

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Stephen M. Dickson, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years.

James M. Inhofe, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Joni Ernst, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, John Cornyn, James E. Risch, Roger F. Wicker, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Mitch McConnell.

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. 45.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Wendy Williams Berger, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle 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 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 nomination of Wendy Williams Berger, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

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

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. 53.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian C. Buescher, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

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.

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 Brian C. Buescher, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Chuck Grassley, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, David Perdue, Ron Johnson, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Martha McSally, John Boozman, Richard Burr, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1327

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the men and women who responded to the horrific events of September 11, 2001, are among the great heroes of American history. Whether fighting the deadly flames, rescuing people who were injured or dying, or removing the destructive debris from the 9/11 attack sites, the 9/11 volunteers and rescue workers displayed the courage and the sacrificial service that has earned them universal respect and admiration.

Tragically, their heroism came at a cost. Their heroism, at exactly these same dangerous sites we are describing, earned them, in addition to great respect, also health challenges in the years since.

In 2001, in response to those challenges, Congress established the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund to compensate both the survivors of the attacks and also the residents who lived near the site. It was authorized for 2 years, and it paid out about \$7 billion in benefits and then closed.

In 2011, Congress revived and expanded the program to cover a larger universe of victims and responders, and

it authorized that fund to spend \$2.7 billion over 5 years.

In 2015, citing a growing need, Congress reauthorized the fund for another 5 years and an additional \$4.6 billion. Of that \$7.4 billion authorized since 2011, the fund has now paid out \$5.2 billion.

With money getting tight, in February of this year, the fund began temporarily reducing the claimants' benefits until Congress reauthorized and replenished it until such time as we can make those beneficiaries whole.

I support that effort. I support it wholeheartedly. The bill before us today authorizes the program not for 2 years, as it was in 2001, or for 5 years, as we did in 2011 and 2015, no, it authorizes the program for an additional 72 years and does not specify a dollar amount.

In Washington, this is a recipe for trouble. As we all know, finite authorizations are how Congress ensures that taxpayer money actually gets to its intended beneficiaries and not simply lost in government bureaucracy somewhere. It is how we make sure this is about protecting those who are supposed to benefit rather than government bureaucrats themselves.

Since 2011, the 9/11 victims fund has always had finite authorizations, and, by all accounts, it has had an excellent record of avoiding waste and abuse. These two things are not coincidental. They go together, and 9/11 survivors and first responders deserve no less moving forward. They deserve no less than to make sure the program created in their honor for their benefit, in fact, benefits them. This is why I would like to offer a simple amendment to this bill that would authorize \$10.2 billion in additional funding for the 9/11 victims fund over the next 10 years. That is the amount the Congressional Budget Office has estimated is necessary for covering all valid claims between now and 2029.

My amendment would further authorize an additional \$10 billion beyond that time. My amendment would not block or delay the bill's consideration, let alone its passage.

This is something we could vote on in a matter of minutes, 15 minutes or so, and then move on to final passage. We could, in fact, accomplish this today before we adjourn for the weekend. This is, in fact, what I prefer. I think finishing our work on this bill to protect victims and first responders is worth 15, 20, 30 minutes of our time. That is what I prefer.

I have had conversations with my colleagues, including colleagues across the aisle. In order to accommodate requests from some of my colleagues, I have agreed, with their mutual assent, to negotiate a different arrangement—one that would make sure we get to final passage on this bill and that we consider my amendment and that of Senator PAUL's within the next few days.