A bill (H.R. 4842) to authorize the Secretary of State to provide funds for a United States pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lee Philip Rudofsky, of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

S. 1699

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last Friday was an exciting day. I was home in Sioux Falls, SD, to mark a huge milestone for the city and for South Dakota—the unveiling of Sioux Falls' first 5G small cells. By the end of this month, Sioux Falls will have a working, albeit limited, 5G network—one of the first cities in the entire country to have one.

Most people take internet access for granted these days. We assume that anywhere we go, we will be able to access our GPS, check Facebook, or send a text message. But the truth is that there are still areas in the United States where it can be difficult to get reliable internet access. Some of those areas are in South Dakota. That is why expanding access to broadband internet in rural communities has been a priority of mine since I came to the Senate. While it can be nice to turn off our phones and take a break, in this day and age, Americans need reliable internet access.

More and more of the business of daily life is being conducted over the internet, from scheduling appointments to figuring out the shortest way from point A to point B. The internet has already become an integral part of commerce. Small businesses and farms in areas without dependable access miss out on a lot of opportunities that most businesses take for granted.

Both as chairman and as a member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I have had the chance to draw attention to the state of broadband access in rural communities. I have conducted numerous hearings with testimony from rural broadband providers, farmers, Tribal representatives, and Federal officials both in Washington and in my home State of South Dakota.

Over the past several years, we have seen the number of Americans lacking access to broadband decrease significantly, but there is more work that needs to be done. With the advent of 5G technology, we now have to expand our efforts to make deploying 5G technology to rural communities a priority.

Most of us think today's internet is pretty fast. We get traffic updates that are basically in real time. We receive emails seconds after they have been sent. We stream our favorite shows at home or on the go. But 5G will make 4G look like dialup. It will deliver lightning-fast speeds up to 100 times faster than what today's technology delivers. That is hard to imagine. After all, as I said, today's technology seems pretty fast, but 5G will enable near-instant responsiveness from our phones and other devices.

However, 5G is about a lot more than streaming more shows on more devices or receiving emails instantly. In addition to being up to 100 times faster than current speeds, 5G will be vastly more responsive than 4G technology, and we will be able to connect 100 times the number of devices that can be connected with 4G. Because of this, 5G will enable massive breakthroughs in healthcare, transportation, agriculture, and other key industries.

5G will bring new opportunities and benefits to rural communities in particular. 5G will pave the way for the widespread adoption of precision agriculture, which uses tools like robotics and remote monitoring to help farmers manage their fields and boost their crop yields. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that precision agriculture will reduce farmers' operational costs by up to $25 per acre and increase farmers' yields by up to 70 percent by the year 2050. 5G will also make it easier for residents of rural communities to access business and educational opportunities and long-distance healthcare.

The technology for 5G is already here, and it is actually being implemented, as Friday's event in Sioux Falls demonstrates.

There is more work to be done before 5G is a reality across the United States. In order to deploy 5G, wireless providers need access to sufficient spectrum, and they need to be able to deploy the infrastructure needed to support the technology in a reasonable and timely manner.

Last year, the President signed into law my bipartisan MOBILE NOW Act. It was legislation that I introduced to help secure adequate spectrum for 5G technology. Earlier this year, Senator SCHATZ and I reintroduced the STREAMLINE Small Cell Deployment Act to address the other part of the 5G equation, and that is infrastructure. 5G technology will require not just traditional cell phone towers but small antennas called small cells that can often be attached to existing infrastructure, like utility poles or buildings.

While the Federal Communications Commission, under Chairman Pai, has modernized its regulations on small cell siting, there is more work to be done, and that is where my bill, the STREAMLINE Act, comes in. The STREAMLINE Act will expedite the deployment of small cells while respecting the role of State and local governments in making deployment decisions.

Importantly, it will make it more affordable to bring 5G to rural areas by addressing the costs of small cell deployment. 5G has tremendous promise for rural areas, but it will only deliver on that promise if we ensure that 5G cells are actually deployed in these areas. I am proud that we have made a good start in South Dakota. Sioux Falls' mayor, Paul TenHaken, has worked aggressively to remove barriers to telecommunications investment in Sioux Falls.

Nationally, we urgently need to take action to remove the final barriers to large-scale 5G deployment. While we have made good progress in securing low- and high-band spectrum, China and South Korea are far ahead of us in opening up midband spectrum to 5G. If we don't want China or South Korea to win the race to 5G and seize the economic benefits that 5G will bring, we need to substantially increase the amount of midband spectrum available to U.S. companies, and we need to do it quickly.

We also need to take action on legislation such as my STREAMLINE Act to pave the way for the widespread deployment of 5G infrastructure. America can lead the world in the 5G revolution. The technology is here. We just need to take the final steps to bring 5G into our communities.

I look forward to continuing to work to support the nationwide deployment of 5G with all of the benefits it can bring to the American people.

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