

There is one classic story that really distills this man's character. Most people who have hung around JOHNNY and his team long enough know the famous tale of the "gin and tonic in the laundry room."

Here is the deal: Back in 2006, JOHNNY was still a new Senator. We were tackling some thorny pension issues, and thousands of Georgians stood to be affected if things didn't get hammered out. So this freshman Senator dove in. He went toe to toe with big players like Ted Kennedy and Bill Young over in the House. He didn't get a seat on the conference committee, but he basically appointed himself an honorary member. JOHNNY worked it like crazy. He sleuthed out where they would be meeting, and he spoke to everyone. Because it is JOHNNY we are talking about, we know how this ends: He delivered for Georgia.

Afterward, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution wanted to hear how this freshman Senator had pulled off this victory. Among other things, the reporter asked how JOHNNY had celebrated. Did he clear out the champagne at some beltway steakhouse?

Here is what he said:

Isakson said that after the vote, he went straight back to his Capitol Hill area apartment and celebrated—by doing his laundry. He did not want to leave dirty clothes behind for a month.

He said further: "So as I was putting coins in the machine, I had a gin and tonic in the laundry room."

This anecdote is almost the perfect encapsulation of JOHNNY ISAKSON. It starts with tenacity and a can-do spirit, propelled forward by charisma, smarts, and stubborn patience. It ends with a win for Georgians and one celebratory cocktail while being wrist-deep in laundry detergent.

Yet there is one other story, I think, that reflects this remarkable leader even more perfectly. It starts with one name—Kate Puzey.

In 2009, JOHNNY was reading his local paper and found an obituary for a young lady from northern Georgia who had been in Africa with the Peace Corps. She was just 24. JOHNNY didn't know Kate and didn't know her family, but he felt called to attend her funeral. He sat quietly in the very back and listened to her friends, her family, ministers, and Peace Corps colleagues.

Unassumingly, he invited the family to stay in touch if there was anything he could ever do. Only later, did they relate what wasn't in the obituary. Kate had been murdered in the dark of night after sounding the alarm on child abuse in her village in the African country of Benin.

JOHNNY ISAKSON was on the case from that day forward. Not only was he a fixture on the Foreign Relations Committee, but he was actually the ranking member on the Africa Subcommittee. So he put a framed photo of Kate on his desk and leapt into action. Senator ISAKSON flew to Benin to personally lean on its President. He

met with Peace Corps officials. He built a legislative coalition for reforms to better protect volunteers.

As I said earlier, because this is JOHNNY ISAKSON we are talking about, we know how the story ends—with results. He helped Kate's parents pursue justice, and just a couple of years after JOHNNY sat down in that pew, the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act was law.

Now, that is JOHNNY ISAKSON in one story. He starts out trying to do good for his neighbors and winds up literally changing the world.

Of course, changing the world can be grueling work. We all know JOHNNY's health has made his tireless service more and more challenging in recent months. As much as the other 99 of us hate to hear it, he has decided it is time to find new ways to serve that don't involve twice weekly air travel or winding trips through the Capitol Complex.

But we know our friend is not riding off into the sunset or kicking up his heels. I know he is bound and determined to keep putting his expertise and institutional knowledge to work on behalf of Georgians who need him. I have no doubt that he will keep on advocating for Georgians with a pen and a phone, more friends across the country than anyone can count up, and maybe a few of his eight grandchildren by his side. It sounds like a pretty enviable work arrangement, and no doubt JOHNNY has earned it. He has earned the right to a little less late night voting and a little more time with his lovely wife Dianne.

So on behalf of all of his colleagues, I will tell JOHNNY to go ahead and relax just a little and maybe find something to drink, but, this time around, he should enjoy it on the front porch with Dianne and leave the laundry until later.

We are savoring our last few weeks alongside our good friend here in the Senate. We are so lucky to have called him our colleague.

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 to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Eric Ross Komitee, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

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

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

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to be on the floor today to speak about something of significance, certainly to Kansas but to the country.

We await House action on USMCA—the trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico. It is a trade agreement that is attempting to replace NAFTA and an agreement that is of significance, as I say, to the folks back home in my State.

For the last 2 years, I have engaged in a campaign to try to elevate the importance and to make sure my colleagues, the administration, and people here in Congress understand how important exports and trade are to the United States' economy.

In Kansas, we are an export State. What we produce, what we manufacture, and what we grow in the fields of our State in many, many instances end up someplace else outside the United States.

I have spoken on the Senate floor before. I have met with the President. I have talked to his Cabinet officials. I wrote an open letter to U.S. agricultural groups, encouraging them to fully engage in support for USMCA approval. I have had speaking engagements in places across the country, trying to rally farmers and ranchers and manufacturers and others to fight to preserve our trading relationship with Canada and Mexico.

On Saturday, at home in Kansas, I was with the Kansas Farm Bureau at a townhall. It kicked off their 101st annual meeting to discuss issues facing Kansas agriculture. The topic of trade and its importance to the products that we grow was the most important and most discussed topic at that townhall meeting.

USMCA was signed over a year ago. It is time for the House to pass this important agreement, and, in order for the House to pass it, the Speaker needs to bring it up for a vote.

Canada and Mexico are Kansas's No. 1 and No. 2 export markets. They account for over one-third of exports from our State. Since 2013, unfortunately, farm income at home has fallen by 50 percent. So net farm income in Kansas is down half in the last 6 years.

Many producers are struggling. They have struggled to hang on to their operations, and when farmers aren't doing well, it means that the communities they live in and support aren't doing well. The question is often this: What business will we lose when farmers are not having financial success? What young men and women who grew up on a farm or grew up in that small town will, perhaps, even reluctantly,

find a job someplace else because the economy is not helpful to them as they start their careers?

USMCA will continue to provide duty-free market access to farm commodities, while also expanding trade opportunities for dairy producers and leveling the playing field for the wheat we export to Canada.

USMCA is important to manufacturers as well. USMCA will protect the integrated North American supply chain that is critical to manufacturers in our State.

Wichita is known as the air capital of the world due to aerospace and aviation manufacturing. Kansas is also home to automobile, farm equipment, and other manufacturers.

Twenty-five percent of Kansas manufacturers—mostly, small to medium-size businesses—export to Canada and Mexico.

Nearly 25 years after its enactment, NAFTA was due to be modernized and to reflect changes in today's economy. USMCA will strengthen the rules on intellectual property rights and address digital trade issues. This modernized agreement will serve as a template for future trade negotiations, putting the United States in the driver's seat for setting global trade rules and norms.

Kansas, as I said, is an export State. If we are not exporting, the ability to earn a living, to save a family farm, and to keep our small manufacturers across the communities that dot our State disappears. The ability to earn a living in Kansas depends upon selling food and manufactured goods around the world.

We must continue the fight for more trade, not less. Again, I ask the House of Representatives to quickly consider and please do not let this calendar year come to an end without the NAFTA replacement in place.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as the House of Representatives continues to hold hearings as part of the impeachment inquiry into President Trump, it is incumbent on all of us here in the Senate to review the evidence, keep an open mind, and avoid prejudging the case. If impeachment articles are served to the Senate, Senators must act as judges and jurors, take an oath to do impartial justice, and see to it that the Senate conducts a fair trial.

So I have been hugely disappointed in the partisan conduct of some of my colleagues on the Republican side, who, in their rush to defend the President, have attacked career public servants and former members of the armed services because they didn't like their testimony, and then they spread baseless conspiracy theories and use their powers of a congressional office to play defense for the President.

The Republican chairman of the Judiciary Committee, for example, has

attempted to send the State Department on a wild fishing expedition for documents to support an already debunked rightwing conspiracy theory.

Meanwhile, the State Department is blocking or delaying the production of documents related to several legitimate and ongoing investigations, many of which were requested months ago.

I would expect that Senator GRAHAM's request, outlandish as it is, would go at the back of the line. It would be another total debasement to the process if Secretary Pompeo were to further politicize the production of documents to Congress and say it is OK to release the documents that Senator GRAHAM wants but not the ones that the House committee wanted. Privilege is privilege. I don't believe it applies in each case, but it is privilege. You can't do it to one and not the other.

Also, it is appalling that, in recent days, certain Members on the other side of the aisle have repeated the lie invented by Vladimir Putin's intelligence services that Ukraine was somehow involved in 2016 election interference.

I have a simple message for my Republican colleagues: Stop spreading Putin's propaganda.

By spreading the false and unsupported narrative that Ukraine, not just Putin, was responsible for interfering in the 2016 elections, Republicans are endangering our democracy and empowering Vladimir Putin at the same time. Even wondering aloud about the debunked Ukrainian interference theory helps Putin muddy the waters and deflect the blame away from his country, which our intelligence services have all agreed—I think it is 17 of them—that he interfered in the election. He is trying to create a diversion, and our Republican colleagues are going along.

Republicans need to stop putting the wind into the sails of Putin's propaganda. More than that, Republicans need to forcefully and unequivocally refute the lie that Ukraine had anything to do with election interference in 2016.

ELECTION SECURITY AND DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Madam President, on election security and the NDAA, earlier this year, FBI Director Wray, Trump's appointee to run the FBI, said: "The Russians are absolutely intent on trying to interfere with our elections." That is what Mr. Wray said in response to a question from the senior Senator from South Carolina. Director Wray went on to say: "My view is, until they stop, they haven't been deterred enough." As a reminder to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Director Wray is a Republican and Trump appointee.

It is the testimony of Director Wray and other national security leaders over the past 3 years that has reinforced our commitment on the Democratic side to secure passage of legislation that includes tough, mandatory, and deterrent sanctions against Putin

and against any foreign adversary who would seek to interfere with our elections.

This wasn't a figment of our imagination; this came from our own intelligence and security agencies, that Russia interfered and that they are going to keep interfering until we stop them. So it is not a radical idea; it is a bipartisan idea. It is a part of bipartisan legislation introduced by Senators VAN HOLLEN and MENENDEZ and supported by Senators RUBIO and GRAHAM. This legislation needs to be included in the Defense authorization bill. Defending our democracy is at the core of our Nation's defense. But at the moment, it is being blocked by Republican Leader MCCONNELL and several Republican committee chairs.

I am sure Leader MCCONNELL and his colleagues, rather than explain their opposition, will do what they usually do: point their fingers at Democrats and say "They are holding up the Defense bill; we are not." That is a time-honored Republican tradition, to deflect blame, and it just doesn't hold water.

Just this morning, we heard the Republican leader claim that Democrats are not supporting the defense programs needed to counter Russia. This is laughable coming from the other side when it is Leader MCCONNELL who has fought so often to prevent funding to protect us from Russian interference. It is my Republican counterparts who green-lit the President's treating the Defense Department as a personal piggy bank, including raiding funds from the European Deterrence Initiative—a program designed to counter Russia—to build the President's wall.

Democrats are ready to roll up their sleeves and work with our Republican colleagues to clear any substantive objections they might have to election interference sanctions legislation, as well as any other issue they might have with the Defense authorization bill, but we need to get serious soon about including these provisions. The annual Defense bill might be our last chance to pass significant reforms to secure our elections.

So, Leader MCCONNELL, are you for securing our elections against Russia or not? Because if you are for it, we can move this Defense bill forward much more quickly.

What is holding it up, in good part, is Leader MCCONNELL's opposition to spending the funds necessary and the legislation and sanctions necessary to stop Russia from interfering.

TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY ISAKSON

Madam President, on a bittersweet note, JOHNNY ISAKSON—what a fine man. Today, Members of this Chamber will hold a bipartisan lunch to say goodbye to one of our most beloved colleagues, JOHNNY ISAKSON of Georgia, who is retiring before the end of the year.

Over the last few months, there have been numerous tributes to JOHNNY on

the Senate floor. He has been called “a real friend,” “a mentor,” “more than a colleague,” “humble and tenacious,” “they don’t come any better”—and that is just by Democrats. That is one of the reasons I suggested to Leader MCCONNELL that we have a lunch for JOHNNY ISAKSON, which we are having this afternoon.

Just as there is good reason to praise JOHNNY ISAKSON in the ways Democrats did, there is good reason that during his chairmanship, ISAKSON’s committee passed so many bipartisan bills—57, to be exact—to help veterans. It is because he treated everyone—Democrat, Republican, Independent, newly elected or committee chair—with respect. JOHNNY never let the cynicism of our political times dim his faith in our ability to get something done.

JOHNNY ISAKSON didn’t have the loudest voice in the room, but it was often the most influential. That is because he built years’ worth of trust. You never doubted his word. He was an honest broker. So whenever a chasm seemed to separate the parties on a certain issue, ISAKSON was often the one spanning the divide. I know that from experience, over and over again. As an example, when families in New York struggled to recover from disasters, like Sandy, only to find that flood insurance rates were crushing them with enormous debt, it was Senator ISAKSON, whose State has suffered its fair share of disasters, who worked with my office to find a solution.

We made enormous progress working together to strengthen media shield laws, protecting fearless and independent journalism at a time when we needed to stand up for a free and open press.

In this most recent important appropriations process, we worked together to help the widows and children impacted by 9/11 gain access to a special terror victims’ funding. I want to thank him personally for that, and more broadly, I want to thank him for the example he set for many other Senators.

There are many fine adjectives that will be used to describe Senator ISAKSON, and all of them will be well-deserved, but one word used to describe Senator ISAKSON is not often found in the Halls of Congress: “kind.” JOHNNY ISAKSON is one of the kindest, most thoughtful Senators I have known in my time here. He is a true statesman. That is why I know that independent of any party or politics, everyone here will miss JOHNNY.

I will have more to say about our friend at the bipartisan lunch this afternoon, but for now, I would like to note for the record Senator ISAKSON’s many years of faithful service to his beloved State of Georgia and his country. We wish him and Dianne the very best as he enters the next chapter of his life.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arkansas.

CHINA

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, the New York Times has recently obtained a secret trove of documents from the highest ranks of the Chinese Communist Party. Those documents reveal some chilling, terrifying details about Beijing’s campaign to stamp out all dissent and religious diversity in Xinjiang Province in the north, where the party has concentrated more than 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other minorities in reeducation camps.

These documents bring to mind George Orwell’s famous novel “1984,” not as the cautionary tale as he meant it, but as an instruction manual for the totalitarian government in Beijing. This reign of terror began in 2014, after a string of terror attacks in Xinjiang Province. But instead of bringing those terrorists to justice, the Chinese Communist Party used the attacks as an opportunity to eradicate all dissent—all wrong-think, if you will—from a province with 25 million residents. It would be as if you tried to turn the State of Texas into a concentration camp.

These secret documents reveal a stunning order from General Secretary Xi Jinping. He said, “We must be as harsh as them and show them absolutely no mercy.” So to beat these terrorists, Beijing chose to adopt the tactics of terror. Every Uighur and dissenter in the province is suffering as a result.

Secretary Xi tapped one of the most notorious enforcers to execute this mission, a man named Chen, who climbed the ranks of the Communist Party first by crushing dissent and religious diversity in the southwestern Chinese province of Tibet. The techniques that they perfected in Tibet, the Chinese Communist party took to Xinjiang. They have turned the province into a garrison state with ruthless and pitiless competence. Chen’s order to the police? “Round up everyone who should be rounded up.”

Uighurs, young and old, were loaded on into buses and taken to concentration camps with thick concrete walls and razor-sharp barbed wire. The police informed anxious relatives that these were schools and that their loved ones were being “reeducated.” And, no, they were not free to leave the school, nor would there be any recess or field trips.

A secret manual obtained by Western journalists reveals that these facilities operate more like maximum security prisons than like schools. The manual’s very first section deals with preventing escapes through the use of guard posts, patrols, internal separation, video surveillance, and double locks on dor-

mitory and hallway doors. The manual even advocates the use of “secret forces” to infiltrate the detainee population to prevent them from joining forces or planning an escape.

Beijing now holds—let me say it again—more than 1 million people in these reeducation camps, supposedly for reasons of national security, but the truth is a lot more chilling. The Chinese Communists, like all totalitarians, are paranoid about their own survival—and rightly so—as a conspiracy of greedy, power-mad princelings with no democratic legitimacy whatsoever.

Like all totalitarian rulers, the Chinese Communist Party is also a very jealous master. Every attachment, every conviction, every loyalty—whether to one’s family, one’s culture, even one’s creator—must be sacrificed on the altar of the Party. According to the Chinese Communist Party, everything must bow before it, and every tongue must profess the slogans of Xi and Mao. That means the Uighurs and also Hongkongers, Tibetans, Taiwanese, and others.

The paranoid Communist Party will not limit itself to one province or one people, nor will it ultimately limit itself to its own land. It will extend its tyrannical reach to every corner that it views as its own, creeping ever outward until it demands the deference of all the world, until it “deals with” the rebellious billions who have not yet learned to love the Chinese Big Brother.

The Chinese Communist Party is running concentration camps today, but make no mistake, its appetite for expansion is far greater, its methods of control applicable to anyone anywhere. The Free World must confront this threat in plain view and act now to avert such a dark and chilling future.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Illinois.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a few years ago, a woman who works in my office in Chicago—who actually cleans up the office in the evenings—was so excited when she learned that her daughter had been accepted to college. It was a dream come true for a woman who had immigrated to the United States, taken some of the hardest, most menial manual jobs in the hopes that her daughter, one day, would have a better life.

She sat down with my chief of staff in Chicago to tell her about the details, and immediately, we knew there was much more to the story. Her daughter had been accepted not just to another

college or university; she had been accepted to a for-profit college in the Chicagoland area. The for-profit colleges and universities are notorious. The numbers tell the story, two separate numbers: 9 percent of all postsecondary students go attend for-profit colleges and universities—University of Phoenix, DeVry, very well-known names—9 percent of students go to those schools, but 33 percent of all of the federal student loan defaults are students from for-profit colleges and universities.

Why? Why is this one category of higher education so notorious for students starting and ending up deeply in debt to the point where they cannot pay it back? Well, the reasons are simple and very obvious. They overcharge the students, and they undereducate them. They make promises that are wild and cannot be kept. They give them courses of doubtful value and do not tell them that any credits that they have earned at these for-profit schools cannot be transferred to city colleges, community colleges, or universities.

So the students are stuck. At some point, some will quit piling on the debt and just basically walk away. All the promises and all the jobs and careers that were supposed to come from this are never going to materialize. It is a classic fraud, and sadly, our government is part of that fraud. You see, we recognize the accreditation of those schools. We tell that cleaning lady and her family that these are good schools and universities. The Federal Government does that and offers Federal loans to these students to go to these schools.

Is it any wonder that the students and their families think they are doing the right thing for their future? The Federal Government gave a stamp of approval. Well, what happens when those schools reach the end of the line? What happens when those same for-profit colleges and universities go bankrupt? The students are in a terrible position, deeply in debt with courses that are meaningless, with their lives compromised, and nowhere to turn.

We decided long ago to create an opportunity for these students to get out of this dilemma—one that we share in by accrediting these schools—something called the “borrower defense,” which allows these students, if they were defrauded, to discharge their federal student loans and get on with their lives.

Today, hundreds of thousands of students—who were defrauded by their for-profit colleges—are desperately waiting for Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to discharge their Federal student loans under a provision in Federal law known as borrower defense. Congress created the borrower defense provision to ensure students’ lives are not ruined by their schools’ misconduct and deception.

In 2014, for-profit Corinthian Colleges collapsed. It left more than 70,000 stu-

dents nationwide with worthless credits they could not transfer and mounds of student debt. The students had been lured into those Corinthian schools with false promises, inflated placement rates and income projections. We know that for a fact. We have the data to show they were lying to the students about what graduation from Corinthian could mean in their lives.

Over the last 5 or 6 years, nearly every other major for-profit college, nearly every one of these have faced Federal or State lawsuits and investigations for predatory practices similar to Corinthian Colleges. The result has been hundreds of thousands of defrauded students across America who are seeking discharges to which we say they are entitled under Federal law.

Secretary Betsy DeVos has allowed more than 200,000 borrower defense applications to pile up at the Department, nearly 11,000 from my own State of Illinois. But listen to this, Secretary DeVos has not approved a single claim for more than a year, 200,000 applications stacking up at the Department of Education, not one approved.

So who are some of these borrowers that are languishing? What is their story? Let me tell you about two of them.

One is Jessica from Tucson, AZ. Jessica attended the Art Institute of Tucson from 2009 to 2012. It was owned by the failed for-profit Education Management Corporation, EDMC. Heartbreakingly, Jessica says: “I have experienced unbelievable amounts of stress and depression due to this situation. I have been placed on anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medication over the years and been through therapy . . . I have self-harmed and contemplated suicide, because I feel so trapped and unable to recover or move forward. I have a general feeling of worthlessness, because I feel like my potential has been squandered.”

She went to the Art Institute of Tucson, and her experience has led her to this desperate situation. She tried to harm herself. Instead of a bright future, she is left with a mountain of debt and nothing to show for it but deep financial and psychological pain. She says, “Every aspect of her life has been affected.”

And so, is Secretary Betsy DeVos trying to help Jessica? No. Secretary DeVos is making it worse. Jessica submitted her borrower defense application almost 4 years ago in 2016. She has waited for this period of time to hear anything from the Department of Education. What is their excuse? I mean, if someone writes a letter to my office and does not get a reply and they come back to me and say, Are you going to answer this, DURBIN, we send a reply. We try to do it promptly with everybody.

How can Secretary DeVos be holding these things up for years, while the students see the mountain of debt growing? As she waits, Jessica’s loans are in forbearance, where they con-

tinue to gather interest, meaning that the total amount owed continues to grow. She is just 1 of 4,518 borrowers from Arizona who are stuck waiting for Secretary DeVos to use the authority that Congress gave her to discharge fraudulent loans.

I also want to tell you about Jonathan from Colorado—3,600 defrauded borrowers are waiting for relief. Jonathan from Westminster, CO, attended DeVry University—sadly a Chicago-based for-profit school—studying to be an electronics engineer.

He is a father and a husband who was trying to provide more for his family, so he took out student loans that sounded like an investment. He currently owes almost \$100,000 in outstanding Federal student loans from attending DeVry, twice what he was told his education would cost.

Of his debt, Jonathan says, “My credit has been destroyed. I couldn’t repay these loans in two lifetimes, even if my degree had any value to employers.” Sadly, it doesn’t. Employers don’t even recognize his degree.

Jonathan says:

My student loans are the millstone around my family. The debt I owe has made my kids not want to attend college at all. They see no value in it; their own father has an engineering degree but he can’t get hired anywhere because his school was a scam.

Those are the words of Jonathan from Colorado.

So not only has this fraudulent school taken away his future by burdening him with a worthless degree and piles of debt; in many ways, it affects his children’s future.

Jonathan applied for a borrower defense discharge in 2017, nearly 3 years ago. He has been waiting to hear from Secretary Betsy DeVos. Secretary DeVos’s failure to provide him with relief, he says, “has caused [him] to lose faith that the government will actually protect students like [him].”

Secretary DeVos has cruelly ignored defrauded borrowers like Jessica and Jonathan, but what is more is that she is trying to make it almost impossible for future borrowers like them to secure the relief that Congress intended by rewriting the rules.

In August, Secretary DeVos released a new version of the borrower defense rule that places unreasonable burdens on borrowers to attain relief. The result is that the Department estimates the DeVos rule will deny nearly \$11 billion in relief to borrowers compared to the current rule.

In September, I introduced a resolution in the Senate to overturn the DeVos borrower defense rule. Forty-two of my colleagues have joined me in cosponsoring it. I plan to bring the resolution to a vote on the Senate floor where it only needs a simple majority to pass. At that time, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will have a choice: Will they stand with Secretary DeVos’s actions—or, I should say, lack of actions for 3 or 4 years—will they deny help to defrauded students, or will

they stand with young people like Jessica and Jonathan, trying to get their lives back together and trying to get Congress to implement the one law it passed that could help them? It is a choice that seems pretty easy for most American people when they hear this scenario described to them.

A recent opinion piece in the *Anchor* Daily News criticized Secretary DeVos for siding with “for-profit colleges that have defrauded students” and “illegally [denying] student loan debt relief to thousands of students.” Even in Alaska, hundreds of borrowers are waiting for borrower defense discharges.

Nationally, Americans agree that these defrauded borrowers deserve relief. In a 2016 New America poll, 78 percent of Americans said that students should have their Federal student loan debt discharged if their school deceived them. That is pretty basic, isn’t it? If you were cheated, you ought to be taken care of.

When you break the numbers down by party, 87 percent of Democrats and 71 percent of Republicans—vast majorities—supported relief for these students. So when it comes time to vote on my resolution to overturn the DeVos borrower defense rule denying relief to defrauded borrowers, I hope my colleagues will stand with students and the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

ABORTION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, my hope is that each of us in this Chamber and their families enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving time, being grateful for all of the blessings that we in this country have.

I know I certainly had a wonderful week. I had the opportunity to spend some time across the great State of Tennessee and to talk with Tennesseans about what was on their minds.

I will tell you this. In my opinion and experience, as diverse as Tennesseans are, there is one thing in common that I heard repeatedly, and that is that they are through with trying to guess where politicians in Washington, DC, stand on issues. This is something I think all of us need to hear and probably don’t want to hear, but our fellow Americans, and certainly Tennesseans, have no idea what their elected representatives believe. Instead, all they see up here is this endless cycle of political in-fighting and failed legislation. They consistently say: We want you to focus on things that are important to us. We want you to focus on things that are important to the country. I will tell you that it is no wonder that our country’s discourse is plagued by what is a marked cynicism for even our most earnest efforts.

As I thought about this during the week and the visits that I had across the State, I thought: You need look no further for an example of where they

see this fighting as being unnecessary than an issue that has become a magnet for derision, and that is the issue of protecting life—more specifically, the use of taxpayer dollars to fund the abortion procedures.

In poll after poll, after poll, a majority of Americans have indicated that they oppose public funding of abortion. The numbers on this are not even close.

As early as this summer, self-identified Democrats’ support for taxpayer-funded abortion struggled to even break out of single digits. The data is clear, and it is convincing. The American taxpayer does not want their tax dollar being used to fund abortion procedures.

So how is it, then, that my friends in the minority insist upon loopholes and work-arounds that make taxpayers complicit in the slaughter of the unborn?

Their cause has been frustrated, of course, by President Trump’s aggressively pro-life agenda. Last year, he proposed the “protect life rule,” which cut taxpayer funding under the title X program for any facility that performs abortions or that refers their clients to those facilities that perform abortions.

This rule closely mirrored my Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act. That was the first bill I filed when I came to the Senate. It is something that is very important to me.

But this year, this body’s liberal faction once again seized an opportunity to undercut the pro-life agenda via a legislative trick known around this Chamber and Capitol Hill as a poison pill. You see, they found a way to hold hostage millions of dollars attached to the fiscal year 2020 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill. That was done via an amendment that funnels family planning dollars to domestic organizations that support abortions overseas.

Do you see what they are doing?

It is an amendment that funnels family planning dollars to domestic—U.S.—organizations, but those organizations are supporting abortions overseas. It also uses Obama-era gender policies to define sex—a clear red herring to get people arguing about gender identity so they will ignore the Democratic Party’s leftward swing on the issue of abortion.

You could chalk all this up to politics, were it not for the existence of the bipartisan budget agreement that both parties agreed to ahead of our work on appropriations. That agreement included a ban on poison pill riders like the Shaheen amendment, as well as assurances that any poison pills would be swiftly removed. We thought we had taken care of that issue with the bipartisan budget agreement, but oh, no, here we go.

Yet in order to “empower women overseas” Democrats have indicated that they are willing to throw away \$847 million for maternal and child health, \$100 million for global health

security programs, \$150 million for nutrition assistance, and \$6.2 billion for global HIV and AIDS assistance. They are doing this, throwing all that money away, so they can make a political point.

This is an interesting development coming from the party that once deployed their support for abortion in only the most extraordinary circumstances. The party of “safe, legal, and rare”—their terminology—has become the party that hedges their bets with infanticide and prioritizes convenience over human life.

Just across the river in Virginia, Ralph Northam and his cohorts were allowed to set a new reprehensible standard for what left-leaning America is willing to condone in the name of soulless politicking.

Tennesseans told me they want to see their representatives speaking up. They want to see women speaking up on behalf of life, families, and the unborn. They see clearly that if protecting life is the hallmark of the conservative movement, then, destroying life is the hallmark of a more liberal approach. They want us to draw a line in the sand and declare once and for all that loopholes and legislative tricks will no longer be tolerated because, for them, abortion is not up for casual discussion. They see how clearly and how easily the left trifles with the lives of children, and they are repulsed by it. What they want us to do is to focus on getting things done that are important to them. And, yes, to Tennesseans, being able to say the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness is something that has a deep meaning.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. 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. CRUZ assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. CRAMER assumed the Chair.)

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator

from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 86, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 369 Ex.]

YEAS—86

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

NAYS—4

Cantwell	Markey
Heinrich	Murray

NOT VOTING—10

Bennet	Klobuchar	Warren
Booker	Rounds	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Sanders	
Harris	Scott (SC)	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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 John L. Sinatra, Jr., of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Rob Portman, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roy Blunt.

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 John L. Sinatra, Jr., of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York, 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 South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 76, nays 16, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 370 Ex.]

YEAS—76

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

NAYS—16

Blumenthal	Hirono	Smith
Brown	Markey	Udall
Cantwell	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Wyden
Durbin	Murray	
Heinrich	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—8

Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Gillibrand	Rounds	Whitehouse
Harris	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 76, the nays are 16.

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 John L. Sinatra, Jr., of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the

cloture vote on Executive Calendar No. 353, the time following the recess until 4:30 p.m. be reserved for tributes to retiring Senator ISAKSON; further that the time from 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. be equally divided between the leaders or their designees on the nomination, and that at 5 p.m., the Senate vote on cloture on the following nominations in the order listed: Executive Calendar Nos. 478, 381, 459, and 460; that if cloture is invoked, the confirmation votes on Executive Calendar Nos. 353, 478, 381, 459, and 460 occur at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 4.

I further ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Duncan nomination be waived and that the cloture votes on Executive Calendar Nos. 479, 489, and 386 occur at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 4, and that if cloture is invoked, the confirmation votes occur at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader on Thursday, December 5.

I further ask unanimous consent that, with respect to all the votes ordered in this agreement, if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator FEINSTEIN be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled recess.

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

The Senator from California.

NOMINATION OF SARAH E. PITLYK

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the nomination of Sarah Pitlyk to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri. Ms. Pitlyk's record is extremely troubling and raises a number of questions about her ability to be a fair and impartial judge.

Ms. Pitlyk was deemed by the American Bar Association to be Not Qualified, one of only 3 percent of people reviewed by the Bar over the past 3 years. This is the first that I have had occasion to review in total. A district court judge, as you well know, must hit the ground running. Ms. Pitlyk's lack of practical knowledge and experience would significantly disadvantage the litigants appearing before her.

I also want to acknowledge the highly unusual nature of a "Not Qualified" rating by the Bar; 97 percent of President Trump's nominees have been rated at least "Qualified" by the American Bar Association. This means that Ms. Pitlyk falls in the small minority—just 3 percent—of candidates deemed not qualified by the American Bar Association. This shows how rare that rating is. The ABA has been reviewing the qualifications, as you already know, of judicial nominees since 1989. They know what they are doing, and those of us on the committee take their evaluations very seriously.