

born to an addicted mother, and they have to be taken through withdrawal as a baby. These little babies you could hold in the palm of your hand are having to go through withdrawal.

They told me that the foster care systems in their States are overwhelmed; mine is, in Ohio. We have more kids under State supervision and in foster care than ever. We can't find foster families fast enough because so many of the parents are unable to take care of the kids. There are more grandparents and great-grandparents than ever having to step forward and take care of these kids. It is affecting our communities in so many ways.

The STOP Act alone isn't going to solve all of these problems. We get that. We have passed legislation around here in the last year and a half to increase prevention and education and to increase treatment and longer term recovery. That is very important, and we need to do more of it. We have new legislation to take that to the next level.

But combating this crisis at its source by making it harder for drugs to enter our country is certainly a step we can, and should, take. It is only common sense. At the very least, it would reduce supply and help to drive up the cost of this drug. One of our problems is that the drug is powerful, but it is also relatively inexpensive.

We have an opportunity with the STOP Act to make a real difference for families in every single State represented in this Chamber. If you are not already a cosponsor, I hope you will join us in this effort. If you are a cosponsor and you support this, I hope you will talk to your leadership, both sides of the aisle.

Let's get this to the floor. Let's get a vote. Let's ensure we are doing everything we possibly can to stop this poison.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 542.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert Earl Wier, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Robert Earl Wier, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, John Kennedy, Johnny Isakson, Jerry Moran, Cory Gardner, John Cornyn, Thom Tillis, James E. Risch, Pat Roberts, David Perdue, Mike Rounds, John Thune, Roy Blunt, Richard Burr, Tom Cotton, Jeff Flake.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 587.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Fernando Rodriguez, Jr., of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Fernando Rodriguez, Jr., of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

Mitch McConnell, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Thom Tillis, Orrin G. Hatch, Roy Blunt, Mike Rounds, John Hoeven, Richard Burr, John Thune, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, John Barrasso, Johnny Isakson, Steve Daines, Chuck Grassley.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 625.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Annemarie Carney Axon, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Annemarie Carney Axon, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, John Kennedy, Richard Burr, Mike Lee, David Perdue, Steve Daines, James Lankford, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham, Patrick J. Toomey, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, James E. Risch.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

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

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

#### VA MISSION BILL AND MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, a lot of our colleagues have been coming down to the floor today and had come down yesterday to talk about two things that are actually very connected. The first is the VA MISSION bill, which we just passed, that is going to significantly transform how we treat our veterans and how we make sure our vets are getting the care they have earned and deserve. Also, appropriately, as that bill has just passed the Senate and is heading to the President's desk, we are talking about Memorial Day and the Memorial Day

weekend that is fast approaching—a very important, sacred time for our country and, certainly, for my State, the great State of Alaska.

What I would like to do is to talk a little bit about the bill and then reflect a little bit more on the importance of Memorial Day as we move forward into this weekend.

One of the things we all do is, certainly, with regard to legislation like this is to look at the national implications. We also look at how our own constituents will be impacted and make sure their interests are served when there is broader, national legislation that we have been working on for months. Many of us had been working on this bill for almost a year. The Presiding Officer and I are on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, so we were very focused on it.

In my State, we proudly claim more veterans per capita than in any State in the country, but we also have unique challenges. Alaska is a very, very big place. With regard to enabling our veterans to get the healthcare they need and the services they need from the VA, it can be a challenge. So one of the things that we worked hard on was to make sure that if a veteran lives in a big State in a very rural part of America, they will still get the benefits they have earned as a veteran.

There are a number of things in the VA MISSION Act, which we just passed, that focus on the unique elements of Alaska. I will give a couple of examples that are now in the legislation that will be signed by the President in a couple days.

The bill requires access to community care—non-VA care—where the VA does not operate a full-service facility in the State. Well, there is no full-service VA facility in Alaska. So what this enables our veterans to do is to get care from other medical service providers, particularly our veterans who are in some of the more rural parts of the State.

It has a specific Alaska fee schedule for the reimbursement of providers because healthcare costs are structurally so much higher in my State, as are transportation costs. There is a fee schedule that the VA uses in this bill just for Alaska. It continues to allow the VA to have Tribal sharing agreements with members of Tribal organizations that, again, have a very far reach and provide excellent care to so many Alaskans, both Natives and non-Natives.

By the way, Alaska Natives serve at higher rates in the U.S. military than any other ethnic group in the country. There is incredible patriotism from those constituents in my State, whom we are all very proud of.

The bill creates standards for timely payments to community care providers. One of the big challenges we had in the VA was that non-VA medical providers provide care for veterans, and then the VA does not reimburse them for months. This causes

enormous challenges, including collection agencies calling the very veterans who got the care and services. This is completely unacceptable. We are trying to change that, and this bill will do it.

Finally, a bill that I had with Senator TESTER from Montana is called the Serving Our Rural Veterans Act, which is now part of the broader bill. What this does is create VA residency programs in States such as Alaska and Montana that don't have medical schools and where there are very few residency programs. Studies show that after doctors do their residency, well over 50 percent of the doctors stay in the States where they do residency programs. That is a great advantage if you have a lot of residency programs, but we don't. What this bill does is set up a pilot program by the VA to work with Native health organizations, DOD health organizations, IHS health organizations, and establish residency programs through the VA so that we can get doctors in Alaska who will do service for our veterans and then stay.

Those are just a few examples of how this bill helps not only veterans nationwide but certainly helps the veterans in my State. Of course, the implementation of this bill is going to be key. One thing that concerns me, to be frank, is that right now there is very little leadership at the highest levels of the VA. As a matter of fact, we have had four secretaries in 4 years. We need to start putting established, secure leaders in the VA to start implementing this important piece of legislation. We will continue the oversight role in Congress, but this is a good start.

More importantly, this bill also sends a strong message to our veterans throughout the country that the Senators in this body, Democrats and Republicans, have focused on them and have their backs, as do Americans all across the Nation.

This is what I want to talk about for the remainder of my remarks this afternoon, on the eve of Memorial Day weekend—looking at and reflecting for a little bit on the Senate floor about the ebb and flow of how we, as Americans, have treated our veterans and memorialized their service because that is what this weekend is all about.

We know and we continue always to lionize and celebrate our World War II veterans and the over 400,000 Americans who gave their lives defending freedom. That is who we are thinking about this weekend. During World War II, from ticker tape parades when they came home to Honor Flights that continue today, this “greatest generation” of Americans, both living and dead, has received the respect and honor that all of our veterans should have, and with good reason. Their sacrifice saved the world from authoritarian takeover, whether it was from Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan. So we always had the “greatest generation” up here in terms of how we view them, how we memori-

alize them—the veterans, those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Then, just 5 years later came the Korean war, and the respect we gave to the tens of thousands of veterans returning home from Korea started to decline, something akin to benign neglect. Many in American society during that time seemed as if they didn't want to be bothered by what was going on in Korea or didn't want to think about the tens of thousands who were killed in action, the over 8,000 who are still declared missing in action, and the over 100,000 American servicemembers wounded in the Korean war. This is reflected even today in the name that many historians have given this conflict, the “Forgotten War.”

I have never liked that phrase. I think it is actually borderline disrespectful. The better way to memorialize the sacrifice of our Korean war veterans is in the words etched into the marble of the incredibly moving Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, just a few miles from here. That memorial—for those who haven't visited, I highly recommend you do; for those who are visiting Washington, particularly on this weekend, it is great to go down there. But there is a simple phrase there: “Freedom is not free.”

Freedom is not free. If this weekend means anything, it is the importance of that phrase on the Korean War Veterans Memorial. That memorial also states: “Our Nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met.”

If you want to see an example of American bravery and what it meant, take a look at the difference between North and South Korea today. There is a satellite photo that is very famous. It shows the Korean Peninsula at night. The North is dark; even today it is dark. The South is full of light, vibrancy, and energy. The reason that happened—the reason that happens to this day is because of the bravery, the service, and the sacrifice of American military members.

These are powerful words on the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, and to me the rightful tribute to that war and our veterans shouldn't be the “Forgotten War”; it should be the “Noble War.” Think about what our men and women did. As I mentioned, they were sent overseas to “defend a country they never knew and a people they never met.” To this day, our troops are on the peninsula right now, keeping the peace—28,000 of them.

So we had benign neglect in the Korean war, and then what happened? Well, then came the Vietnam war.

We all know what happened. Yet to this day, we really don't know why it happened. Our country kind of went off-kilter, and in terms of the honor and respect we showed our Vietnam veterans and their wounded and fallen comrades, America hit rock bottom—

World War II, here; Korean war, benign neglect; Vietnam, disgraceful conduct toward the men and women serving in the military.

We have all heard the stories; they are sad and tragic. We have all heard the stories of young men and women who went to serve their country and fight overseas in Vietnam, who came home to protesters, were spit on, and called baby killers.

I remember hearing about one such episode from a senior marine officer when I was a young marine infantry lieutenant. He came home from combat and met his dad, who was a World War II veteran, at the airport. He was in his service alphas—the green uniform that marines wear—sea bag over his shoulder. His dad was with him. He came outside of the airport, and protesters were there, and someone threw red paint on him and his father.

Think about that. A dad and a young man who just came home from fighting in Vietnam—and that is what he got. But here is the amazing thing, and it is why our country owes such a debt of gratitude to our Vietnam veterans. Instead of being racked and incapacitated by bitterness and anger, these veterans did something amazing, something remarkable. They set out to make sure that future veterans of America's wars and their fallen comrades would receive better attention and better treatment and better respect than they did. They made it their mission in life that we as a nation would once again honor our military as we honored the veterans coming home from World War II—at the highest level. That is what they did.

Here is the amazing thing. They succeeded. They succeeded, and we need to really be thinking about our Vietnam veterans and those killed in action in Vietnam this Memorial Day.

Again, for those who haven't been there, if you want to go to a moving memorial about America's war sacrifices and war dead, there is nothing more moving than the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

As someone who has seen what our Vietnam veterans have done for the next generation of veterans, I have also seen this throughout my own military career: When we come home from doing our duty, it is the Vietnam veterans who are there making sure that the current generation of American soldiers, American warriors, gets the respect and honor that these veterans never got.

Let me give you one example. Many years ago, I was commanding a Marine recon unit in Alaska. One of my soldiers—one of my sergeants, one of my marines, a great marine—was killed. We had a memorial service. It was a small memorial service for this young Marine sergeant at Fort Richardson. It was outside. We were in our dress blues in a very somber service. Four guys pulled up on Harley Davidson motorcycles. They were older. They pulled up on their bikes, and they just sat there

through the whole service—a very, very powerful presence.

At the end of the service they came up to me. I was a captain at the time. They asked if I was the senior officer, and I told them I was. I said: Thanks for coming. What are you doing here? Did you know my sergeant?

They said: No, we just read about the service in the paper today, and we wanted to be here to show our respect and honor for this young Marine sergeant.

Think about that. Vietnam vets who weren't treated well at all when they came home were making sure that one Marine Corps sergeant in Alaska got the respect and dignity he deserved as a veteran. Our Vietnam vets used their painful experience to become our Nation's guardians of military respect, honor, and dignity.

So, right now, where are we as a country? Well, I think we are back at that high level. I think we are back at that high level of not only respecting members of the military—veterans, Active Duty, Reserves—but certainly our wounded and fallen warriors. It is, in large measure, because of the efforts, sacrifice, and courage of our Vietnam veterans. So we can't thank them enough. As Alaska's Senator, I am so honored to represent so many veterans and so many Vietnam veterans.

Here is what I think is important to talk about on the Senate floor. As we move into Memorial Day weekend, let's resolve—not just as a community, in places like Alaska, but as a country, as a Senate—that we will always, always stay at this high level of respect for our fallen, for our veterans and their families, and, particularly, for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice and the men, women, wives, husbands, and children they have left behind.

I think this is also important. Even though we are back as a nation at this very high level—you always hear it; you always hear it; it is always in the background—some start to question the service and sacrifice of America's military. You have heard it a little bit when ISIS was running amok in Iraq and Syria. You heard some people say: Geez, we took these places with a lot of blood and treasure, and now they have fallen to terrorists. Was that worth the cost of the young men and women who died in those battles? Did our soldiers, marines, and sailors die in vain?

I think it is really important to answer that question right here on the Senate floor, and it is something I hope we can all agree on. No American who has ever worn the uniform of our country to fight for freedom and defend our Nation and die for this country—whether at Valley Forge, Iwo Jima, Hue City, Ramadi, Fallujah—has ever died in vain. We always need to remember that, particularly as we are coming upon Memorial Day weekend.

I wish to thank again all of the members of the military and their families who protected our freedom for cen-

turies and will continue to do so. We are working hard in the Senate to make sure our veterans are taken care of. The VA MISSION Act, which we just passed and which is going to the President's desk for his signature, is part of that sacred commitment we have to our veterans and their families. I wish to thank them all as we come upon Memorial Day weekend.

I yield the floor.

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

STEPHEN CURREN, GUY DEMETER, MATT NIMS, ANDY NEAL, AND DAVID HUIZENGA

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to call attention to the important efforts made each day by our public servants.

At the beginning of this month, this very body honored our public servants by adopting a resolution marking the first week of May as Public Service Recognition Week. We need to do more to continue that sentiment year round. But on the same day the Senate adopted a resolution honoring our public servants, Congress received a letter from the administration looking to use Federal employees to solve our budget problems, with cuts to retirement and freezes in pay. Is this really in the best interest of our public servants? Is this really the best method to attract and retain the best and the brightest to work across vital agencies to keep our government running?

That is why today I wish to continue the longstanding tradition of honoring exemplary Federal employees—a tradition that was begun by my friend Senator Ted Kaufman from Delaware. It is my hope that the story of these five Virginians will remind my colleagues and the administration that public servants go to work every day with the sole mission to make this country a better and safer place to live.

First, I would like to acknowledge Stephen Curren. In Stephen's capacity as Director of the Division of Resilience at the Department of Health and Human Services, he coordinated the national response to help protect public and private healthcare computer systems from the worst effects of WannaCry, a global cyber attack that threatened patients' health and safety.

Stephen's team applied existing processes for dealing with physical disasters like hurricanes and tornados and adapted them to prepare for a cyber attack response. They continue the critical work necessary to improve the collaboration on cyber security with private healthcare agencies and the public.

Next, I would like to share a bit about Guy Demeter, the FBI's first-

ever data scientist. In his work, Guy develops technological solutions to organize the Bureau's data and has helped the FBI to track down child predators, identify banks evading sanctions, assist counterterrorism investigations, and guard against internal threats. His innovative strategies are efficient, cost-effective, and have been a crucial part of increasing our national security.

Third, I would like to recognize the work of Matt Nims, the Acting Director of the Office of Food for Peace at USAID. Under Matt's leadership, last year his office distributed emergency food and nutrition assistance to 20 million people facing severe hunger and starvation in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, and northeast Nigeria as a result of drought, extreme poverty, and violent armed conflicts.

Matt's team used data from USAID's Famine Early Warning Systems Network to anticipate food shortages before they became full-fledged crises and then developed innovative ways to deliver food, plan managed food distribution, and keep up with the day-to-day challenges of working under difficult and dangerous conditions, saving countless lives.

Next, I would like to recognize Andy Neal. Andy is the Branch Chief for Actuarial and Catastrophic Modeling at FEMA. We have all seen the devastating effects of floods across the country, but what many don't know is that the National Flood Insurance Program provides critical financial help to victims of hurricanes and other storms. By the end of 2016, the program was \$25 billion in debt.

In response, Andy led his team in an unprecedented effort to persuade private reinsurers for the first time to assume some potential flood damage liability. They were extremely successful. The government paid 25 private insurance companies \$150 million in premiums in 2017, and the insurers ended up covering more than \$1 billion of the \$7.6 billion in claims to policyholders in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, and has secured even more coverage for 2018.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to recognize David Huizenga, the Principal Assistant Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation at the National Nuclear Security Administration.

In his everyday work, David confronts some of our most pressing international threats, formulating national security policy, monitoring compliance with nuclear agreements, and working with other nations to safeguard nuclear stockpiles and reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism.

In the past 3 years, David has worked to remove nuclear material from Poland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Japan, and Ghana, relying on relationships with his international counterparts to make the world more secure. Here in the United States, David and his team have also worked to reduce the amount of

radioactive materials used in medical and commercial applications. A Federal employee for 28 years, David's work as a nonproliferation expert is widely respected both in the United States and around the world.

I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring these outstanding individuals, as well as government employees at all levels around the country, for their excellent work and their commitment to public service.

I yield the floor.

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

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

#### GAS PRICES

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, as we head into Memorial Day weekend and the summer driving season, gas prices are up nearly 25 percent since President Trump took office. That means American consumers are paying \$350 more per year to fill up under President Trump, and here is why:

No. 1, President Trump's incoherent foreign policy has been exacerbating the geopolitical risk premium on oil prices and driving them up, and President Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Iran deal is further roiling oil markets. Because of these actions that increase risks around the world, gas prices could keep going up even more this summer. I call this the "Trump oil risk tax," and its impacts are being felt right now.

The oil risk tax completely wipes out any tax savings from the Republican tax scam for the poorest Americans. The lowest 40 percent of earners are projected to get roughly \$200 this year from the GOP tax plan. That is eliminated, obviously, by the \$350 more they are paying now to gas up thanks to Donald Trump's policies.

Donald Trump loves having his name on things—towers, steak, universities. Now his name is associated with higher gas prices for every American family.

Reason No. 2, while consumers are getting tipped upside down at the gasoline pumps, oil companies are benefiting from a \$25 billion tax cut this year alone from the GOP tax scam. That is on top of the \$7 billion to \$8 billion a year they get in permanent tax breaks and also free drilling loopholes. All of that is on top of the \$25 billion of tax breaks this year alone. Is Big Oil using those GOP tax giveaways to help drivers across America? Nope. They are using it to buy back tens of billions of dollars' worth of their own stock. Big oil companies are using this tax windfall to pump up their own profits rather than to help consumers at the pump.

Reason No. 3, the United States is exporting historic amounts of American oil, even while we remain dependent on OPEC and the Middle East. Exporting

U.S. oil is only a further giveaway to Big Oil. We are now exporting more than 2.5 million barrels a day of U.S. crude overseas, even while we are still forced to import that exact same amount—2.5 million barrels a day—from OPEC and the Middle East, and we are sending our oil overseas to benefit foreign nations like China, which is getting one-quarter of U.S. oil exports.

Why would we send our oil overseas instead of keeping it here to help our consumers and our security? Well, because Big Oil stands to see \$500 billion in new revenue over the next 20 years as a result of U.S. oil exports because they can charge more for U.S. oil overseas. They make more money if they sell it to foreigners than if they sell it to U.S. citizens—U.S. consumers. Exporting American crude means our consumers are more vulnerable to supply shops and more closely tied to rising international prices.

Reason No. 4, OPEC and Russia are colluding to manipulate oil markets. In response to the millions of barrels a day of U.S. oil we are exporting, OPEC, Russia, and other nations are working together to simply cut their production by an equal amount. You don't need to be Robert Mueller to know collusion is going on between Russia and OPEC to boost oil prices and hurt American consumers at the pump as they are getting ready for the Memorial Day weekend.

That is why I introduced the OPEC Accountability Act. This legislation would require President Trump to negotiate with OPEC, with Russia, and other nations to put an end to this cartel that is manipulating markets and harming American consumers. This legislation would further direct our Trade Representative to take action against any country in the cartel that refuses to stop conspiring to raise prices.

President Trump is doing nothing to hold OPEC and Russia accountable. It is time for him to immediately begin negotiations with this cartel to put an end to their manipulation of the oil markets of the world but also of the United States of America.

Reason No. 5, the Trump administration is attacking fuel economy standards that help consumers and reduce our reliance on foreign oil.

The historic fuel economy emissions standard of 54.5 miles per gallon by the year 2025 that is currently on the books is projected to save consumers more than \$1 trillion at the pump. They will reduce our consumption of oil by 2.5 million barrels of oil a day by 2030. That is how much oil we import from OPEC every single day. Why would the Trump administration seek to eliminate all of the increases in fuel economy standards for the vehicles we drive if they know that it will back out all of that imported oil from the Middle East? You don't have to be a detective to figure this out. They would do it at the behest of the big oil companies, the big auto companies, and the Trump administration so that they can put these

fuel economy standards in their cross-hairs.

The Trump administration is in the process of making a U-turn and putting us in reverse on these critical fuel economy emissions standards. That will mean that consumers will pay even more at the pump, and it will mean that we will be even more reliant on oil from OPEC and other foreign nations and unstable regions around the world.

President Trump likes to tout American energy dominance, but thanks to his policies, it is high gasoline prices that are dominating American consumers' pocketbooks. President Trump says his agenda is "America First," but the policies he and the Republicans are pursuing are putting Big Oil, OPEC, Russia, and China first and American consumers last. It is time for this to end. It is time for us, in our country, to have a debate about this oil agenda.

The President always says that he wants to have an agenda that is "all of the above"—meaning every energy source—but when you examine it very closely, it just comes down to oil above all. We are seeing that, and the consumers are paying the price at the pump. We need to ensure that everyone in our country understands who is responsible, whose name is on this price increase, and that name is Donald J. Trump. They are his oil policies. It is his foreign policy that is creating this problem for every consumer as we head into the Memorial Day weekend and as we continue throughout the summer and into the rest of this year and next year.

It is a very important issue for every American. They are going to feel it in their pocketbooks because the tax break that the President is touting is going to be completely wiped out by the high energy prices that will go right to the Koch brothers, right to Big Oil, and right to OPEC.

If the President wants to do something about this, he should call up his pals, the Saudi Arabians. He should call up his pals in the United Arab Emirates. He should call up his pals in the big oil companies and bring them in and tell them that he wants this to end, that he wants there to be lower oil prices, that he does not want them to be taking advantage of this tight American marketplace as we export 2.5 million barrels a day.

It is time for us to begin to understand what is happening to our economy. Ultimately, it is not just going to be drivers at the pump. It is going to be businesses. It is going to be large and small who are going to be impacted by this, and it is ultimately going to have a supreme, negative impact on our economy—not for the oil companies but for anyone else who purchases this oil, which is everyone.

Thank you for the time.

I yield back.

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

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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 848, 851, 852, 853, and 854.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of David B. Cornstein, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Hungary; Francis R. Fannon, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Energy Resources); Eliot Pedrosa, of Florida, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank; Jonathan R. Cohen, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be the Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Deputy Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations; and Jonathan R. Cohen, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Cornstein, Fannon, Pedrosa, Cohen, and Cohen nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 898 and 899.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Erica H. MacDonald, of Minnesota, to be United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota for the term of four years; and Scott Patrick Illing, of Louisiana, to be United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Louisiana for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the MacDonald and Illing nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of Executive Calendar Nos. 859, 860, 861, 862, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Coast Guard; that the nominations be confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

##### IN THE COAST GUARD

The following named officer for appointment as Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, a position of importance and responsibility in the United States Coast Guard and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., Section 50:

##### To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Michael F. McAllister

The following named officer for appointment as Deputy Commandant for Operations, a position of importance and responsibility in the United States Coast Guard and to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., Section 50:

##### To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Daniel B. Abel

The following named officer for appointment to a position of importance and responsibility in the United States Coast Guard