

Merkley	Schumer	Van Hollen
Murphy	Shaheen	Warren
Reed	Smith	Wyden
Rosen	Stabenow	
Schatz	Udall	

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander	Murray	Whitehouse
Leahy	Sanders	
Markey	Sasse	

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.

The Senator from the Iowa.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 3693 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today I come to the floor to salute and thank our Nation's law enforcement officers during this year's National Police Week. It is notable that this week dedicated to the brave men and women in blue is in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am grateful to all who are working on the front lines right now, whether they are doctors and nurses or teachers and grocery store clerks. We are grateful to all of them, including a lot of jobs that I haven't even mentioned.

But this week, we have the unique opportunity just to settle on one group of people and thank them in a special way during National Police Week, and that is our police officers. Now, more than ever, we appreciate their service and dedication. Being a police officer isn't just a job. I am in public service, but I haven't been a police officer. I think it is fair to assume that they put their lives on the line more than most of us who are Members of the Senate.

It is not just a job. It is a calling. Each officer has answered that call and is dutifully serving during these very trying times that we call this virus pandemic. For that, I am—and, I am sure, everybody is—forever grateful.

I am particularly thankful for the men and women in blue who serve my fellow Iowans. I would also like to recognize the officers who serve in Washington, DC, the Capitol Police, meaning those who serve here on the Hill. They work to ensure our safety and protection, not only from criminals but also from a virus that has drastically changed the way we work in the Senate to serve our constituents, the American people, and, for me, the people of Iowa. Thank you to the policemen on Capitol Hill here for your selflessness and dedication.

COVID-19 knows no boundaries and has, unfortunately, affected hundreds of police officers. As of May 11, 101 officers have died in the line of duty from the virus. We must continue to honor members of the law enforcement community who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The circumstances of loss are a little different now but no less heroic or devastating.

As a Senator, my actions often speak louder than my words. So I am pleased to show the members of the law enforcement community how much I support and appreciate you through legislation. Every year, during Police Week, the Senate advances various bills focusing on the needs of the police community. This year is no different. To that end, I recently introduced a bipartisan bill with the title of Safeguarding America's First Responders Act. This bill addresses the unfortunate reality of officers' exposure to COVID-19.

To ensure benefits through the Public Safety Officer Benefits Program, my bill creates a presumption that if a first responder is diagnosed with COVID-19 within 45 days of their last day on duty, the Justice Department will treat it as a line-of-duty incident.

Loss of a family member in the line of duty isn't only emotionally devastating, but it also means lost wages in tough times. This bill recognizes the challenges posed by the pandemic and better ensures that officers' families will get the financial help as promised to other police officers who are killed in other ways in the line of duty. This bill enjoys wide support from multiple law enforcement groups and a group of bipartisan cosponsors here in the Senate.

The Senate is considering two other police bills that I support. Police officers have demanding jobs and experience events that often impact their mental health. The next bill is named the Confidentiality Opportunities for Peer Support Counseling Act, or we call it COPS Counseling Act, for short. This bill builds off the recommendations provided by the Justice Department in their recent report on law enforcement mental health and wellness issues.

Specifically, the bill provides confidentiality to Federal law enforcement officers by restricting individuals who participate in peer support counseling sessions from disclosing communications arising out of these sessions. With that privacy, we encourage more people to get the help they might need.

Peer support programs serve as a valuable role in providing mental health care to law enforcement and first responders. But as I have indicated, confidentiality concerns have left these programs and these professionals underutilized. This bill also encourages best practices for officers and for first responders on peer support programs across the country.

I want to thank Senator CORTEZ MASTO for leading this bill and teaming up with me on this important issue.

Lastly, I am proud to cosponsor Senator HAWLEY's bill, with a title of Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act. This bill seeks to address mental illness and increasing suicide numbers among law enforcement by requiring the FBI to open a voluntary data collection program to track suicides and attempted suicides within local, Tribal, State, and Federal law enforcement.

By providing accurate and detailed information on these issues of suicide, more effective prevention programs can be implemented.

I urge my colleagues to support all three of these bills. Passing them into law is one way of saying a big thank-you to the brave men and women who serve us so selflessly in law enforcement. We owe them a debt of gratitude, particularly during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

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

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I wish to state for the record that, though the difficulties of traveling across the country in the midst of the current coronavirus pandemic made it impossible for me to present in the Capitol to vote on the nomination Brian D. Montgomery, of Texas, to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, I would have voted 'nay' had I been present.

Few things create a stronger foundation for a thriving, successful families than affordable housing. Study after study has shown that children who grow up in a stable home do better in school and are more successful over the course of their lives. Stable affordable housing builds strong neighborhoods and communities because the members of that community are invested in its success. For generations of Americans, homeownership has been a driving force behind the building of a strong middle class, helping families build wealth through the equity generated through homeownership.

As the son of a union mechanic, I experienced this throughout my own life. My father's wages were enough to afford a modest ranch home in a blue collar Oregon community. And because of that house and that community, I was given all kinds of opportunities. I was allowed to explore my interests, whether it was taking machines apart and putting them back together again in my dad's garage or exploring the great outdoors as a Boy Scout. I was able to receive a good public education and go on to be the first in my family to graduate from college.

But far too many Americans don't have those same opportunities today. That is because the goal of affordable housing, whether buying a house or renting a decent apartment, is out of reach for too many working and middle-class families and falling further