

to protect people from these horrendous actions. In the case of the military, the Department of Defense should take a stronger posture in terms of preventing sexual assault within its ranks. I say this as a former company commander and a retired lieutenant colonel. While there have been concrete steps taken to improve the safety of our servicemembers, there is more that we can and should do to protect our men and women in uniform and change the overall culture.

The message I hear all too often is that victims in our armed services have a fear of retaliation. Folks, this is absolutely unacceptable. Those who report sexual assault should not fear coming forward, and those who retaliate against individuals should be punished to the full extent of the law. I helped author a bill to make retaliation its own unique offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and fortunately for our servicemembers, this bill is now law.

It is my hope that Congress can continue to work on legislation that addresses these issues.

While my personal story certainly does play a role in my passion for change, so also do the stories and faces of men and women back home in Iowa, every single one of them, with that face, with that name, with that heart, and with that soul. It is their stories that push me to want to make real and lasting change. Whether it is working with Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN, ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act or fighting to reduce the abuse of females in custody through legislation with Senators BOOKER and BLUMENTHAL, combating sexual assault should be bipartisan and something we all can agree on.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues toward ending sexual assault once and for all. This issue will continue to plague us until we come together and take concrete steps to address it. We all can and must do better.

This month, as we raise awareness of sexual assault, I hope to see this body taking real and lasting action.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:43 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and was reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Domenico nomination?

Mr. INHOFE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 66 Ex.]

YEAS—57

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Alexander | Fischer | Paul |
| Barrasso | Gardner | Perdue |
| Bennet | Graham | Portman |
| Blackburn | Grassley | Risch |
| Blunt | Hawley | Roberts |
| Boozman | Hoeven | Romney |
| Braun | Hyde-Smith | Rounds |
| Burr | Inhofe | Rubio |
| Capito | Isakson | Sasse |
| Cassidy | Johnson | Scott (FL) |
| Collins | Jones | Scott (SC) |
| Cornyn | Kennedy | Shelby |
| Cotton | Lankford | Sinema |
| Cramer | Lee | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Manchin | Thune |
| Cruz | McConnell | Tillis |
| Daines | McSally | Toomey |
| Enzi | Moran | Wicker |
| Ernst | Murkowski | Young |

NAYS—42

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Baldwin | Hassan | Rosen |
| Blumenthal | Heinrich | Sanders |
| Brown | Hirono | Schatz |
| Cantwell | Kaine | Schumer |
| Cardin | King | Shaheen |
| Carper | Klobuchar | Smith |
| Casey | Leahy | Stabenow |
| Coons | Markey | Tester |
| Cortez Masto | Menendez | Udall |
| Duckworth | Merkley | Van Hollen |
| Durbin | Murphy | Warner |
| Feinstein | Murray | Warren |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Whitehouse |
| Harris | Reed | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—1

Booker

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant 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 Patrick R. Wyrick, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

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.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Patrick R. Wyrick, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 67 Ex.]

YEAS—53

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Alexander | Fischer | Perdue |
| Barrasso | Gardner | Portman |
| Blackburn | Graham | Risch |
| Blunt | Grassley | Roberts |
| Boozman | Hawley | Romney |
| Braun | Hoeven | Rounds |
| Burr | Hyde-Smith | Rubio |
| Capito | Inhofe | Sasse |
| Cassidy | Isakson | Scott (FL) |
| Collins | Johnson | Scott (SC) |
| Cornyn | Kennedy | Shelby |
| Cotton | Lankford | Sullivan |
| Cramer | Lee | Thune |
| Crapo | McConnell | Tillis |
| Cruz | McSally | Toomey |
| Daines | Moran | Wicker |
| Enzi | Murkowski | Young |
| Ernst | Paul | |

NAYS—46

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Baldwin | Heinrich | Sanders |
| Bennet | Hirono | Schatz |
| Blumenthal | Jones | Schumer |
| Brown | Kaine | Shaheen |
| Cantwell | King | Sinema |
| Cardin | Klobuchar | Smith |
| Carper | Leahy | Stabenow |
| Casey | Manchin | Tester |
| Coons | Markey | Udall |
| Cortez Masto | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Duckworth | Merkley | Warner |
| Durbin | Murphy | Warren |
| Feinstein | Murray | Whitehouse |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Wyden |
| Harris | Reed | |
| Hassan | Rosen | |

NOT VOTING—1

Booker

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Patrick R. Wyrick, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, it is an honor to speak on the

floor of the Senate today for the first time. I really want to say a thank you to my colleagues here in the Senate for the warm welcome, especially Senator ALEXANDER, for the friendship, advice, and counsel he supplies to each and every one of us, especially to me.

I am really humbled to be here as the first female elected from Tennessee to serve in the Senate. I just have to note that a few decades ago, neither the Presiding Officer, who is the first woman from West Virginia, nor I could have been here in this Chamber speaking because women would not have been allowed. Yet our suffragists took care of that with women getting the right to vote.

I love this quote by Susan B. Anthony. I think it is so good and appropriate for us: "I declare to you that woman must not depend upon the protection of man, but must be taught to protect herself, and there I take my stand."

Women have always been fierce defenders of freedom and freedom's cause. Many times people will say to me: Why do you choose to serve? For me, it really is more or less a calling to public service. In that calling, I find it important to defeat the narrative that still exists to this day that conservative women should be seen but not heard. Here in this Chamber and in my role, I will continue to fight against a media that chooses to empower women on one side of the political aisle and denigrate those of us on the other side of the aisle. I am going to make certain that conservative women do have a strong voice in the Senate.

I am here because, throughout my history—my family's history, as I have researched our history—there were so many who chose to serve in the military. There are others, like my family, who have chosen to serve our communities and our neighbors in our schools, in our churches, and in community activities. I regard my public service as a civic duty and a way to give back to the country that has given me so many blessings.

What I have found from Tennesseans is that many of them are just like me. They have grown up in a rural area. They have worked hard, and they have built their version of the American dream. I am very typical of that. I grew up on a farm, attended college, married, had children, two grandchildren, and really appreciate the opportunities I have been given to work hard, to build a business, and to share in the benefits of hard work.

Politically, I fought the establishment of both parties in Tennessee when I was in the State senate. There, thousands of Tennesseans joined me in opposing a massive, job-killing State income tax. We won that fight.

Ever since, I have been focused on fighting high taxes and fighting wasteful spending because I know the money we appropriate and that gets spent is not Washington's money; it is the taxpayers' hard-earned money. Govern-

ment ought not have the first right of refusal on your paycheck, but it does. It is part of our duty as public servants to be responsible stewards of the taxpayers' money and to be aggressive in rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse.

I think we should heed the 2010 warning of the then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mullen, when he said: "The most significant threat to our national security is our debt."

Our debt today is a staggering \$22 trillion. Now, think about this. When George Bush left office, that debt was at \$10.7 trillion. It is \$22 trillion today. For our children and for our grandchildren, I think it is immoral to pass on this kind of debt.

I am also here because I am pro-life, and I will protect those who cannot protect themselves. I will tell you it is astounding to me that this body could not pass legislation that would protect babies who are born alive as a result of botched abortions. It is a disgrace. Big Abortion must be held accountable because its actions are a stain on the moral fabric of our country.

Just as I promised Tennesseans, I promise my colleagues that I am going to work hard and will stand strong for what I believe in because I know I am working for freedom, free people, and free markets. As Frederick Douglass said, "I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong." I invite all of my colleagues to join me in protecting what I term to be the "big five"—faith, family, freedom, hope, and opportunity, especially freedom.

Washington needs to be reminded of just how precious the core value of freedom is, not only for Tennesseans but for all Americans. Every community and every church in Tennessee is filled with veterans and families who have sacrificed and who cherish that hard-won gift of freedom. They talk about it regularly. They have parades. When the troops come home, they celebrate our freedom. In Tennessee, we have 470,000 veterans who call Tennessee home, and it is such an honor to come to this body and stand with them because of the work they have done for us.

I serve on the Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees. We know our military has to have the resources it needs to fight our 21st century adversaries. Our veterans deserve not only our thanks but the benefits that have been offered to them. So, last month, I introduced the Gold Star Family Fellowship Program Act. This will establish a fellowship for those Gold Star families in our Senate offices. I have also joined Senator TESTER in the Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act to honor our women soldiers from World War I.

I am here to make certain our Nation is a nation of legal immigrants, not of illegal immigrants. The chaos at the border should embarrass each and every one of us as it has been decades in the making. This crisis is something

we ought to work together on solving—drug trafficking, sex trafficking, human trafficking, and gangs. We must solve it rather than allow it to be a political issue for a campaign.

I am here to work to protect your right to privacy—the physical and the virtual space. Yesterday Senator KLOBUCHAR and I sent a letter to the FTC that focuses on how we protect Americans from what I call the data pirates at Google and Facebook. Your privacy is important, and I believe you and I have the right to send notes to our friends without having the entire stories of our lives sold to the highest on-line bidder.

We are finishing our work on the BROWSER Act. I introduced this when I was in the House, and we are going to introduce it here because I believe it is imperative to give you the tools to protect yourselves online. I believe we need one set of privacy rules for the entire internet ecosystem. This is what you call fairness.

Our family has always believed we have a responsibility to leave a place in better shape than we found it. It is, more or less, our family mantra.

I will say that changing the rules of the Senate to allow for the confirmations of judges and to proceed on the Executive Calendar are exactly the right moves. You can call it the nuclear option or whatever you want to call it. In the press, I have heard it called many things in the last few days, but obstruction tactics do absolutely nothing to leave this Chamber or the country in better shape. Maybe it makes for good political rhetoric, but our country deserves better.

I agree with Leader MCCONNELL. This is a key way to help our Nation and our Chamber function fully and better. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I am going to work to confirm those qualified judges who will respect and uphold the Constitution.

In January, it was an honor to be sworn in by Justice Brett Kavanaugh and to join Senator ERNST as being the first Republican women on the Judiciary Committee. Being the first woman ever elected to the Senate from Tennessee and being a conservative woman are things that are not lost on me. Indeed, conservative women have quite a track record in leading the fight for freedom in our Nation's history.

At the top of that record is fighting and winning the right for women to vote. Next year, we are going to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote. You may not be aware, but Tennessee was the 36th and the decisive State to ratify this amendment. It was the suffragists who fought and led that charge, and I am honored to join so many of our female colleagues in this Chamber in drafting legislation to honor that anniversary. Indeed, I am going to provide all of our colleagues the opportunity to cosponsor and participate in one of those bills that will have a commemorative coin for the event.

Howard Baker—a great Tennessean and the former majority leader of this body—once remarked about the nature of the Senate: “[And] if we cannot be civil to one another, and if we stop dealing with those with whom we disagree, or that we don’t like, we would soon stop functioning altogether.”

With that in mind, my time in the Senate is going to be focused on action and accomplishment—things that will lead to positive change.

Many times, people have asked me: What is one of your strengths? What do you think helps you in the political process?

I have repeatedly said: I am a pretty good change agent.

That is something we need to do to fully function and to serve our Nation.

Tennessee has constituencies across every sector of our Nation’s economy, and they are wanting change. They want fair and free markets, less regulation, less taxation, and less litigation. Our industries are in agriculture, energy production, financial services, national security installations, veterans hospitals, world-class universities, healthcare, manufacturing, technology, entertainment, and communications.

In Tennessee, we are a logistics hub, with great networks and intermodal facilities. As a member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I am going to work with them to make certain that when the Federal Government shows up, it is there to be a help and not a hindrance.

Tennessee is a cultural leader and is the Nation’s center for music, songwriting, and religion. The people want protection of the works they create and of the sermons they preach.

Tennesseans also tell me that as their Senator, they want me to be aware they are concerned about the future of the Nation. It is unimaginable to Tennesseans that nearly three decades after the end of the Cold War, there is a debate in Washington about, are you for socialism or are you for freedom? They cannot believe this is happening. They want to make certain we are going to continue to push forward and protect this Nation and protect our freedoms that we have. We will continue to do that and to push back.

We have a lot of challenges we are going to face. Tennesseans want to make certain that we are going to be there to focus on prosperity and leadership for future generations. This is going to require our paying attention to technology. My colleagues will find that I am going to work to push for 5G and next-generation technologies for both our commercial and military space.

Senator BALDWIN and I are introducing bipartisan legislation to advance rural broadband, and I have joined Senators GARDNER and CORTEZ MASTO on the ACCESS BROADBAND Act to make resources available to rural communities. Technology is not

only enabled by freedom, it enhances freedom.

Make no mistake, our technology and our power are being challenged by all of our adversaries. Primary among them is Communist China, which is a threat to our country because it steals our technology, our innovations, and in its unfair trading practices and monetary policy. We should all be united in taking on the Chinese. Our Tennesseans talk to me regularly about their concerns about some of the theft that takes place by China. We have other enemies as well—from Maduro in Venezuela to the Ayatollahs in Iran, to Kim Jong Un in North Korea. We must stand together as Americans if we are to advance the cause of freedom.

Tennesseans have been clear in what they want and in what they expect from their U.S. Senator. They want somebody who is going to listen to them and be concerned about the stories of their lives, not the DC story of the day. Tennesseans are ready for bold ideas on how the Federal Government should spend their taxpayer dollars.

They don’t want tweaks around the edges of bills; they want something bold. They are concerned about how we are going to fund the military. They are concerned about what we are going to do to further our presence in this land.

Tennesseans want a Senator who will respect freedom and the rule of law. It is a beautiful and diverse State. It represents the best of what this Nation has to offer. Our history reflects a common set of values that are based on faith, family freedom, hope, and opportunity, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to preserve these values and to fight back against those who would attempt to undermine them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Wyrick nomination expire at 5:30, Tuesday, April 9; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action. I further ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Stanton nomination be waived; finally, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture motion on the Abizaid nomination be withdrawn and the Senate vote on his confirmation at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, on April 10, 2019.

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

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

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

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.’S LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL

Mr. JONES. Madam President, I rise today to honor a great American, an American whose words lit a flame of hope in the hearts of those souls who had become weary with the weight of injustice, an American whose struggles, ideals—and, yes, his dreams—are etched in the foundation of our Nation.

On April 12, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was arrested in my hometown of Birmingham, AL. His crime? Leading a peaceful march to protest the indignity suffered by the Black community in the Jim Crow era. He had violated Birmingham public safety commissioner “Bull” Connor’s ban on public demonstrations, which targeted the growing resistance of African Americans to the injustices they were suffering.

While in solitary confinement in Birmingham, Dr. King wrote what became known as the “Letter from Birmingham Jail”—a stinging response to a group of White clergy in Alabama who had denounced his tactics and questioned the wisdom and timing of his arrival in Birmingham.

They insisted that he was an outside agitator coming to Alabama to instigate trouble. Dr. King responded famously: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

In his letter, he rejected the idea that African Americans should be more patient for change in the face of the daily indignities inflicted by segregation and in the face of violence and threats and intimidation. He wrote: “There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over.”

While I did not experience this struggle as a young child—a young White child growing up in the nearby Birmingham suburb—I spent much of my adult life and career as a lawyer and former U.S. attorney examining the history and absorbing its lessons. I have often returned to Dr. King’s letter to understand the forces at play at the height of the civil rights struggle. Each time I read his words, I am in awe of his courage and resolve in the face of such incredible personal risk.

While we have come so far and while we have made great progress in loosening the binds of racial injustice that have constrained and suffocated our Nation for so many years, we have not yet fully relieved the weight of our country’s abominable history of slavery, segregation, and racial discrimination.

That is why I rise today. It is our civic duty and I believe our moral obligation to remember Dr. King’s words and his deeds, to tell his story, to appreciate that 1963 was not all that long ago, and to reflect on how many things have changed and how many have not. Our obligation is to honor Dr. King’s