

productivity of our economy and the protection of American workers, not partisan political goals. In a recent hearing, for example, I discussed with Chair Powell the specific challenges of the labor market in rural areas, and he came prepared with a serious and thoughtful economic analysis that showed his keen understanding of these issues.

Chair Powell has resisted pressure from the White House to intervene in the economy to produce results in line with President Trump's political agenda, and that has infuriated President Trump, who has attacked Chair Powell on Twitter and harangued him in meetings. The President feels he made a mistake in choosing an actual, serious, sober-minded, thoughtful public servant, and he is set on not making that same mistake again.

Either President Trump doesn't understand what the Fed is for or he is hoping that we don't. And whether it is Mr. Moore or someone with the good sense to keep his misogyny to himself, we on the Senate Banking Committee should be prepared to give special scrutiny to any Federal Reserve nomination that this President sends to us because, while these issues might not be the flashiest, they are of critical importance to the people whom we represent.

Indeed, when I joined the Senate Banking Committee earlier this year, few Minnesotans took notice, but I see it as a chance to make an enormous impact on people's lives by opening up new opportunities for people to bet on themselves and to build the lives they want. Our work can help to open up access to credit for families and small businesses and underserved communities, especially communities of color. As a Senator from Minnesota who is proud to represent our States' Tribal communities, I know how badly they have been neglected by our financial system, and I am determined to rectify that injustice. As a Senator who is proud to represent so many rural communities, I am excited to use my place on this committee to expand opportunities for economic development in parts of our State that too often go overlooked.

Our work can make sure that our financial system remains on solid footing, not just so that our economy can continue to grow but so that more people can claim their stake in it—buying homes, starting businesses, and building wealth they can pass down to their next generation. Our work can help to hold Wall Street greed in check and to make sure that people don't get ripped off when applying for student loans and mortgages and so that we never again see a repeat of the great recession that wiped out so many jobs and pensions. Yes, our work can help to protect the integrity of the Federal Reserve from people who see it as a tool for partisan politics, as a laboratory for radical ideas, or as a playground for extremist ideologues who love to spout off with-

out knowing their facts—people like Stephen Moore.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this nomination. I also urge us all not to let the important work of the Federal Reserve slip out of the public eye once this nominee is defeated. Instead, let's make this a moment to highlight the important issues that the Fed deals with every day and ensure that it is led by men and women who understand its mission and appreciate the impact it has on the people that we all serve.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. PETERS. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted "yea."

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 85 Ex.]

#### YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst
Barrasso	Fischer
Blackburn	Gardner
Blunt	Graham
Boozman	Grassley
Braun	Hawley
Burr	Hoeven
Capito	Hyde-Smith
Cassidy	Isakson
Collins	Johnson
Cornyn	Kennedy
Cotton	Lankford
Cramer	Lee
Crapo	McConnell
Cruz	McSally
Daines	Moran
Enzi	Murkowski

#### NAYS—47

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	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	

#### NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe Young

The nomination was confirmed.

#### 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 senior assistant legislative 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 Andrew Lynn Brasher, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 86 Ex.]

#### YEAS—52

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	
Ernst	Paul	

#### NAYS—47

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	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	

#### NOT VOTING—1

Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, and the nays are 47.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### RAPE KIT BACKLOG

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, from time to time, our country has listened with empathy and heartbreak as survivors of various forms of sexual abuse come forward, men and women alike, who have bravely shared their stories, reviving a national conversation about sexual violence and inviting others to share their stories after years or even decades of silence. We know that these cases aren't limited to any class, place, age, gender, or circumstance. We have heard from major public figures and close friends alike, highlighting an issue that has for too long hidden in the shadows.

Some of the most disturbing allegations are those that take place against our children in school. Last month, Senator HASSAN and I introduced the Jenna Quinn Law, which would help educators and caregivers identify and prevent child sexual abuse. It literally teaches people how to recognize the symptoms, what children are saying, when they are not vocalizing their plight, by the way they act. It would allow the use of grant funds for specialized training to ensure that teachers and school personnel are prepared to recognize and report child sexual abuse.

This legislation is named after a brave Texan, a child abuse survivor herself, and has been modeled after successful State legislation. It is an important step in our efforts to stop sexual abuse, and I hope we can take these reforms, which have been adopted now by more than half the States, and make them nationwide.

Of course, protecting students from sexual abuse doesn't end after high school, as we know. In recent years, our country has followed high-profile cases involving students even at our colleges and universities. We all remember 2011, when the now notorious Penn State football coach, Jerry Sandusky, was arrested and charged with 52 counts of sexual abuse of boys. What happened next was a combination of support for the survivors and disgust with those who knew about the allegations but did nothing. Employees, ranging from a graduate assistant to the university president himself, were aware of the allegations but remained silent.

Then there is Larry Nassar, an employee at Michigan State University

and a former USA Gymnastics national team doctor. He was accused of molesting hundreds of young athletes under his care, and more than 250 women shared their testimony at his sentencing last year. Despite numerous complaints about Nassar's behavior, some dating back to the 1990s, university officials kept quiet. Law enforcement was never informed, and his disgusting abuse was allowed to continue unreported for years.

Sadly, these are not the only instances of university officials turning to avert their gaze from sexual misconduct. It has happened at other major universities across the country, including one in Texas. In each of these cases, university leaders did not take action against the abusers despite the fact that official Title IX or external investigations had been conducted. Some of them said: "We just simply didn't read the results of the report."

These stories of abuse are difficult to hear, but they have led to positive changes by highlighting the ineffective and sometimes nonexistent policies to handle these types of abuse.

That is why last month, along with my colleagues from Michigan, Senator PETERS and STABENOW, I introduced the Accountability of Leaders in Education to Report Title IX Investigations Act, or ALERT Act for short. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure greater accountability by requiring colleges and universities to submit an annual certification to the Secretary of Education, to include the following:

First, it would affirm that the university president and the board members have reviewed all Title IX and Clery Act sexual offense reports of an employee involving sexual misconduct. This would compel administrators to take this matter more seriously and thoroughly examine all the allegations.

Secondly, it would require that the university certify that the president or board members had not interfered with or inappropriately tried to influence an ongoing investigation.

In any educational institution, especially those that receive taxpayer funds, administrators should be held accountable for their actions and place the health and well-being of their students above all else.

The public conversation regarding these abuses has encouraged more victims to confront their abusers and pursue justice.

Throughout my career, dating back to my time as Texas attorney general, it has been my privilege to work with advocates for victims' rights and to help provide them with the resources they need in order to heal and recover. But what if we could do more to prevent people from becoming victims in the first place? What if we could improve accountability on college campuses related to reports of sexual assault perpetrated by their employees? Well, it seems to me the answer is obvious. While there is nothing we can do to turn back the hands of time and pre-

vent these young men and women from being taken advantage of in the first place, we can take action to hold universities accountable for employee sexual misconduct that they already know about and stop abusers from continuing to harm students.

I hope this bill can work its way quickly through the regular order through Congress, the House and the Senate, and make its way to the President's desk so we can begin to improve accountability on college campuses all across our country.

While we continue our work to prevent sexual abuse in all its forms, there is more we need to do to support victims. Tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee will vote on what I have no doubt will be a major bipartisan achievement for the 116th Congress.

We see many pieces of legislation that divide Members of the Senate, and sadly those are often the ones that get the most attention. But the Debbie Smith Act is the type of bill we should be talking about and celebrating. The namesake of this legislation is an incredibly courageous woman whom I have had the pleasure of working with over the years.

Debbie Smith is an ardent advocate for eliminating the rape kit backlog and expanding the DNA database to provide victims with answers and peace of mind. Sadly, her personal advocacy was borne from experience. In 1989, Debbie was home doing laundry when a stranger broke into her house. He blindfolded her, abducted her, and took her to a wooded area behind her home, where he robbed and repeatedly raped her. Debbie reported the crime to the police and went to the emergency room for a forensic exam, but because of the nationwide backlog, there were no immediate answers. Her rape kit was not even tested right away, as it should have been.

Although exact numbers are difficult to estimate, experts believe that as many as 400,000 rape kits remain untested in the United States. We really don't know with any precision. Each one of them represents a story of a sexual assault victim and holds the key to identifying and apprehending a vile criminal. Like every other victim whose DNA evidence sat or still sits on a shelf, Debbie simply had to wait. In her case, it took 6½ years before she finally got the answers she had been looking for when a cold hit revealed the identity of her rapist.

Debbie knows the fear and uncertainty that comes upon victims just by not knowing the answers to who did it and how we make sure justice is served. She made it her mission to eliminate the backlog. She has become a trusted voice for sexual assault victims all across this country and, of course, works the Halls of Congress on a bipartisan basis to make sure we don't lose sight of this important goal, which is to eliminate the rape kit backlog.

The Debbie Smith Act was signed into law in 2004 and provides local and