

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 4:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

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COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at 12 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST
TIME—S. 3985

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3985) to improve and reform policing practices, accountability, and transparency.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro

tempore, upon the recommendation of the Democratic Leader, pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, Public Law 107-228, and Public Law 112-75, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Reverend Frederick A. Davie of New York.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 18,
2020

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, June 18; further, that following the prayer and the pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Walker nomination; finally, notwithstanding rule XXII, postclosure time on the Walker nomination expire at 1:30 p.m.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator BLUMENTHAL.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

NOMINATION OF JUSTIN REED
WALKER

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to talk about the nomination of Justin Walker to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, but let's start with Conner Curran. Justin Walker actually has met Conner—not really, but I introduced him to Conner through this picture during his nomination hearing in the Judiciary Committee.

Several years ago, Conner was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a degenerative life-threatening disease which presently has no cure. Most people who have the disease die by their mid-20s. Conner was diagnosed at age 5. I met Conner a couple of years later. There is probably nobody who has inspired me more with his courage, his energy, his strength of character than Conner Curran and his wonderful family who live in Ridgefield, CT.

His parents were told, at the time of his diagnosis, that this beautiful young sweet child would slowly lose his ability to run, lift his arms, hug them, and he would need complex care for the rest of his life. He would need multiple specialists that would cost tens of thousands of dollars each year, which they

could not afford. But they made it possible or, actually, it was made possible by the Affordable Care Act. Now, because of that act, he cannot be denied care. He is alive. He is not giving up. He is fighting for both a cure and the Affordable Care Act.

He is not the only one. There are 1.5 million people in the State of Connecticut alone and millions more around the country living with pre-existing conditions. There are 182,000 children among those 1.5 million people, just like Conner, living with the potentially debilitating and even deadly effects of preexisting conditions, and there are millions more around the country. For them, for Americans, the Affordable Care Act is more than a law; it is a lifeline. Each of them can get the affordable care they need because of that lifeline.

Right now, we all know that healthcare has never been more important. We talk about it every day. We are full of rhetoric on the floor of this Chamber about the healthcare crisis, which has precipitated an economic crisis and about the disproportionate effects of that healthcare crisis—a pandemic of an insidious, deadly disease on poor and, often, communities of color.

At the time of this crisis, the President of the United States has nominated Justin Walker to be an appellate judge, a present district court judge who has said that his main mission is to destroy the Affordable Care Act. Of course, that is perfectly consistent with the Trump administration's view of the Affordable Care Act. It is litigating in court right now against the Affordable Care Act. President Trump has opposed it consistently, constantly, vociferously.

Justin Walker, at his investiture as a district court judge, pledged that he would continue to make destruction of the Affordable Care Act a priority. During his investiture remarks, attended by his mentor, the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, he said:

[A]lthough my legal principles are prevalent, they have not yet prevailed. . . . [A]lthough we are winning, we have not won. . . . [A]lthough we celebrate today, we cannot take for granted tomorrow or we will lose our courts and our country.

That wasn't some law review article that Justin Walker wrote back when he was going to school. It wasn't some speech that he made to a local chamber of commerce. It was literally at his swearing in as a U.S. district court judge for the Western District of Kentucky just months ago, not even a year. He said: "[A]lthough my legal principles are prevalent, they have not yet prevailed." If there were a new meaning to give to the word "irony," this nomination would exemplify it.

During a public health crisis, the President of the United States has nominated someone who wants to take healthcare away from people and deny them health insurance.

The reason Conner is here is really to show that these big principles have real-life consequences. Judges have impact. The law matters. Words matter.