

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 related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

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. 938.

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 Peter A. Feldman, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for the remainder of the term expiring October 26, 2019.

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 Peter A. Feldman, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for the remainder of the term expiring October 26, 2019.

Mitch McConnell, Richard C. Shelby, Todd Young, Pat Roberts, Thom Tillis, Cory Gardner, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, David Perdue, John Boozman, Roy Blunt, Jerry Moran, Lamar Alexander, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Barrasso, Steve Daines.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. 941.

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 Peter A. Feld-

man, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2019. (Reappointment)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 Peter A. Feldman, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2019. (Reappointment)

Mitch McConnell, Richard C. Shelby, Todd Young, Pat Roberts, Thom Tillis, Cory Gardner, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, David Perdue, John Boozman, Roy Blunt, Jerry Moran, Lamar Alexander, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Barrasso, Steve Daines.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HURRICANE FLORENCE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, many in the Carolinas and other communities in our eastern States are dealing with wind, flooding, and storm surge damage caused by Hurricane Florence. In the lead-up to this hurricane and in the ongoing response to it, Federal agencies have played and continue to perform critical roles in forecasting, public safety, rescue, and recovery.

One of the key agencies involved in this effort is the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA. NOAA houses the National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center, which is responsible for issuing watches, warnings, and forecasts of these hazardous weather events.

Despite its responsibility for critical functions, NOAA has been without a Senate-confirmed Administrator for nearly 2 years due to obstruction by Senate Democrats. Barry Myers, the President's nominee to lead NOAA, was first approved by the Commerce Committee, of which I have the privilege of chairing, in December of 2017. Ten months later, his nomination sits stalled on the Senate floor, and he is far from alone.

During and after disasters like a hurricane, Americans use products such as portable generators, ladders, and power

tools in greater quantity and frequency than during other times. The Consumer Product Safety Commission has a critical public safety mission to ensure that such products sold on store shelves or over the internet are safe. When there are safety issues, the Commission is charged with taking action. But nominations for this critical agency have also been blocked in the Senate. The same is true for the country's leading highway safety regulator. For months, Democrats have blocked the nomination of Heidi King to be the administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. While she has shepherded the agency in an acting capacity, she has been denied the full weight and authority of a Senate-confirmed leader. So have other Commerce Committee-approved nominations for the Departments of Transportation and Commerce, Amtrak, and the Surface Transportation Board. All of these agencies play critical roles in promoting public safety. What is most frustrating is that this all feels like *deja vu*.

We have already seen this disturbing pattern play out with other safety nominees earlier in this Congress. The nomination of Ronald Batory to lead the Federal Railroad Administration had been stalled in the Senate for more than 6 months over demands by Senate Democrats concerning a parochial infrastructure project. Only after three deadly passenger rail accidents did Democrats finally relent and allow this critical railway safety official to assume his full agency leadership duties.

In another instance, Senate Democrats blocked nominees for the National Transportation Safety Board. This opposition only subsided following a deadly Missouri duck boat tragedy that claimed 17 lives. Once the Board was sent out to investigate and attention moved toward the blocked vacancies, Democrats finally relented to their confirmation.

Maybe Hurricane Florence will have a similar effect on some of these other blocked nominees, but it shouldn't take a tragic national disaster for Democrats to stop making unrelated demands that obstruct nominees from working in critical posts.

I urge my colleagues to stop this dangerous obstruction and instead give qualified nominees approved in committee the chance to lead their agencies so that we are all well prepared for the next natural disaster, safety recall, or serious accident.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in 2017, more than 72,000 Americans died from drug overdoses, and 49,000 of those deaths were related to opioids. Opioid overdoses have surpassed motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. Whole communities have been devastated by the opioid epidemic. The situation is rightly described as a crisis.