is time to apply economic pressure and pressure on how our partnership will work long term.

We want our ally back—the Turkey we used to know, that we cooperated with, and maintained a long-term friendship with. We would love to maintain that long-term friendship with an ally that has strongly stood with us, and we have stood with them, but we do not recognize what Turkey is anymore.

A good first step with them would be to follow the lead of North Korea and release our hostages out of their jails.

Mr. President, I yield back.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I thank Senator LANKFORD.

I went to Turkey when I was speaker of the house in North Carolina and led a delegation there about 7 years ago, spent 9 days, met with business leaders, and met with President Erdogan. I came away with a great deal of optimism—as a matter of fact, so much optimism, I hosted a delegation from the mayor of Kayseri, who is now a Minister in the Turkish Government, to talk about how North Carolina and Turkey could build stronger economic ties. We both have textile and furniture industries. It looked like a great opportunity, but, as Senator LANKFORD said, the Turkey of today bears no resemblance to the Turkey I visited about 7 years ago, to the Turkey I visited just a few weeks ago.

I would like to be talking about how we help Turkey take the fight to terrorist organizations threatening their homeland. I would like to work more with Turkey, as we have this week, to identify ISIS leaders, detain them, and make that region safer.

I would like to be a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee—and sit right next to Senator SULLIVAN—fighting for additional NDAA provisions that underscore our commitment to our NATO ally in Turkey, but now I am at a fork in the road, and right now I only have one position to take; that is, to put Turkey on notice for their bad actions as a NATO ally and for their bad actions toward American nationals in the country of Turkey.

So I am with Senator LANKFORD, Senator SHAHEEN, and other Senators. When we do our markup on the national defense authorization, instead of talking about how we strengthen our relationship for their part in manufacturing the Joint Strike Fighter and what is the timeline to actually have our NATO ally have Joint Strike Fighters, F–35s, within their military base, now I have to start talking about whether they should have it at all. I have to start talking about what are the implications of a Russian missile defense system in a NATO country, with all the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets that come with it. I have to start talking about what the future of our relationship is with a nation that is, for the first time in NATO history, holding American hostages—a NATO ally. I have to take

things in a different direction. It is my responsibility, as the co-lead of the Senate NATO observer group, as the Senator of a State who has had a citizen in prison for 580 days. I have no choice.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the time today. I will be back next week, and I will be back every week until we see justice served for Pastor Brunson.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

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

Mr. WYDEN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 89 Ex.]

YEAS—49

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

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Heitkamp	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Murphy	Whitehouse
Harris	Murray	Wyden
Hassan	Nelson	
Heinrich	Peters	

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Duckworth	McCain
Coons	Graham	

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.

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 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 Joel M. Carson III, of New Mexico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Johnny Isakson, James Lankford, Steve Daines, Ben Sasse, Mike Crapo, John Kennedy, John Barrasso, 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 Joel M. Carson III, of New Mexico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 71, nays 24, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 90 Ex.]

YEAS—71

Alexander	Flake	McConnell
Barrasso	Gardner	Moran
Bennet	Grassley	Murkowski
Blunt	Hassan	Murphy
Boozman	Hatch	Nelson
Burr	Heinrich	Paul
Capito	Heitkamp	Perdue
Carper	Heller	Portman
Cassidy	Hoeven	Risch
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Roberts
Corker	Inhofe	Rounds
Cornyn	Isakson	Rubio
Cotton	Johnson	Sasse
Crapo	Jones	Schatz
Cruz	Kaine	Schumer
Daines	Kennedy	Scott
Donnelly	King	Shaheen
Durbin	Lankford	Shelby
Enzi	Leahy	Sullivan
Ernst	Lee	Tester
Feinstein	Manchin	Thune
Fischer	McCaskill	Tillis
Toomey	Udall	Wicker
	Warner	Young

NAYS—24

Baldwin	Harris	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Klobuchar	Smith
Cantwell	Markey	Stabenow
Cardin	Menendez	Van Hollen
Casey	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Duckworth	McCain
Coons	Graham	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 71, the nays are 24.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Joel M. Carson III, of New Mexico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to return to a theme that I have been addressing the last few days, and that is the nomination of Ms. Gina Haspel to be Director of the CIA.

Yesterday, the entire country—indeed, the entire world—saw Ms. Haspel's performance before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Speaking for myself, I could not have been more impressed, and taking an informal poll among others, I think many people felt the same way.

It is a tough requirement of her confirmation process for somebody who has spent 33 years working for the CIA in some of the most obscure—and unknown to the rest of us—spots around the world to have to come and answer questions about her career, much of which happens to be classified information.

We had an open session and then a classified hearing where she and we on the committee could protect the sources and methods and alliances we have around the world that help us collect intelligence for our policymakers and help to keep our country safe. As expected, she faced intense rounds of questioning, as I said, both in an open session and behind closed doors. I believe she did so with patience, courtesy, and poise.

She articulated her view on a number of topics, of course. She defended her record against a series of false accusations and said repeatedly what those of us who have supported her already knew. She believes that U.S. Government actions must be held to a strict moral standard. If confirmed, she would not obey an order she believed to be unlawful, and in her new role, she would not restart interrogation programs inside the CIA.

I want to highlight three developments that I believe lend credence to many of Ms. Haspel's statements during yesterday's hearing. First are the