

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 33.

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 Rodolfo Armando Ruiz II, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

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 Rodolfo Armando Ruiz II, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, John Thune, Rick Scott, James M. Inhofe, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Tim Scott, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, John Boozman, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso.

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. 34.

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 Raul M. Arias-Marxuach, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

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 Raul M. Arias-Marxuach, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, John Thune, Rick Scott, James M. Inhofe, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Tim Scott, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, John Boozman, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso.

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. 36.

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 Joshua Wolson, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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 Joshua Wolson, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

CONFIRMATION OF DAVID BERNHARDT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, we just voted in a very important vote on the Senate floor—a bipartisan vote—to

confirm Mr. David Bernhardt as the next Secretary of the Interior for the United States of America. It was a strong vote—56 to 41.

I want to begin my remarks this afternoon by rising to express my gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Bernhardt for stepping up to the plate to continue to serve his country and to continue to serve the Department of the Interior now in the role of Secretary, the individual who is going to be running the Department of the Interior for the United States.

I thank my colleagues. It was a bipartisan vote in the Senate, which I think is important for voting for now-Secretary Bernhardt. Actually, I would like to be the first Senator to call him Secretary Bernhardt. If you and your family are watching, Mr. Secretary, thank you.

I also want to mention that I have been listening to some of the speeches made by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. To be perfectly blunt, I find what we just witnessed a bit disheartening. I would like to say at the outset that we can and should disagree on policy disputes. Certainly issues like land issues are really important to me in my State, that is for sure. We can disagree about the direction of how we are going to move some of those policies forward. What is disheartening, though, is when you have someone like Mr. Bernhardt, who is willing to serve his country again—and I am going to talk about that—essentially getting his reputation dragged through the mud on the Senate floor. It is not a good thing. It doesn't encourage people to want to serve.

So, Mr. Secretary, thank you. I know this wasn't an easy confirmation process.

When you look at his background, this is actually one of the most qualified individuals to serve as the Secretary whom we have had in many years. He was the Solicitor General under President George W. Bush, confirmed by the Senate; he was the Deputy Secretary for the last 2 years, confirmed by this body; and now he is the Secretary. I would say those are very high qualifications. I just want to talk about him for a little bit.

Why do I support Mr. Bernhardt? The Secretary of the Department of the Interior is really important to America. It is critically important to my State, the great State of Alaska. We have over 200 million acres of land under the Department of the Interior's control in Alaska—200 million acres. That is over two times the size of California. In fact, one-quarter of all the lands that the Department of the Interior manages for the United States reside in Alaska. Let me repeat that. One-quarter of all the lands that the Secretary of the Interior manages in America are in my State.

So we take this role of Secretary of the Interior very, very seriously, which is why I wanted to come to the floor and again thank Secretary Bernhardt