

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Gregory J. Slavonic, of Oklahoma, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; 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 nomination 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 Slavonic nomination?

The nomination was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last month, during Workers' Memorial Day, we honored and remembered those killed or injured on the job. It is a day we reaffirm our commitment to workers and their families to do all we can to prevent these tragedies.

Forty-seven years ago, when the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was established, an estimated 14,000 workers were killed on the job. By 2016, the number was reduced to nearly 5,200. We have come a long way in worker safety, but when more than 14 people die on the job every day—and only 2.9 million work-related injuries are reported annually even though the real number could be as much as 7.4 to 11.1 million—more work needs to be done. Clearly, the workplace remains too dangerous. We owe it to America's working men and women to ensure their safety, but too often, we are reminded of our failure to do so.

I want to talk about Pamela Knight, from Dixon, in my home State of Illinois. An employee of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Pamela was asked last September to check on the welfare of a child. When Pamela arrived, sensing a dangerous environment, she decided to remove the 2-year-old boy from the home and place him in protective custody. That is when the child's father

knocked her to the floor, kicked her in the head, and continued beating Pamela's fractured skull. After this horrific incident, she was airlifted to a hospital in nearby Rockford, IL, where she underwent two surgeries, but it was too late. Pamela suffered permanent brain damage and passed away about four months after the attack. Pamela Knight was 59 years old.

The job of our investigators and first responders, like Pamela, at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is not easy. They are on the frontlines to those in crisis, but we can all agree, it should never be fatal. My heart goes out to Pamela's family, friends, colleagues, and all our public service workers protecting and serving the most vulnerable in our communities.

The theme of this year's Workers' Memorial Day was "Safe Jobs. Every Worker's Right." While the administration attempts to walk back many vital protections and existing safeguards for our workers, let's recommit ourselves in Congress to live up to those words and provide the right every worker deserves: a safe job. In doing so, we can honor the legacy of courageous Americans, like Pamela Knight, who simply did her job.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in fighting for secure workplaces everywhere and once and for all, live up to the promise of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's mission to assure the dignity of a safe and healthy working condition for all Americans. With the right commitment, we can protect, strengthen, and advance the gains we have made over the last half century and make the safety of all workers a reality.

CONFIRMATION OF ANNIE CAPUTO AND DAVID WRIGHT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Annie Caputo and David Wright on their confirmation as members of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Regrettably, it has taken almost a year for the Senate to confirm these excellent nominees. This is yet another example of how broken the Senate's confirmation process is and why we need to change the rules so we can process nominees in a timely manner.

Annie and David will make outstanding commissioners. For over a decade, Annie has served as a top adviser on nuclear energy issues to members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. She has worked on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, advising the committees' chairmen, including former Chairman JIM INHOFE and, now, me.

Here on Capitol Hill, Annie is considered the dean of nuclear energy policy. More than any other staff member, she knows the nuclear power sector. As a nuclear engineer, Annie knows the

physics behind nuclear power. She also knows the challenges it faces and the bright future it can have if we make the right decisions here in Washington. Likewise, Annie knows our Nation's nuclear regulatory agencies, especially the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. She understands how the NRC can be improved, how it can be more responsive to the public and its licensors, and the best way to accomplish that goal.

Prior to becoming chairman, I found Annie to be instrumental in helping me conduct oversight of the nuclear industry and the NRC. She was particularly helpful following Fukushima. Since becoming chairman, I have seen how she is an invaluable part of the Environment and Public Works staff. For example, Annie was largely responsible for drafting S. 512, the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act. This is a bill that will help facilitate the licensing of advanced reactors and reform how the NRC collects fees from its shrinking pool of licensees. It is a bill that we need if this country is going to allow nuclear power to succeed in the future. Last year, the committee passed this bill by a broad bipartisan vote of 18 to 3. It remains a top priority of mine and is legislation Congress should send to the president by the end of the year.

Beyond the area of policy, I want to thank Annie for the role she played at the committee office. I want to thank her for helping my other staff, especially the way in which she served as a mentor to them. They are better staffers for the time they spent learning from and alongside Annie. I know other Members of Congress in the House and Senate feel the same way and share my gratitude to her.

So congratulations, again, Annie. Congress will be a poorer place without you. But our loss will be the NRC's gain.

While I do not know David on a personal level, I also believe he will be an asset to the NRC. For about a decade, David served as a member and chairman of South Carolina's Public Service Commission. He also served as the president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. David is held in high esteem among those who work on nuclear issues.

Like Annie, he is a dedicated public servant. I wish the two of them the very best in their new roles on the Commission.

Thank you.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this Monday, we will celebrate Memorial Day. Across our proud Nation this Memorial Day weekend, we remember the men and women of our Armed Forces who made the greatest sacrifice imaginable. Whether it was on the battlefield of Antietam, the beaches of Normandy, or in the mountains of Afghanistan, thousands of Americans have taken up the mission to defend our Nation, ideals, and freedoms at home and

abroad, knowing that they may not survive. This Memorial Day, let us pause to pay honor to their immense courage.

I specifically remember the sacrifices of my fellow citizens from Maryland such as SPC Tocarra Green. She was the first woman from Maryland to die in the Iraq War. I remember SGT Erick M. Houck, a Baltimore native like me, who died in Afghanistan just last year. It is a remarkable notion that our fellow citizens were willing to pay such a high cost for our own freedom. They and those like them deserve every honor we can bestow.

Memorial Day weekend often serves as an opportunity for Americans to spend time with friends and family. As we consider the cost of our freedom, let us also remember the families of our fallen, our Gold Star families. As we remember the sacrifices of our fallen servicemembers, we also recognize the tremendous loss to their families and admire their patriotism and perseverance.

Despite all of these sacrifices, the struggle to preserve our freedom continues. Just as in times past, our enemies seek to threaten the freedom for which our American brothers and sisters have laid down their lives. These enemies don't just fight our troops on the battlefield; they have attacked the integrity of our electoral system and our freedom of speech while seeking to reverse our progress against racial inequity and religious freedom. One of the best ways to honor our fallen comrades is for us to work together to defend our freedom and our American principles. We cannot allow the erosion of the liberties our family members and friends have fought so hard to defend.

As I pray for the fallen and their families this weekend, I will also pray for our men and women currently serving in harm's way and for their families too. I am truly grateful for those who have served our country, past and present, and I will continue to do my very best to serve them in return.

TAX REFORM

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as you know, Congress passed, and the President signed, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act late last year. While much media attention has been focused on certain aspects of tax reform, one topic that has not received due attention is the positive effect that tax reform is already having on small businesses. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I strongly supported this legislation because I saw the potential it had to spur investment, create economic growth, and provide tax relief to the millions of small business owners whose resilience and work ethic provide ample evidence that the American Dream is alive and well. This piece of legislation has had a positive impact, not just for small business owners and their employees in

my home State of Idaho, but also for small business owners and employees all across our country. I plan to introduce and highlight these small businesses on a weekly basis for the near future.

While there are more and more uplifting stories of small businesses that are benefiting from tax reform each day, today I wish to share the story of Renaissance Property Management, LLC located in Dearborn, MI. Renaissance Property Management's owner, Rudaina Hamade, and her son Michael operate this successful small business, which specializes in acquiring rental properties, asset management, and 24 hour property maintenance. Through their business, the Hamades and their 5 to 10 employees, some of whom are seasonal, strive to offer tenants affordable and distinguished homes. During the last recession, when so many small businesses were suffering, her determination was on full display. Though the Detroit housing market experienced a steep decline, the Hamades persevered, and after finding financial backing, they continued to invest in the Detroit market even while many others were reducing their footprint in the city.

Ms. Hamade, a Lebanese immigrant, is a prime example of the American Dream, having exhibited an amazing drive and work ethic throughout her life. She received her finance degree from Davenport University while raising her children and running a small business. In addition to running her company and raising a family, Ms. Hamade is also an active member of the Dearborn Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Council at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Changes in the tax law have offered welcome relief to the Hamades' employees and their families. This new law has enabled the Hamades to provide their employees with bonuses ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000. They have also been able to make capital investments in their company. These investments include upgrades to their computer system and the purchasing of new software, machinery, and tools. Stories like these show that tax reform was a more than worthwhile goal that has improved small businesses' outlook, provided employee bonuses, lowered taxes, and increased investment in many sectors of our economy. In the coming weeks and months, I intend to bring more attention to the positive effects that tax reform has had on small businesses across our great country.

HUNGARY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this week, the Senate is poised to confirm the nomination of David Cornstein to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Hungary. Against that backdrop, as well as reports that Secretary of State Pompeo will meet with the Hungarian Foreign Minister in Washington at the end of this month, it is timely to con-

sider the troubling situation in Hungary.

Budapest is a fabulous city. The Parliament is regarded by many as one of the most beautiful legislative houses in the world. Hungarians are a warm and generous people, and the United States and Hungary have a shared history dating to the times of Lajos Kossuth, whose bust graces the halls of the U.S. Congress. Hungarians have come to this country as both immigrants and refugees, enriching our national fabric.

The beauty of Budapest masks a growing climate of fear, however. For the past 8 years, Hungary's ruling Fidesz party has tried to pass majoritarianism off as democracy. Media pluralism has disappeared. The government plays favorites with religions, preferring some while discriminating against others, like the Hungarian Evangelical Fellowship. Moreover, the checks and balances that are essential for democracy are missing in action. To say that the ruling party now exercises unchecked legal power is not an exercise in hyperbole, but merely a concise analysis of the facts.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban has allowed corruption to flourish, enriching his own friends and family. The government has recentralized, and more of the economy is either under state control or in the hands of Orban's cronies. Once Fidesz won two-thirds of the seats in Parliament in 2010, the party changed the election system to perpetuate that outcome. As Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE, elections observers concluded, separation of state and party is no longer respected. For a country that suffered under a one-party regime, that is a deeply disturbing conclusion.

In 2013, I chaired a Helsinki Commission hearing on the trajectory of democracy in Hungary. Frankly, I did not think things would get this bad, in part because I did not think the ruling Fidesz party would become more extremist than Hungary's strongest opposition party, Jobbik, but after 2010, with Jobbik's anti-Semitic and anti-Roma rhetoric serving as a Greek chorus, Fidesz leaders carved out their own revisionist bona fides, worked to rehabilitate fascist-era figures, and repeatedly awarded, elevated, and amplified one of the country's most extremist polemicists. They determined that they could get away with further escalating hate-mongering against racial and religious minorities with one tweak: call them Muslims and migrants. Hatred, it seems, is fungible.

Not surprisingly, the politics of fear, historical revisionism, and national grievances have found expression in the ruling party's foreign policy too. The most alarming example has been Hungary's opportunistic approach to Ukraine following Russia's 2014 invasion, with Hungary's rhetoric often echoing Moscow's. Overall, the Hungarian Government's approach suggests that it is not interested in a dialogue about the Hungarian minority in