

cannabis and hemp businesses have access to the same banking services as any other business. She established the Senate Cannabis Working Group to coordinate the Senate's efforts around this issue.

She has worked to ensure the integrity of our judicial system by vetting the nominations for judgeships and, in one case, produced significant insights and records that resulted in the Senate rejecting the nomination of Ryan Bounds for the 9th Circuit.

In her spare time, Lauren has been fighting to save our democracy. Earlier this year she created my "Blueprint For Democracy" to introduce six specific bills, and she was the point person on my team for finalizing the Senate version of the For the People Act, a comprehensive election reform bill which takes on anti-democratic practices such as gerrymandering, voter suppression, and dark money.

But beyond those accomplishments and many others that I haven't mentioned, she made one contribution that I will always remember and deeply appreciate. As many are aware, I spent a significant amount of time over the last year and a half shining a light on the Trump administration's policy of cruelty toward immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers on our southern border.

Even though immigration issues are not in her portfolio, it was Lauren who inspired me to get involved. I was reading the speech by former Attorney General Jeff Sessions—a speech labeled his "zero tolerance" speech—and the name didn't strike me as unexpected. But when I read the details, it sounded as if the plan was to discourage refugees from coming to our border by deliberately traumatizing children, to rip them out of their parents' arms.

I refused to believe that any American administration would ever actually do this, and, as I was expressing the belief that no American administration would ever resort to hurting children as a strategy to deter immigration and would not resort to a strategy of hurting children to do anything that is not acceptable under any moral code or set of ethics or religious standards, it was Lauren who said: There is one way to find out, and that is to go down to the border.

So I went that next weekend, that next Sunday, and became the first Member of Congress to see the children being sorted into cages after being separated from their parents and to be turned away from any conversation in front of a former Walmart where I had heard that hundreds of separated boys were being held.

The video of that really sent a message to the entire Nation of what this administration was hiding, but the fact that I was there at that processing center and the fact that I was there at that former Walmart, seeking to find out what was going on with those hundreds of boys who had been taken from their parents, was because Lauren

Oppenheimer said: The best way to find out is to go down to the border yourself.

Thank you, Lauren, for playing such a critical role in all of these efforts. You are such a valued member of our team, and you are still valued as a member of our team. You will always be a member of our team, even as you go on to work for our colleague from Alabama.

Our office notices your absence, without the energy and enthusiasm emanating from your desk and your unceasing willingness to take on new challenges and your very valuable work to mentor other team members.

Know that all of us on the team wish you the very best as you continue to fight for a better world in this new chapter of your career.

I am excited that you are returning to your world of expertise, the world of banking. I may be calling you now and then to get your insights on that set of issues that you know so well.

All of us look forward to seeing the insights and understanding you will help us gain from your perspective when you are fully immersed in the banking world. It will be valuable to all of us in the Senate and valuable to our Nation.

I thank you for your service.

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

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

VOTE ON RAY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. WYDEN. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 10 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Sinema
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Duckworth	Menendez	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Harris	Peters	

NOT VOTING—6

Alexander	Moran	Sanders
Booker	Perdue	Warren

The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that 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.

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. 498.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

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 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 Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Ron Johnson, Mike Rounds, Richard Burr, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, Tim Scott, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, John Boozman, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

The Senator from Florida.

IRAN

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, President Trump is working to defend the freedom of our country. He was right to take swift and decisive action to kill one of the world's worst monsters. Soleimani was responsible for the death and maiming of thousands of Americans and tens of thousands worldwide. He ordered the attack on the United States Embassy in Iraq. He had plans to kill more Americans.

There are some in this body who are trying to curtail the President's authority to defend Americans and defend American interests. This is not only foolish; it is fool hardy. Our President does and should have the authority to defend Americans, period, but it is an authority he doesn't take lightly. President Trump is right to use restraint and avoid further escalation unless Iran continues their provocations.

The regime in Iran—a regime that chants “Death to America” and wants to wipe Israel off the face of the map—needs to know that the United States will not tolerate acts of aggression against America or our allies. The death of Soleimani was a strong warning, but they should also know they have the opportunity to become productive members of the world community and bring peace and prosperity to their people. The choice is theirs. We all want peace, and the greatest deterrent to war is our economic and military strength, but Iran must make the choice for peace. It is a choice that is theirs alone.

During this trying time, I want to pause and take a moment to remember the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. We often forget in Washington that the people carrying out the orders of our Commander in Chief are just that—people. They are not pieces on a chess board. They are fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters.

I remember my father talking about his experience in World War II—a conflict he certainly had no expectation to return from. He loved his service to our country but never forgot those we lost.

I remember friends going to Vietnam and Korea. I have spent many hours sitting and talking with Gold Star parents. As Governor, I watched Florida National Guard units leave for wars in the Middle East.

The cost of war is great. As Ronald Reagan said, “Freedom is not bought cheaply.” We should never forget that.

I am praying for our brave men and women in uniform—some of them Floridians—headed overseas to protect Americans and prevent an escalating conflict, and I am praying for peace.

These heroes put their lives in danger to defend our Nation, and we cannot thank them enough for their sacrifice and their service. We must recognize the dangers and threats that our world faces today, and we must always stand together united to defend freedom and democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

REMEMBERING JOCELYN BIRCH BURDICK

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, on the day after Christmas, former Senator Jocelyn Burdick died in Fargo, ND, at the age of 97.

Jocelyn served only 30 days, roughly—or 3 months, maybe, at the most—in the United States Senate while she filled the vacancy that was created by the death of her husband, the longtime United States Senator, Quentin Burdick. During those 3 months, Jocelyn was able to cast votes as her husband would have cast them and to support his staff after his death and through the transition to fill the vacancy in a special election. Jocelyn will forever hold a place in North Dakota history as North Dakota's first woman United States Senator.

However, her service in North Dakota goes far beyond those 3 months she served in the Senate. All of us Senators know the importance and the incredible service of our spouses. Jocelyn stood by Quentin's side for 32 years while he served our State here in this important body.

Throughout her life, Jocelyn embraced her place in public life with tremendous grace, dignity, and class. She demonstrated by example how people can be principled in their beliefs, yet friendly, cordial, even affectionate while having different political views. I am honored to be standing here using her desk—Quentin's desk. To be a part of this heritage is a great honor for me.

The impact of her life well lived can be seen in countless ways, especially as a philanthropist, as a political and community volunteer, and certainly as a woman of deep faith. Jocelyn's memory will remain alive in the hearts of all of those who had the privilege to know her.

Kris and I join Senator HOEVEN and Mikey, and many, many North Dakotans in sending our condolences and our best wishes to the Burdick family. We pray that fond memories and the deep affection so many people held for Jocelyn will comfort them in these

days and the days ahead. I pray that God will bless Jocelyn Burdick's memory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, today I rise, along with my colleague Senator CRAMER, to honor former Senator from North Dakota Jocelyn Burdick. She was the first woman to represent the State of North Dakota in the U.S. Senate. My wife Mikey and I were saddened to hear of her recent passing, and we want to extend our sincere condolences to all of the Burdick family.

As I said, I, along with Senator CRAMER, have introduced a resolution to honor Senator Jocelyn Burdick and her service to the people of North Dakota and the United States in this body.

Jocelyn was born in Fargo, ND. She attended Principia College and Northwestern University and began her career as a radio announcer in Moorhead, MN.

On September 12, 1992, Jocelyn Burdick became the first woman from the State of North Dakota to serve in the U.S. Senate. She was appointed by then-Governor George Sinner to fill the seat of her late husband, Quentin Burdick, whom she served alongside during his 32 years in this body, the U.S. Senate. The Burdick family has a long history of public service.

During her time in the Senate, she helped to establish the Quentin N. Burdick Indian Health Program at the University of North Dakota, supporting healthcare training programs for Native Americans, and helped to secure funding for the Federal courthouse in Fargo named after her late husband.

Jocelyn was a Sunday school teacher and devoted member of the Christian Science Church. She served as president of the local Parent Teacher Association, recorded public service announcements raising awareness of substance abuse and drunk driving, and was nationally recognized for her philanthropy on behalf of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority.

I knew Jocelyn Burdick, and she was a fine person. I join with the people of North Dakota in expressing our appreciation for her service on behalf of our State and our Nation.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). The Senator from Ohio.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in the fall of 2016, just 4 years ago, I heard Candidate Trump repeatedly promise to get rid of the North American Free Trade Agreement—to pull out of it, to renegotiate it, or to fix it so that it worked better than it did.

I didn't support Donald Trump for President. I think he has been a less than honest President with whom I disagree in terms of his character and in terms of his work product, but that is really not the point. The point was

that I liked what he said about getting out of NAFTA. I know what NAFTA did to the Presiding Officer's home State of Indiana. I know what it did to Dayton, OH; to Cleveland, OH; to Canton, OH; to Youngstown, Toledo, Mansfield, Springfield, Zanesville, and to almost every community in my State. So I welcomed the President's saying that.

The reason I thought these trade agreements were so bad for our country was that these trade agreements were always written by corporate interests to serve the needs of the executives and the major stockholders of the corporations. In fact, they not only were not written for workers, but they undermined workers. I have never voted for a trade agreement. I voted against NAFTA, and I voted against the Central American Free Trade Agreement. I voted against permanent normal trade relations with China—one after another after another—because I saw that these trade agreements were written for corporate interests and that they betrayed workers.

What happened is that companies would shut down production in Canton or in Niles or in Bryan or in Lima, and they would move overseas, build factories there, and sell those products back into the United States. That was what happened with these trade agreements. Corporations liked them because they could exploit low-income workers. They liked them because their profits could be greater. They liked them because they had no responsibility to their workers when they would move overseas and sell the products back. That was their mission. That was the way these companies did business. So I welcomed the President's doing that.

Then, about a year ago, the President presented the new NAFTA. He called it the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the USMCA. When he presented it to the Congress, it was more of the same. It was almost exactly the same. It had a few little tweaks, but fundamentally the President again betrayed the workers, as all of these trade agreements do. The President's bill, the President's USMCA, was again a giveaway to corporate interests. In fact, there was a provision in there for the drug companies that was maybe worse than I had ever seen in a trade agreement. The White House, I admit, does look like an executive retreat for drug company executives except on Tuesdays and Fridays, when it looks like a retreat for Wall Street executives.

The President presented this USMCA to us, and it was the same ol, same ol. It fundamentally would mean more jobs would be outsourced, more profits for corporations, and more exploitation of low-wage workers. Because of his USMCA, even more companies would shut down in Lima or in Zanesville or in Gallipolis or in Portsmouth or in Chillicothe and move overseas to look for cheap labor and weaker labor laws so they would make more money. So

this President betrayed workers again by giving us a trade agreement that was no better than the ones he had campaigned against.

Yet, this year, a number of us—Senator WYDEN of Oregon, Speaker PELOSI, Congresswoman DELAURO of Connecticut, and organized labor—banded together and said: No, Mr. President. We are not going to pass another corporate trade agreement. We are not going to pass another special interest trade agreement that sells out workers and enriches corporate executives over and over. We are not going to buy that again. We are saying no to that. Then we said: We will support your USMCA only if you include strong language for workers.

So we got the Brown-Wyden amendment in this agreement.

Finally, after a year—the President fundamentally refused to talk to us about it, and the U.S. Trade Rep refused to seriously include this language—they realized: Wait a second. If we don't do this, we will never get another USMCA. So just a few weeks ago, President Trump and U.S. Trade Representative Lighthizer finally agreed to put in strong labor language.

Do you know what that means? It means that the center of our trade agreement now—the center of our trade policy—is workers. Workers are now at the center of our trade policy, not corporate interests that send jobs overseas, not pharmaceutical companies that make even more money when they go to China, not other kinds of corporations that outsource their jobs and have their whole business plans undermining workers.

Do you know what else that means? It is good news for places like Gallipolis and Zanesville and Mansfield and Lima and Chillicothe and Columbus and Dayton and all of these communities in my State. It is good news for them because, for the first time, they can look to our trade policy and see that workers are the center of that trade policy.

In years and years here, I have never voted for a trade agreement. I have always opposed NAFTA and CAFTA and PRT with China. Last week, in the Committee on Finance, because they included Brown-Wyden, because workers are now at the center of our trade policy, I cast my vote for a trade agreement that will matter, that will help workers in my State. It is a good move. It means not just that this trade agreement will be better; it means, in the future, that any President who wants to pass a trade agreement will have to do what we did this year over the resistance of President Trump. He will have to do what we did this year and put workers at the center of our trade policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, if I go back 2½ years, there was a lot of turmoil and a lot of conversation about

the President of the United States' stepping into the issue of trade, specifically in North America, for it was a settled issue between Canada and Mexico. Yet we asked the question: Should we revisit NAFTA?

At that time, a lot of people said that the trade agreement was complicated and hard and that we shouldn't touch the trade agreement, that we should just leave it alone. With all of its warts and all of its faults, it is what it is. Don't touch it.

Instead, the President chose to step into the North American Free Trade Agreement and say: No. We are going to renegotiate this deal. It is 25 years old, and it needs a revisit. Against the many people who were pushing against him, he pushed through that and said: Let's start all over again.

In the past 2½ years, the Trump team has renegotiated the deal and brought it back to Congress, where it passed with overwhelming bipartisan support—finally—in the House. It sat on the House's desk for 14 months before those in the House took it up. Finally, after 14 months of their not taking it up, they passed it with overwhelming bipartisan support. It has now gone through the Committee on Finance here in the Senate with a vote of 25 to 3, and it is headed toward the floor of the Senate, to the President's desk, and finally to getting this issue resolved about North American free trade.

Now, with this issue between Canada and Mexico, I have had some folks ask me: Why is it such a big issue? It is a big issue because Canada and Mexico are our No. 1 and No. 2 trading partners in the world. Far and away, Canada and Mexico are our biggest trading partners. Our trade relationships are essential not just to every border State but to States like my State. In Oklahoma, Canada and Mexico are also our biggest trading partners. They are vital to our economic success and have been key to what has happened in NAFTA over the last 25 years.

Yet now, after all of the negotiations and all of the noise, we finally have a revised area in trade that has needed to be addressed with things like intellectual property, which is a new chapter in what is now called the USMCA or what people call NAFTA 2.0. This simple change is not so simple when trying to deal with intellectual property theft, whether it be a camcorder recording in a movie theater somewhere in Mexico, whether they sell pirated copies, which has been an issue, or whether it is just the ownership of patents and how things actually move from place to place. Can you confiscate property that is illegally produced at each border crossing, and how is that managed? That is addressed for the first time in this agreement—trying to protect American patent owners from not having their patents stolen once they leave and go to Canada or Mexico.

Twenty-five years ago, digital trade was not a major issue in NAFTA. Obviously, it is a very significant issue for

us now, and it is finally addressed in this agreement, as well as how we are going to handle digital services and digital trade.

There is something very important to my State, and that is agricultural trade and how agricultural goods are going to move. Now, the vast majority of this USMCA agreement lines up exactly with the NAFTA of the past, but there are some areas that were problems in the NAFTA of the past that had to be addressed, one of those being wheat, for instance.

When wheat moved from the United States into Canada, Canada downgraded that wheat to a lower grade so that our Oklahoma farmers would get less profit for that because they downgraded that wheat as it moved across the Canadian border. This agreement settles that issue. That was just Canadian protectionism. It wasn't that the wheat was of a lesser quality; it was just that they were trying to protect Canadian wheat instead of having an actual free market.

This is a free trade area. The tariffs and the fees go away across North America if we can have a level playing field. In areas in which we don't have a level playing field, like with Oklahoma wheat competing with Canada's wheat, we are taking that on. I feel confident that Oklahoma wheat is going to win that fight, and given this new trade agreement, we get the opportunity to win that.

There are lots of areas in the agreement that help us in agriculture. There are areas in digital trade and intellectual property, as well as in multiple other areas of manufacturing. That is why so many groups and so many individuals have looked at this and have gone back to the Trump administration, with some of my Democratic colleagues begrudgingly swallowing hard and saying: This is a good agreement for America in the future. This does help us keep jobs here. This helps us continue to have a level playing field for trade.

I congratulate the Trump administration for its 2½ long years of very hard work to get to this agreement. I am grateful that we are nearing an agreement with China, a phase No. 1 agreement. It is much needed because China has been a major problem in intellectual property theft and in its having an unfair trading platform. I am grateful the administration has also completed the first stage of a major, new trade agreement with Japan. Those are our four largest trading partners, and it is significant to our economy not just in the short term but in the long term that we continue to have stable free trade areas in as many places as we can.

I am confident in the American worker. When given the opportunity to compete, we win because of the quality of our work, the quantity of our work, and the creativity of the inventions we put out from this country. Let's keep doing that. Let's keep winning around the world in our trade agreements.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO DOUG AND APRIL MOORE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is the end of the week here, a Thursday at least, on the Senate floor, and it is that time of the week that I usually come down and talk about somebody who is making my State such a great place to live in, somebody who is doing great things for their community, somebody I refer to as a group or individuals as our Alaskan of the Week.

So this is kind of exciting. The pages usually see this as the most exciting speech of the week because they learn about Alaska.

This is our first Alaskan of the Week of the year. I am sure the Presiding Officer is even excited about that. It is actually the first one of the whole decade, so stand by.

Now, usually I give these speeches and talk a little bit and update about what is going on in Alaska.

I just spent a glorious holiday, New Year's, Christmas in Anchorage and Fairbanks over the last couple weeks.

We passed the winter solstice. That is the shortest day of the year. Now, it might not feel like that in Alaska, but actually the days are getting longer, getting more sunlight, but the cold has hit, winter has come.

In Anchorage, our largest city, my hometown, temperatures just last weekend when I was home were dropping into the 15-below-zero range. In the interior of Alaska—that is a little more north—it hit 65 below zero in Manley Hot Springs on December 27. That rivals the winter temperature on Mars. OK? It is cold.

I was in Fairbanks. That is part of the interior, beautiful Fairbanks, where it has been close to 40 below the last couple weeks. I went out and took a run. I am not sure I realized it was that cold. It was only about 20 below on my run. It was kind of cold, but it was still a nice run. We have a lot of folks who get out and enjoy the beautiful winter, beautiful temperatures.

I mentioned in the interior—the elementary school in Nenana recently posted that they were going to cancel school if it hit 55 below zero.

So these are tough people, especially having just witnessed Washington, DC, close the whole darn city because they had a half inch of snow, but I am digressing here.

We live in extremes in Alaska, but, for many of us, that is exactly why we live in Alaska. Toughing out these extreme temperatures together certainly makes us closer, brings communities together, makes people rely on each other. We are a huge State geographically, but a small, tight-knit State in terms of population, and we get through things like these tough winters, really cold winters, by gathering together in small and large places all across the State, places of warmth, particularly when it is cold outside.

So today I would like to recognize an Alaskan couple who has provided one

of those places of warmth for the community of Talkeetna and the surrounding areas. Talkeetna is about 100 miles north of Anchorage. It is a must-visit stop when you come to Alaska. Why? Well, it is absolutely beautiful. It is the gateway to Denali National Park, and if you would like to take a flightseeing tour of Denali, it almost certainly is going to take off in Talkeetna.

So I encourage everybody who is watching here in the Gallery or on TV, you have to come to Alaska. You have to visit—winter, summer, fall, spring, it doesn't matter. You will have the best trip of a lifetime. Go to Talkeetna.

It is also a unique town in many ways—Alaska unique. It was the model for the TV show, many years ago, "Northern Exposure." Its honorary member for 10 years was a cat named Stubbs. So you get the picture. It is a town filled with generous and warm people who love their State, their communities, their country.

Our Alaskans of the Week today are Doug and April Moore. They are the owners of an iconic store in Talkeetna, Moores' Hardware and Building Supply. It is a hardware store with a heart and a place for the community to gather, particularly in the winter, and it is a place that the Moores run to reflect the value of families and communities that they hold so dear.

So let me tell you a little bit about the Moores. Doug's parents and his brother moved from Anchorage to Talkeetna in 1981, when Doug was a preteen and his parents wanted to live in a smaller community, smaller than Anchorage, and they wanted to own their own business. So they chose a tool store housed in a Quonset hut. Like many small business owners all across Alaska, all across America, they got to work—hard work, long hours, but that is what they did.

The younger Moores worked at the store when they were growing up, but Doug chose to be a surveyor when he was in college, and eventually he ran into April, his wife, at a restaurant in Talkeetna. Because it is a small town, they knew each other. They had grown up just a quarter mile apart, but things clicked at that restaurant.

After they got married, Doug and April decided they wanted to run the family business, the hardware store, and they wanted it to stay in the family.

Fast forward to now. If you live in Talkeetna, and you want to build a house, you want to make repairs, you need a hammer, a nail, or just for a cup of coffee, their store is more than 10,000 square feet, with a staff of about 20, with more in the summer. The staff loves the place. They love the Moores because they are great people, great owners, dedicated owners.

Here is how one employee describes working for them:

You will never find anyone like them anywhere.

Another said:

They are amazing people, what they do to us personally—they take care of us. They make sure we are taken care of. If we have family issues, they understand and do everything they can to help.

Doug recently said:

We're a family-oriented business. The families of the people who work for us are very important. The kids of our employees have grown up in the business.

Both of their parents have been together for 50 years, and Doug and April have been together 25. These are really important milestones, really important examples.

As Doug said, "We really believe that's one of the big problems with America right now—families not staying together. We live our values."

The Moores are also heavily involved in the community. April was a Girl Scout leader and a PTA member. Doug was the president of the community council, a volunteer emergency medical technician, a volunteer firefighter. They help on Thanksgiving with the food bank, as well as the local gun club and firing range. They give where they can. They give back to the community. They are integrated in the community.

Last summer, a series of wildfires ravaged through Southcentral Alaska. The most destructive of these fires was the 3,700-acre McKinley fire. It destroyed 51 homes, 3 businesses, and 84 outbuildings. Thank God, nobody in Alaska was killed.

As one of the largest hardware stores servicing that region where that fire was, Moores' Hardware and Building Supply stepped up, donating time, equipment, and giving to people who needed help, people who needed to rebuild.

We often talk about how small businesses are the backbone of our country's economy, but here is the thing. They are also the backbone of our communities.

In small towns throughout America or throughout Alaska, businesses are not just places for people to go and shop for things. They can also be places where people get together, where people give to one another.

In fact, they are often the glue that holds communities together. This is what Moores' Hardware and Building Supply is. I have had the honor of going there, shopping there, seeing this great store and community in action.

Now, one of the Moores' sons, Justin, is in training to take over the store when Doug and April finally retire. It will then be an official third-generation small business in the great State of Alaska. What a great accomplishment that will be.

Justin is committed, just like Doug and April, to their employees and their communities. So I want to thank the Moores. In fact, I want to thank all small business owners across Alaska and across the country for your hard work.

Doug and April, thank you not just for that hard work but for all you are doing for the community of Talkeetna

and the surrounding areas and for the great State of Alaska.

Congratulations on being our first Alaskan of the Week of 2020.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 3:32 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 5:28 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SULLIVAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 541, 542 and 552.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Cynthia L. Attwood, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring April 27, 2025 (Reappointment); Amanda Wood Laihow, of Maine, to be a Member of Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for the remainder of a term expiring April 27, 2023; and Crosby Kemper III, of Missouri, to be Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a term of four years, en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Attwood, Laihow, and Kemper, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO CARTER HENDRICKS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as my good friend Carter Hendricks prepares to end his service as the mayor of Hopkinsville, he certainly has a lot to show for his years of leadership in Southwestern Kentucky. He has helped the region take full advantage of its great potential, and I know I join his friends and constituents in expressing our gratitude. Today, I would like to honor this remarkable Kentuckian and wish him well as he embarks on his next chapter.

When he was first elected in 2014, Carter made headlines for becoming the second youngest mayor in Hopkinsville's two centuries of history. The local newspaper, the highly regarded Kentucky New Era, also reported that Carter was only the city's second Republican mayor. He quickly mobilized the city's administration with a bold strategy to make Hopkinsville an attractive destination for economic development. His flagship initiative, called "Hoptown WINS," was a nearly \$15 million capital campaign involving downtown improvements, as well as new parks, a sports complex, and a visitors center. These state-of-the-art amenities are meant to help draw investment and good jobs into Hopkinsville and the surrounding areas. Now halfway through his second term, Carter and his constituents are beginning to see the positive results of his leadership. His vision of Hopkinsville's bright future is helping to create the conditions for growth and prosperity.

Carter had been encouraging economic growth in the region long before he first stepped foot into the mayor's office. For nearly a decade, Carter worked in senior positions at the Christian County Chamber of Commerce, including 4 years as its president and CEO. With local leaders and the business community, he helped develop creative solutions to the county's challenges.

I have had the great privilege to work with Carter in both of these capacities. When I heard the area's lack of access to a Federal interstate was obstructing business investment, Carter and I teamed up to find a solution. In 2017, Senator RAND PAUL and I secured the designation of a nearby section of the Edward T. Breathitt Pennyryle Parkway as Interstate 169. When President Trump signed our provision into law, he helped connect Christian County to the Federal interstate system and bolstered Carter's efforts to encourage growth in the area.

We also partnered to support the brave men and women stationed at Fort Campbell in Christian County. The installation is part of Kentucky's critical role in our national defense structure, and the local community takes seriously its responsibility to support Fort Campbell's mission and the servicemembers stationed there. During his time with the chamber, Carter led the business community's efforts to be strong and supportive neighbors. Together, we wanted to welcome