

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 107.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Neomi J. Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Neomi J. Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, James E. Risch, Steve Daines, John Thune, Lindsey Graham, James M. Inhofe, Tim Scott, Pat Roberts, Thom Tillis, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Mike Crapo.

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. 98.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, for a term of four years.

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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby

move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, for a term of four years.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Boozman, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Chuck Grassley, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, Lamar Alexander, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker.

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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL RAYMOND A. THOMAS

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, today I wish to honor my friend, GEN Raymond A. Thomas III, commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, for his dedication to military service in the U.S. Army. General Thomas will retire from active military duty on March 29, 2019, after serving 39 years defending our national security.

Born in Philadelphia, PA, General Thomas graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and was commissioned as an infantry second lieutenant in 1980. Throughout his career, General Thomas has grown as a well-respected leader and a vital asset to the special operations community.

Prior to assuming command of U.S. Special Operations Command, General Thomas served as commander, Joint Special Operations Command—JSOC—Fort Bragg, NC. His other general officer assignments include Associate Director for Military Affairs at the Central Intelligence Agency; commanding general, NATO Special Operations Component Command—Afghanistan; deputy commanding general, JSOC; Deputy Director for Special Operations, the Joint Staff in the Pentagon; assistant division commander, 1st Armor Division in Iraq; and assistant commanding general, JSOC.

Prior to his promotion to brigadier general, General Thomas served as the JSOC Chief of Staff and Director of Operations. He also faithfully served in key joint and special operations assignments all around the globe to include commander, Joint Task Force—Bravo, Soto Cano, Honduras; commander, 1st

Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Savannah, GA; and commander, B Squadron, 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment—Delta, Fort Bragg, NC.

I ask my colleagues to join me as I proudly recognize the remarkable military career of GEN Raymond A. Thomas III. I wish General Thomas, his loving wife, Barbara, and their extended family the very best as they embark on the next chapter of their journey together.●

TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW SHUMAN

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I am proud to recognize in the RECORD the American Legion's director of the national legislative division, Matthew Shuman, who has a long record of service to our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Shuman has not only dedicated his career to serving veterans, he is a veteran himself. He served in the U.S. Army from 2008 to 2012, most notably as a military police officer. Mr. Shuman concluded his military career serving on the Arizona Army National Guard Honor Guard, providing military funeral honors for our Nation's fallen soldiers.

Mr. Shuman began serving veterans with the American Legion in 2015, starting as an assistant legislative director with the veterans employment and education portfolio in Washington, DC. In his current role as director of the national legislative division, Mr. Shuman is the chief advocate for the 2-million-member organization, working with Federal agencies, the White House, and the media to share what the American Legion is doing in Congress on behalf of the 20 million American veterans.

During his time with the American Legion, Mr. Shuman had a role in the creation and passage of significant legislation impacting America's veterans. These include the VA MISSION Act, the VA Appeals Modernization Act, the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, and The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act. These efforts have contributed to improving the quality of life and strengthening healthcare and benefits for servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Today I am honored to pay tribute to Mr. Shuman for his service to our country and his steadfast commitment to advocating on behalf of veterans throughout his career. Congratulations to Mr. Shuman on his lasting legacy of advocacy for veterans, and I wish him the best in his future endeavors.●

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the service and career of veteran and dedicated advocate Matthew Shuman.

The American Legion is a cornerstone in countless American communities, helping our veterans get the care, benefits, and recognition they earned while giving back through

youth programs, scholarship assistance, and grassroots efforts. The American Legion's membership is robust and active, and they have been well-served by Matthew.

Matthew has been a tireless legislative advocate for American Legion members and the veteran community as a whole. In his role overseeing the American Legion's legislative efforts, Matthew has been instrumental in improving VA healthcare and benefits for our more than 22 million veterans, including 2 million Legionnaires around the world.

Matthew served in the U.S. Army from 2008 to 2012. He served as a military police officer and concluded his military career as a member of the Arizona Army National Guard Honor Guard, memorializing our fallen soldiers by providing military funeral honors.

Following his military service, Matthew attended Grand Canyon University and participated in the Reserve Officer Training Corps, ROTC, at Arizona State University. He graduated from Marymount University in Arlington, VA, with a B.S. in criminal justice. He established his passion for public service by working for two different Members of Congress, as well as working on the 2012 election cycle.

Matthew's career with the American Legion began in 2015, when he started as an assistant legislative director focused on veterans' employment and education in their Washington, DC, headquarters. In January 2017, Matthew began his tenure as the director of the American Legion's national legislative division. In that role, Matthew has been the American Legion's chief advocate before Congress, the White House, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Matthew has helped lead an organization that has always been at the forefront of advocating for veterans and securing the resources, healthcare, and benefits veterans have earned.

As ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, it has been a joy to work with Matthew and the American Legion on important legislation like the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act—also known as the Forever G.I. Bill—several reforms and subsequent overhaul of the VA's healthcare system, and the current implementation of the VA MISSION Act. All the while, I have been impressed with Matthew's charisma, kindness, and humor.

These bipartisan bills, all of which were signed into law, serve as a testament to Matthew's dedication and leadership on behalf of veterans. Future generations of veterans will be able to look at these bipartisan reforms as examples of Matthew's advocacy on behalf of all veterans.

It is my honor to recognize Matthew's outstanding military service

and continued service to our servicemembers, veterans, and their families. As Matthew begins a new chapter, I have no doubt that he will continue to be a voice for those in need.

To Matthew, on behalf of myself and a grateful nation, I extend my greatest appreciation to you for your enduring bravery, service, sacrifice, and advocacy.●

REMEMBERING JACK COGHILL

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I speak in memory of an Alaska pioneer, a pillar of the community of Nenana, signer of the Alaska Constitution, legendary Alaska legislator and our 6th Lieutenant Governor, Jack Coghill, who died in February at the age of 93.

Long before statehood, the name Coghill was synonymous with the town of Nenana. Jack's father, William A. Coghill, Sr., emigrated from Scotland to Canada and then to Alaska in March 1907. He landed in Valdez, hiked to the interior over the course of 10 days, and went to work delivering the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

In 1916, Bill relocated about 60 miles down the road to Nenana, which was at the time a boom town. It was home to the Alaska Engineering Commission, which was building the railroad, a bridge, and a large dock. Along with a partner, Bill converted an existing business into Coghill's Store, which continues to exist today.

In the 1930s, Jack and his brothers, Bill, Jr., and Bob, began learning the business from the ground up. They were hauling freight, stocking shelves, assisting customers, and delivering the groceries. Jack served in the Army in World War II. He was a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Alaska Command, fighting in the Aleutians. Following the war, Jack moved home to Nenana. When Bill, Sr., died in 1947, Jack and his brother Bob, along with their mother, took over the store. Later the business included a movie theatre, fuel distribution, and a roadhouse.

Public service was an important part of Jack Coghill's life since the late 1940s. He served on the Nenana School Board, and he was mayor of Nenana for 23 years. He was elected to the Alaska Territorial Legislature in 1952 and re-elected in 1956. At age 30, he was selected as one of 55 delegates to the Alaska Constitutional Convention. Jack participated in the drafting of the Alaska Constitution in 1956 and was the third individual to sign it. Post-statehood, he served in the Alaska House of Representatives and the Alaska Senate. In 1990, he was elected Lieutenant Governor on a ticket with Wally Hickel. Unable to stay away from service, Jack returned to the Nenana City Council when his term as Lieutenant Governor concluded. Until his death, Alaskans of all generations looked to Jack for advice.

Jack and his wife Frances were parents to six children. Next to family,

Jack characterized his service on the Alaska Constitutional Convention as his greatest achievement. Of course, that was far from Jack's only recognition. He held an honorary doctorate from the University of Alaska and was elected to Junior Achievement's Small Business Hall of Fame.

One of Jack's six children is John Coghill, a friend whom I served with in the Alaska Legislature and who serves as a member of the Alaska State Senate today. John remembers his father as "a firm believer in utilizing Alaska's natural resources to build a strong economy and provide good paying jobs for Alaska . . . He had the same passion for Alaska, even at 93."

With the passing of Jack Coghill, only one of the signers of the Alaska Constitution, Victor Fischer, remains alive today. While it is sad to part with a pillar of Alaska's history, an individual who was instrumental in Alaska's growth from its frontier, territorial days to today's modern State, we were blessed to have his leadership for so many years.

It is an honor to share just a brief glimpse of the story of Jack Coghill with my colleagues here in the U.S. Senate.●

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1271. An act to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a pilot program instituting a clinical observation program for pre-med students preparing to attend medical school.

H.R. 1381. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to take actions necessary to ensure that certain individuals may update the burn pit registry with a registered individual's cause of death, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 729. A bill to prohibit the use of funds to Federal agencies to establish a panel, task force, advisory committee, or other effort to challenge the scientific consensus on climate change, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communication was laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and was referred as indicated:

EC-529. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "OMB Final Sequestration Report to the President and Congress for Fiscal Year 2019"; to the Special Committee on Aging; Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Appropriations; Armed Services; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; the Budget; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; Environment and Public Works; Select Committee on Ethics; Finance; Foreign Relations; Health, Education,