

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. 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 each.

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

CONFIRMATION OF JOHN L. RATCLIFFE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the confirmation of Congressman JOHN RATCLIFFE to be Director of National Intelligence.

I voted against JOHN RATCLIFFE for Director of National Intelligence for three key reasons.

First, I do not believe Congressman RATCLIFFE is qualified for the position of Director of National Intelligence, DNI.

By law, a DNI requires "extensive national security expertise." Past DNIs have been career civil servants or military officers with extensive experience in intelligence and foreign affairs.

By contrast, Congressman RATCLIFFE has been a member of Congress for 4 years and the mayor of a small town in Texas. His sole intelligence community experience is a single year on the House Intelligence Committee.

I am deeply concerned that during his hearings he was unable to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the most pressing threats and challenges that we face as a nation.

Second, I am very concerned with Congressman RATCLIFFE's position on torture.

During his nomination hearing, he refused to denounce torture. He refused to admit that certain CIA actions following 9/11 were torture. And he refused to agree that waterboarding is torture, regardless of potential changes to U.S. law.

Torture is morally reprehensible, and the head of our intelligence community must be willing to say so and prevent it from happening again.

Third, the DNI must not be politically motivated. The DNI directs 17 intelligence agencies with a budget of more than \$60 billion and is responsible for providing objective intelligence analysis to the President.

Congressman RATCLIFFE is a vocal defender of President Trump and served on his impeachment defense team. I am concerned that politics would interfere in his duties if he were confirmed.

We need a confirmed DNI with the right experience and objectivity to do the job.

Congressman RATCLIFFE was nominated for this position last year and subsequently withdrew. Nothing has changed since then to qualify him for this role.

NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I am pleased that earlier this week the Senate passed S. Res. 586, a bipartisan resolution designating this week National Public Works Week. National Public Works Week celebrates the profound impact our public works professionals have on our safety and quality of life. Public works are the shared assets that make up the backbone of our Nation. Public service professionals build, manage and operate our nation's most essential services.

Many of us take for granted work that goes into the services we rely on every day. This week provides an opportunity to reflect on the men and women behind those services. Let us consider the way our daily life is powered by public service professionals: We wake up in the morning to turn the tap on and expect water to come out. We place our trash bins on the street and expect it is collected in timely manner. Some of us may drive over bridges built to last generations and follow traffic signals that were carefully planned to keep us safe.

The work of public service professionals has a tangible impact on our lives every single day. Consider the employee who replaced the aging pipe that brings water to your home or the scientist that ensured that water is safe to drink. Consider also the sanitation worker who keeps your street clean and healthy. We can also think of the engineer who designed the bridge and the construction worker who started the workday before dawn to ensure the construction minimally impacted your routine. National Public Works Week gives us a formal opportunity to humanize these services and say thank you to the people working behind the scenes to keep our communities running.

There is no more important time than now to recognize these individuals. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our communities in ways previously unimaginable. However, we can count on public works employees to rise to the occasion. Public works employees are often on the frontlines, risking their own health to ensure that services are delivered. While much of public life has come to a standstill, the rhythm of public services continues. Water mains break and require repair and garbage must still be collected.

The pandemic has thrust millions of Americans into financial uncertainty, unsure how they will pay for basic services. Many public works agencies, like the Baltimore Department of Public Works are continuing to offer discounted water rates as the pandemic continues.

Public works also offer hope for our Nation's economic recovery. From the Great Depression came a formative era in the history of public works in America. President Franklin D. Roosevelt understood the power of transformative projects to jumpstart America's economy and provide a higher

quality life than previously known. The New Deal made an indelible impact on the structure of our government and trajectory of America's financial recovery. The projects themselves now stand as a physical representation of our young Nation's capacity to overcome adversity with ingenuity and grit.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our Nation is profound. However, our Nation is ripe for investment in public works projects that will put people back to work and stimulate our economy, as was done with the New Deal. As the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I understand the urgent need to address our Nation's aging infrastructure. That is why I am proud that the Committee reported favorably, on a bipartisan basis, a surface transportation reauthorization bill last year, America's Transportation Infrastructure Act, S. 2303, which authorizes billions of dollars to State and local governments to invest in roads, bridges, and highways, and why I hope my colleagues in the Senate will come together and follow through with important infrastructure legislation. There is no better time than now to invest in our Nation's infrastructure and employ a new class of public works professionals. Public works are central to the American story of resiliency and fortitude, even in the face of despair. This week, and always, we should look to public works professionals with gratitude for their contributions to our lives.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, due to the coronavirus pandemic, Memorial Day commemorations will be different this year. The coronavirus may force us to continue Memorial Day traditions virtually or privately with our families. Nevertheless, it is important for us to take time this weekend to honor those who bravely gave their lives for all of us.

Throughout our Nation's history, courageous and patriotic men and women have gone into battle and lost their lives to protect the freedoms that make being a U.S. citizen such a blessing. I am proud that Mississippians throughout our history have readily committed to serving our Nation. Likewise, we are equally committed to honoring the fallen and their families.

It was Mississippians who helped initiate the solemn act of commemorating those lost in battle. Columbus, Mississippi, proudly claims rights to originating Decoration Day, when women began decorating the graves of the all casualties not long after the Civil War.

This year, despite all precautions we must take, there are ways we can remember and honor the fallen. For my part, I honor the brave Mississippians who have dedicated their lives to protecting our citizens, and I pray for the