

Lankford	Peters	Shelby
Leahy	Portman	Sinema
Lee	Reed	Sullivan
Loeffler	Risch	Tester
Manchin	Roberts	Thune
McConnell	Romney	Tillis
McSally	Rubio	Toomey
Moran	Sasse	Whitehouse
Murphy	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Paul	Scott (SC)	Young
Perdue	Shaheen	

NAYS—28

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Schumer
Bennet	Harris	Smith
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Stabenow
Booker	Hirono	Udall
Brown	Kaine	Van Hollen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Warner
Cardin	Menendez	Warren
Casey	Merkley	Wyden
Coons	Rosen	
Cortez Masto	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander	Murkowski	Sanders
Burr	Murray	
Markey	Rounds	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 65, the nays are 28. The motion is agreed to. The majority leader.

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. 655.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Victor G. Mercado, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

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 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 Victor G. Mercado, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, Jerry Moran, Rob Portman, Michael B. Enzi, Deb Fischer, Kevin Cramer, John Thune, John Boozman, Shelley Moore Capito, Marco Rubio, Todd Young, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Tim Scott, James E. Risch, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

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. 652.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian D. Miller, of Virginia, to be Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (New Position).

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 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 Brian D. Miller, of Virginia, to be Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (New Position).

Mitch McConnell, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tim Scott, Marsha Blackburn, Chuck Grassley, Steve Daines, Mike Crapo, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, David Perdue, Martha McSally, John Thune, James M. Inhofe, Kevin Cramer, Ted Cruz, Cory Gardner.

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. 656.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of James H. Anderson, of Virginia, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

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 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 James H. Anderson, of Virginia, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, Jerry Moran, Rob Portman, Michael B. Enzi, Deb Fischer, Kevin Cramer, John Thune, John Boozman, Shelley Moore Capito, Marco Rubio, Todd Young, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Tim Scott, James E. Risch, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

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. 644.

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Drew B. Tipton, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

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 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 Drew B. Tipton, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, Steve Daines, Cory Gardner, Tim Scott, Ted Cruz, David Perdue, James E. Risch, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Lindsey Graham, Mike Crapo, Michael B. Enzi, John Barrasso, Marsha Blackburn, John Thune, Richard C. Shelby.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

The Senator from Missouri.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, we have seen things in the pandemic crisis that nobody in living memory has dealt with. In so many ways we are writing the book and trying to read the book at the same time, trying to figure out how we get to where we need to be.

Clearly there has been an incredible strain on the American economy and an incredible strain on the American healthcare system and everybody involved with that.

Public health experts told us we had to flatten the curve, and the economic cost of flattening the curve was pretty great. On the other side of that equation, the impact on hospitals was significant in that many of them have been ready and waiting for whatever they needed to do, and because we flattened the curve, the worst-case scenarios didn't occur, and in most cases they were prevented, and we had plenty of hospital beds. Before it was over, we had ventilators and all those things we will have later.

But the crisis, because of flattening the curve, has certainly lasted longer and will last longer than it would have otherwise. I am not saying that is a bad thing; I am just saying measures like closing businesses and sending people home from work, practicing social distancing, putting people on the unemployment rolls have really created serious problems for people who have cause to have challenges to their mental well-being.

I think the impact is that nearly half the adults in the United States say that the coronavirus has impacted their mental health. This is on top of the statistic we traditionally believe from the National Institutes of Health and other places that one out of four or one out of five adult Americans has a diagnosable—and I wouldn't hesitate to add an almost always treatable behavioral health problem—mental health problem. But coming through the coronavirus, again, one half of all adults say that their mental health has been impacted by that, whether that was social distancing or everybody trying to do everything that you normally do at other places than home. Maybe it was economic uncertainty, which, along with the isolation, can certainly create depression and anxiety.

It is, in almost all cases, likely to be worse for people who had a prior mental health problem or a prior mental health diagnosis, but those aren't the only people who have been affected.

Addiction issues have become a bigger problem, again, than they were 6 months ago. People who don't have access to their support system, people who were moving with great focus on the part of the Federal Government and many State governments away from opioid addiction are in a situation where they are isolated; they are depressed; they are concerned about job or family or health and beginning to think: What was that one thing that really made me feel good? Well, maybe I can just do that one more time and have that great feeling, and I wouldn't get addicted again.

It turns out that addiction doesn't work that way. So we see people with unprecedented challenges as this almost perfect storm impacting mental health hits us.

Last month, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reported nearly a 900-percent—a 900-percent—increase in the number of calls to its Disaster Distress Hotline over this time last year. Nine times as many people are calling that distress helpline, that Disaster Distress Hotline, than were calling a year ago.

Practitioners in behavioral health issues see the impact every day. They are certainly warning that this could produce its own second wave of impact that lasts well beyond the time we have treatment for coronavirus because people, even if they have had the vaccine, even if they have stopped worrying about the coronavirus, have found themselves in a place with their mental health issues that they don't want to be but might not be able to figure out how to get out of.

If we don't respond quickly and we don't respond forcefully, we could certainly lose more lives to this pandemic. One new study from the Well Being Trust estimates that 75,000 more people will die from things like suicide and substance abuse because of the pandemic. We are already seeing evidence that that may be a place where we are moving.

My hometown newspaper, the Springfield News-Leader, reported this week that Greene County, my home county, the first place I was elected as a county official, has already seen a 25-percent uptick in suicide and overdose deaths in the last couple of months.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. I think it is appropriate for us to talk about the ways that coronavirus has widened the gap in the medical system between access to physical health issues and access to mental health issues.

This is the month and the time we need to realize that you can't separate those issues. We need to realize that those issues are of equal concern and need to be treated equally.

As I mentioned before, the estimate generally is somewhere in the neighborhood that one in four Americans has a diagnosable mental health issue, but the other estimate is that less than half of them seek any help or the care they need.

As that number has grown now to one in two saying that they have concerns about their mental health or that their mental health is not where it was before this all started, we see a coming together of factors here that we have to figure out how to deal with. We need to take steps on how to address it. We need to realize that more needs to be done. We need to continue to work toward the normalization of treating all health the same.

In the CARES Act, the Congress did provide \$425 million for substance abuse and mental health services. That includes more than half of that—\$250 million—to certified community behavioral health clinics; \$50 million for suicide prevention; and \$100 million for emergency response grants to address substance and mental health disorders.

Federal resources are critical, but most of the response and most of the important work will be done at the local level, so the Congress also unanimously agreed, in the CARES Act, to extend the excellence in mental health and addictive treatment demonstration program through November 30.

We added two States. I talked to CMS this morning about moving forward in adding those next 2 States to the 19 States that originally applied.

This program was first authorized in 2014 in some legislation that Senator STABENOW from Michigan and I had sponsored at the time that created the whole concept of certified community behavioral health clinics that care for patients regardless of where they live or their ability to pay—24-hour, 7-day-a-week access. It was necessary, if you were going to be part of that program, that you could get preventative screenings, you would have care coordination with your other healthcare providers.

By the way, if you have a behavioral health issue, it clearly has impact on what other health issues you might have. If you are dealing with that behavioral health issue in the right way, you are going to save a lot of money and a lot of caregiver time in most cases as you deal with your other issues if you are doing what you should be doing. If you are feeling better about yourself, if you are taking your medicine, eating better, sleeping better, showing up for appointments, your other health costs are going to go down. So not only is this the right thing to do, but it also, in my view, will turn out to be a money-saving thing to do, to invest money where it needs to be invested.

In eight States that have the certified centers under the Excellence in Mental Health Act, those patients have reported a 62-percent reduction in both hospitalization and emergency room visits. Probably that one statistic, on its own, may have offset whatever investment we have made in this mental health program. People not going to emergency rooms, obviously, means you are less likely to come in contact with people who have COVID-19 or some other virus.

We need to be sure we are using telehealth to connect you with your healthcare provider, whether that is a mental health provider or another provider. That is critically important.

People who are struggling with mental health or addiction are particularly challenged right now. We need to let them know they are not forgotten, and no matter how alone they feel, they are not alone, and the Congress is paying attention to this, but we need to pay attention to the people on the frontlines who are assuring that the right things are done in the right way at the right time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

NOMINATION OF MAJOR GENERAL SCOTT
SPELLMON

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, first of all, I just want to associate myself with the words of my colleague Senator BLUNT. I couldn't say it as eloquently. I certainly couldn't improve upon it. I am just going to say I completely agree. Thank you.

The real purpose for my coming to the floor today is to demonstrate my support for MG Scott Spellmon of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

General Spellmon is up for a promotion to Lieutenant General and has been nominated to become the Chief of Engineers and Commanding General to replace General Semonite as he retires.

Since coming to the Senate, General Semonite and I have become well acquainted with each other. While we haven't always agreed, I do appreciate his service, his very hard work, and his accessibility, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic.

His retirement is well earned, and I thank him for his service and wish him well.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee, I serve on two of the Army Corps committees of jurisdiction. As many of my colleagues can attest, it is a rare occasion that I compliment the Corps. It is an agency that is the epitome in many cases of cumbersome bureaucracy.

I am not unique in my frustration. During our last EPW hearing with the Corps, criticism was both bipartisan and tangible. From Rhode Island to North Dakota to Oregon, each of us expressed frustration with a seemingly tone-deaf bureaucracy, which either doesn't do what it is supposed to do or does what it is not supposed to do.

That frustration brings me here today: Major General Spellmon's pending nomination and promotion. Throughout this process, I have worked closely with General Spellmon on numerous issues important to North Dakota and other Western States.

Early on, I spoke with him regarding the Spring Creek embankment in Central North Dakota. Due to the poor maintenance of relief wells, the Corps was going to move forward with a water control plan that could potentially devastate water supply and irrigation needs in eastern parts of my State.

As per usual, the Corps' decision matrix was overly complicated and did not adequately reflect the needs and realities of rural America. When I brought the issue to General Spellmon, he promised to take a fresh look and reassess the economic impacts of the project. He then worked with me to craft legislation supporting these efforts, which was added to the water infrastructure legislation we unanimously passed out of the EPW not too long ago. He listened to the problem and is working with me to help solve it.

I also challenged General Spellmon on Western State water rights—a prob-

lem that has plagued Western States that operate under the prior appropriation doctrine. On a bipartisan basis, Democrats and Republicans from Western States have been frustrated by an Army Corps that either ignores States and Tribes or needlessly inserts extra bureaucracy into decisions that are really not theirs to make. Once again, General Spellmon listened intently to the concern and provided thorough, honest responses to be used as a guidepost for Corps policy moving forward.

Of equal importance, he acknowledged the flaws within his own organization. In my time in Congress, honesty sometimes seems to be missing but not with General Spellmon. He has proven he is willing to listen and be responsive in a forthright manner, and I thank him for that.

I am confident General Spellmon will continue to listen to Western States and provide the necessary deference to them pursuant to congressional intent and to our Nation's Constitution. I have appreciated getting to know the general, and while my oversight and questions may not have always been the most enjoyable to him, he has proven to be up to the task of replacing General Semonite. I support his nomination and promotion, and I hope his exemplary service will be replicated by the rest of the bureaucracy he is going to lead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

OBSERVING MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, on Monday, our country will celebrate Memorial Day. It is a very special day—one that we, as Americans, set aside each year to honor those members of the military who have given their lives in sacrifice to their country.

Right now, this is typically the time when I am getting ready to travel home and go to Southern Oregon—to Eagle Point and to Central Point, wonderful communities to spend Memorial Day with hundreds of veterans and members of their families. These are events that take place each year and are inspiring and affirming and basically a time when Oregonians, from very young to often approaching almost 100 years old, assemble and are part of a centuries-long lineage of patriots who have been willing to serve and sacrifice for our great Nation.

There are other communities that come together to remember lost friends and loved ones, but at home in Oregon, we have always said: Eagle Point and Central Point are the gold standard in terms of services and programs to recognize our veterans, and members of their family, who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation.

I think we all know that this Memorial Day is going to be different. There will not be the same big gatherings, and there will not be as many parades. But one of the reasons I want to come to the floor of the Senate today—and I

will be home this weekend thinking about Eagle Point and Central Point—is I want to make sure our country never ever diminishes the significance of this day.

Never should our country take away our determination to honor those who pay the ultimate price in service to America, and it shouldn't cause us to forget that Memorial Day can be hard—very, very hard on the parents and spouses and children and friends our fallen heroes left behind. I know when I am recognized to speak in Central Point and in Eagle Point, I look out in the crowd, and I always see family members with a Kleenex by their eye, trying to remember and at the same time deal with the inevitable grief. This Memorial Day, I am going to be thinking of all of those who have come year after year to Central Point and Eagle Point in Southern Oregon to do something very, very important: to speak up for Oregon on the importance and appreciation we have for those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

My view is, this year, on Memorial Day, it is more important than ever to reach out and connect with those folks who are remembering loved ones they have lost in the line of duty—to give them a call, ask how they are holding up—because the last few months, in particular, have been tough on everybody, and their sacrifice shouldn't be forgotten.

I know when I am home in Southeast Portland this weekend, I am going to be thinking about whom I am going to be talking to, checking in with, and see how they are doing just for the reason I mentioned. These have been tough times for everyone, and I think this is going to be a very difficult Memorial Day for those Americans who are remembering loved ones they have lost in the line of duty.

It is also more important than ever to remember for ourselves that as Americans, we owe so much to so many. The parades and the services may have to wait until Memorial Day 2021, but our deep respect and gratitude for sacrifice does not.

Just on a very personal note, apropos of the respect and gratitude for sacrifice, I think about my late father and my mother, both of whom fled the Nazis. Not all of our family got out. My great Uncle Max was one of the last who was gassed in Auschwitz. My father basically talked his way into our Army because he was a fluent young man in German, and he convinced our military that he could be part of our propaganda unit to drop the pamphlets on the Nazis, making it clear that they could never defeat our great troops.

My mother, on the other hand, was a WAC, and I look often at the picture that is on my wall of my mother in her WAC uniform. For them, during their lives, Memorial Day was a really special day because they were so thrilled to be able to come to the freest and most open Nation on Earth and to be able to serve in our military. They, in