

United States District Judge for the Northern District of Indiana.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer, David Perdue, Todd Young, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis.

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. 30.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of David Steven Morales, 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 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 David Steven Morales, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer, David Perdue, Todd Young, John Thune, Mike Rounds, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis, Lindsey Graham.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

TRIBUTE TO JOHN STURGEON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is Thursday afternoon on the Senate floor, and it is one of my favorite times of the week because I get to come down and talk about an Alaskan who has

made a difference in my State and in the country sometimes. This one, by the way, is a big one. I think I am being a little bit presumptuous, but the pages, I think, view this as kind of one of their favorite speeches of the week because you learn about Alaska, and I get to brag about my wonderful State.

Now, I have been hearing a little bit back home that people like to watch this sometimes, but the gentleman I am going to talk about is John Sturgeon. That is him right there in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, and that is him with his hovercraft in Alaska when he is out moose hunting. This is an epic tale—epic, and it just happened. So I am going to be a little bit more long-winded on this “Alaskan of the Week” speech because it is actually really important for Alaskans; it is really important for my colleagues; and it is really, really important for Federal judges who rule on things that relate to Alaska.

We had an epic, huge U.S. Supreme Court case that just came down last week relating to this heroic figure, John Sturgeon, related to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, ANILCA—that is a mouthful; that is a huge statute that was passed by this body in 1980—and how that has been interpreted over the years, over the decades. The Supreme Court just last week interpreted this case in a way that we Alaskans think it should have been interpreted, but unfortunately Federal Agencies for 40 years have been interpreting it another way. So I am going to talk a little bit about that.

I will begin by talking about John Sturgeon and this battle he waged. Literally, they are going to make a movie out of this someday. Trust me. This is an epic—an American classic—12-year legal battle that he waged so he could go hunt a moose off the Nation River, a river in Alaska, and the Feds were saying he couldn't. So he fought and he fought, and he went to the Supreme Court not once but twice. So are we ready? This is one epic story that, again, I guarantee you they are going to make a movie out of someday.

So let me begin by talking about John Sturgeon, the 74-year-old man right there and what brought him to Alaska. Well, he is from Minnesota, originally and, like so many Alaskans, soon-to-be Alaskans—people watching, we want you to come up and visit, by the way. We want you to come up and live there. He felt the pull of Alaska very early in life.

John says he remembers dreaming about Alaska as a child. When he was graduating from high school, he applied for a few jobs as a hunting and fishing guide, but like many patriotic Americans—actually, many of my fellow Alaskans—he joined the military instead. My State has more veterans per capita than any State in the country. After he finished two tours in Vietnam in the Navy—so we are talking a real heroic guy here—he formed a

plan. He was going to go to college, get a degree in forestry, and then head north to Alaska. That is what he did. He stuck with the plan.

As soon as he finished his last exam in college, he put it on the professor's desk, and without even getting his diploma, he jumped into his car and drove all the way out to Alaska. He didn't even wait for graduation.

So, initially, he moved to Wrangell in Southeast Alaska, and then he became director of the division of forestry for the State of Alaska—a great job, a really important job. It was a position he held until 1986, and then he formed his own timber company, which he runs today with his son.

Now, throughout all this time, John Sturgeon, like many Alaskans, loved to get out to see our great outdoors, to hunt, to fish. There was a particular area in the interior part of Alaska that he discovered that was particularly good for moose hunting. For those of you who have been up to Alaska or haven't, we have very large moose, and we have a lot of them, a lot of moose.

To get to this area, however, he had to cross a river—the Nation River, within the Yukon-Charley National Preserve, which is a preserve that was actually created by Congress. I am going to get to that. The Nation River, in a lot of areas, is very shallow. It is very shallow, so the best way to traverse the Nation River is via hovercraft. You are looking at John Sturgeon's hovercraft right there.

It was 2007, and John was in his hovercraft when the steering cable broke, and he and two friends lugged the hovercraft to a sandbar to fix the cable—just like this. This is the sandbar right here at the Nation River.

Three park rangers then showed up. We love our park rangers up in Alaska, but we also have a little more skepticism than most States about Federal agencies saying they can control what we can and can't do. John says that they were very cordial, asking all sorts of questions about hunting in the area.

He said: I just thought they were interested in the hunting. Then one of them pulled out a thick rule book.

Uh-oh. They found and pointed to a section in the rule book in which hovercrafts aren't allowed in Federal parks or preserves. They told him they were going to cite him for violating this Federal regulation if he didn't move his hovercraft.

I talked earlier about this big law, a giant law that passed in 1980. Most Alaskans didn't want it passed.

Think about this. Unfortunately, this happens a fair amount to my State. There are laws that come from the Federal Government that we don't want; yet Senators and Congressmen pass them anyway and tell Alaskans how to live their lives. That is what ANILCA did. It is a huge law.

Of course, back then, our Senators fought for provisions that protected Alaskans' interests, even though they didn't really like the law. I will talk a little later about what that law did.