

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 43, nays 56, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 161 Leg.]

YEAS—43

Baldwin	Harris	Peters
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lee	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Moran	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	
Gillibrand	Paul	

NAYS—56

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

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The motion was rejected.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE S.J. RES. 26

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 26.

Mr. THUNE. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "nay."

(Mr. COTTON assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring the vote?

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 162 Leg.]

YEAS—42

Baldwin	Coons	Hassan
Bennet	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Cruz	Hirono
Booker	Duckworth	Kaine
Brown	Durbin	Klobuchar
Cantwell	Feinstein	Leahy
Carper	Gillibrand	Lee
Casey	Harris	Markey

Menendez	Reed	Stabenow
Merkley	Rosen	Udall
Murphy	Sanders	Van Hollen
Murray	Schatz	Warren
Paul	Schumer	Whitehouse
Peters	Smith	Wyden

NAYS—57

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

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The motion was rejected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Edward F. Crawford, of Ohio, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

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 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 Edward F. Crawford, of Ohio, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Thune, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, James E. Risch, Bill Cassidy, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, Kevin Cramer, Mike Braun, Pat Roberts.

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 Edward F. Crawford, of Ohio, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 163 Ex.]

YEAS—92

Baldwin	Graham	Portman
Barrasso	Grassley	Reed
Bennet	Hassan	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Roberts
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Romney
Blunt	Hoeven	Rosen
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Boozman	Inhofe	Rubio
Braun	Isakson	Sasse
Brown	Johnson	Schatz
Burr	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Carper	Klobuchar	Shelby
Casey	Lankford	Sinema
Cassidy	Leahy	Smith
Collins	Lee	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Sullivan
Cornyn	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Thune
Cotton	McSally	Tillis
Cramer	Menendez	Toomey
Crapo	Merkley	Udall
Cruz	Moran	Van Hollen
Daines	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murray	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Wyden
Fischer	Perdue	Young
Gardner	Peters	

NAYS—7

Duckworth	Harris	Warren
Feinstein	Hirono	
Gillibrand	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 92, the nays are 7.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last week, we commemorated the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and in just a few weeks, we will celebrate America's independence on the Fourth of July.

It is important for us to pause and remember the contributions made by the men and women who wear the uniform of the U.S. military who fight every day to protect our freedoms.

The Senate Armed Services Committee just completed its markup of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 and voted overwhelmingly to send this legislation to the Senate floor. This is an annual event for us in the Senate. We pass the Defense authorization bill to ensure that crucial Department of Defense programs are continued, that America's servicemembers are paid, and that our national defense is modernized to keep pace with the rapidly evolving threat landscape.

One of my top priorities in the Senate has been to ensure that America's military men and women have what

they need to keep our Nation safe from threats both at home and abroad, and this bill, the national defense authorization bill, fulfills part of our commitment to do just that.

There are more than 200,000 military men and women stationed in Texas at places like Fort Hood, Fort Bliss, Lackland Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, and Ellington Field. We in Congress have a duty to provide these men and women with the training, the tools, and the resources they need to achieve the most difficult missions they face today and embark on those that will inevitably arise tomorrow.

I have no doubt that these talented servicemembers could have chosen any career—certainly one that involved fewer sacrifices and more time spent at home with their families—but, instead, they have chosen to serve their country. That decision should never stand in the way of their ability to exercise one of the most fundamental rights we have as American citizens, and that is the right to vote.

In 2016, only 46 percent of Active-Duty military voted by absentee ballot—46 percent. What concerns me is the fact that one-third of those who did not vote said that the absentee voting process was too complicated. We have to change that, so I have introduced a bipartisan bill called the Military Voter Protection Act that simplifies the absentee voter registration process for servicemembers stationed abroad. It would ensure that within 30 days of arriving in theater during a deployment, servicemembers are provided with a briefing on absentee voting registration and an opportunity to fill out the registration form or application.

Currently, 28 States allow the Federal write-in absentee ballot to serve as both the registration form and the actual ballot itself. My bill encourages the remaining States to follow suit, reducing the amount of paperwork military members have to fill out in order to exercise their right to vote.

This is an important step to simplify that process for our men and women in uniform and ensure that arduous and cumbersome paperwork does not deter them or dissuade them from casting their ballot. I have been working with the chairman and the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee to ensure that this provision will be included in the Defense authorization bill for fiscal year 2020 to make it easier for our servicemembers to make sure their voices are heard at the ballot box.

As we prepare to consider the Defense authorization bill here in the Senate, I want to thank the men and women who serve our country and assure them that we will continue to do everything we can to support them and ensure they are empowered and mission-ready and, yes, that they can also cast their ballot.

TEXAS STORMS

Madam President, on another matter, like many parts of the country,

Texas has been impacted by severe weather. Last weekend, parts of my State were impacted by severe storms, bringing hail, rain, and winds up to 70 miles per hour. The quick-moving storms hurled debris and caused extensive and widespread damage. One of the most devastating scenes was an apartment building that was sliced by a construction crane and took a life.

In the wake of the storm, hundreds of thousands of North Texans lost their power, and many of them are still waiting for the lights to come back on. And if you have been in Texas during June, you know it is not just your lights you want; you want your air-conditioning to run as well. There is never a good time or circumstance to be without power, but in Texas, June is far from ideal.

As many Texans keep working to get back to some sense of normalcy, I want to express my gratitude to the first responders who have been working tirelessly to support our communities. I have immense respect and gratitude for those who take on these difficult and sometimes thankless jobs. We need to tell them every chance we get that we appreciate the work they do to protect our communities every day and especially during times of natural disasters.

Somehow, these challenging times have a way of bringing communities closer together and reminding us that through the hard times, we still have a lot to be thankful for.

In the wake of these storms, I have read dozens of stories about friends and neighbors and kindhearted strangers helping one another.

There was a man who lived in the apartment building that was struck by the crane I mentioned a moment ago who said he spotted a neighbor trapped inside his car in the garage, which he described as “facing straight down.” He and another neighbor said “We can’t leave him like that” and exposed themselves to danger to pull the man through the back window and help him escape safely.

A neighborhood in East Dallas came together to help a woman cut and remove trees that fell over her home, saving her a lot of time and money.

Even though the neighborhood is dealing with widespread power outages, one person with a generator has kept a refrigerator on with the community’s groceries.

I also read about restaurant workers who helped a woman from Frisco whose car had been hit by a falling tree. While the woman and her 3-year-old niece were able to escape the vehicle, her friend was trapped inside. The employees at this restaurant ran into the storm to help lift the tree so her friend could escape. They then gave her food, blankets, and even drove them to a nearby Target so they could find some dry clothes.

The restaurant owner downplayed their actions saying:

I don’t think we really did anything out of the ordinary that anybody else wouldn’t do. We were just being good Samaritans.

I am grateful for the Good Samaritans across Texas who put themselves in harm’s way in order to help their neighbors. As I said earlier, in times of tragedy or hardship, it is heartwarming to see stories like these that remind us of how lucky we are, in Texas and across the country, to live in supportive communities.

In closing, I want to thank the first responders, utility workers, and newfound friends who have supported one another through these storms. I will continue to keep the families of those killed and injured in my prayers, and I hope power will soon be fully restored.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am on the floor again today to talk about developing the American workforce. Why? Because it is such a big issue back home in Ohio and around the country.

Pro-growth Federal policies, including tax cuts, have really worked. I just had another group of Ohio small businesspeople visiting me today, telling me how they have taken those tax savings and used them to invest in their workers, invest in machine and technology, helping to create more economic growth. It is working.

The most recent report released by the Commerce Department shows that the economy grew by 3.1 percent in the first quarter this year. That is significant. By the way, it is about twice what was projected for that same quarter prior to tax reform being put into place. So we are doing about twice as well as the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office thought we would be doing at this point.

Official unemployment is now 3.6 percent. That is tied for the lowest in 50 years. We continue to see solid wage growth, including better wage growth—which is really exciting for me—among people who are not, as I said, supervisory employees; in other words, blue-collar workers, a 3.4-percent increase in wages. That is after about a decade and a half of flat wages when you take inflation into account. Finally, we are seeing a real increase in wages.

I hear from our small business owners back in Ohio how this is working for them, but I also hear something else, which is that they are looking for workers.

The good news is, the economy is growing. There is a demand for workers, but that is not the whole story. We are still seeing a lot of individuals who are missing out on the benefits of a growing economy, not working, and not even looking for work. I have visited dozens of factories and businesses