

economy, Mr. Bernhardt's extensive ties to the fossil fuel industry are troubling, to say the least.

The Secretary of the Interior is charged with the stewardship of public lands and waters and safeguarding our natural resources for generations to come. Yet the Washington Post has reported that Mr. Bernhardt has so many conflicts of interest that he must carry a card around just to keep track of them. Think about that. Mr. Bernhardt has such deep ties to fossil fuel companies with business pending before the Interior Department that he cannot keep track of them.

How Mr. Bernhardt would approach his position if confirmed as Secretary of Interior is no mystery. During his time as Acting Secretary, he has gained a reputation as a general in the Trump administration's war on science. Reports suggest that he has suppressed scientific evidence in order to benefit corporate interests at the expense of environmental protection.

Rather than be responsive to Congress about our concerns, Mr. Bernhardt has displayed a stunning lack of transparency. Like many Trump nominees, he has failed to respond to basic inquiries from Congress. For example, on March 20, I sent a letter—along with Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator MERKLEY, and 15 of our colleagues—requesting that the Acting Secretary respond to a series of questions about his views on offshore drilling. With his hearing in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee quickly approaching, we asked Mr. Bernhardt to respond prior to coming before Congress. This way, committee members could have at least a baseline understanding of his views while crafting their questions. We received no response.

Mr. Bernhardt then came and testified before the committee. He could have used the opportunity to enlighten us about his views on offshore drilling. He chose not to. Now, 3 weeks later, we still lack answers, even as the majority seeks to confirm him as Secretary of the Interior.

When an individual seeking confirmation by the Senate refuses to answer basic questions posed by 18 Senators, that should be a red flag for all of us. The questions that were asked weren't technical. They weren't "gotcha" questions. They were straightforward questions about one of the most fundamental jobs the Secretary of the Interior has—the stewardship of our Nation's coastal waters.

We asked Acting Secretary Bernhardt: Do you support opening up any or all of the Atlantic Ocean to offshore oil and gas exploration, development, or production? No response.

We posed the same question about the Pacific, the Arctic, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Again, no response.

We asked the Acting Secretary if he would commit to meeting with the Governors of States in which he proposes to drill for oil. No response.

We asked if he would commit to meaningful public hearings in States

impacted by offshore oil drilling. No response.

We asked how he could reconcile the opposition to offshore drilling of every Atlantic and Pacific Governor—Democrat and Republican—with President Trump's goal of opening all of those waters to drilling. Again, we got no response.

We asked whether the Acting Secretary could confirm to us that the Trump administration's revisions to the well control rule—the one major safety reform put in place after the Deepwater Horizon disaster—wouldn't denigrate safety. No response.

I will not risk it. I will not risk New Jersey's \$44 billion tourism industry. I will not risk over \$800 billion in coastal property values. I will not risk a recreation and commercial fishing industry that supports 50,000 jobs in my State. I will not risk the economies of shore towns up and down the coast of New Jersey and the entire Atlantic. I will not risk the lives and livelihoods that depend on clean coastal waters because that is what we are risking if we vote for Mr. Bernhardt.

I cannot fathom going home to my constituents and telling them that I gave the nominee for Secretary of the Interior a free pass on basic questions about the job he is applying for.

With the radio silence from this nominee on offshore drilling, I have no reason to believe Mr. Bernhardt will deviate from the path chartered by this administration. Every Member of this Chamber knows what that path looks like.

We have seen the weakening of protections put in place after the BP oil-spill, endangering the safety of workers and the livelihood of our vibrant coastlines. We will see the start of seismic blasting in search of oil up and down our coasts without any concern for the devastating impact on wildlife and our fisheries. We will see the finalization of President Trump's offshore drilling plan—one that would open the entire Atlantic Ocean, the entire Pacific Ocean, the entire Gulf of Mexico, and the entire Arctic Ocean to offshore drilling. If this plan comes to fruition, sooner or later we will see another crisis of the magnitude of the Deepwater Horizon.

My friends, my colleagues, this is not a matter of if; it is a matter of when. When that day comes, every Member of this Chamber who supported David Bernhardt is going to have to answer to their constituents, to the shore businesses who see their livelihoods washed away in a slick of oil, to the fishermen who are suddenly out of a job through no fault of their own, to coastal towns that see their communities and the tourism and recreation industries their economies depend on wiped out.

I refuse to take that risk. A vote for David Bernhardt is a vote for offshore drilling. I ask my colleagues to oppose his nomination.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 77 Ex.]

#### YEAS—56

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

#### NAYS—41

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

#### NOT VOTING—3

Booker	Harris	Perdue
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The nomination was confirmed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

#### 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. 123.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The bill clerk read the nomination of William Cooper, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy.

## 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 Cooper, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, Richard C. Shelby, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, Marco Rubio, Tim Scott, Kevin Cramer.

## 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. 188.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The bill clerk read the nomination of R. Clarke Cooper, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

## 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 R. Clarke Cooper, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, Mike Crapo, John Hoeven, Johnny Isakson, John Thune, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, Pat Roberts, James E. Risch, Richard Burr, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, David Perdue, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton.

## 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. 214.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The bill clerk read the nomination of Gordon Hartogensis, of Connecticut, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation for a term of five 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 Gordon Hartogensis, of Connecticut, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation for a term of five years.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, Mike Crapo, John Hoeven, Johnny Isakson, John Thune, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, Pat Roberts, James E. Risch, Richard Burr, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, David Perdue, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton.

## 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. 26.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The bill clerk read the nomination of J. Campbell Barker, of Texas, to be

United States District Judge for the Eastern 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 J. Campbell Barker, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas.

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. 29.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The bill clerk read the nomination of Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

## 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 Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

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.