

State-approved facility, which, by Federal law has standards that meet or exceed Federal inspection standards.

Our legislation would allow these products, which pass State inspection standards, to be sold across State lines, opening up new markets for producers and giving consumers greater choice at the grocery store. At a time when our food supply is in danger, this is a very easy first step.

Like so many sectors of our economy, the food production industry was ill-prepared for the unprecedented changes that needed to be made when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Labor shortages and worker protection measures slowed down plants around the country, and outbreaks even caused some of the facilities to shut down entirely.

We saw this happen in my home State of South Dakota, where our Sioux Falls Smithfield plant processes 20,000 hogs a day and employs approximately 35 hard-working individuals. At the peak of the crisis, hog processing dropped approximately 40 percent in May, and beef production dropped approximately 35 percent in May, when compared to 2019 production levels across the United States. At one point, there was a backlog of nearly 1 million cattle ready to be processed.

Meanwhile, grocery stores across the country began to see meat shortages on their shelves because of the chokepoint found in the concentration of beef processing at the big four packers, where processing capacity had been curtailed. Livestock producers were faced with one of the worst scenarios they could face—having to euthanize their animals because they weren't able to get them into a processing facility. While we have been able to recover some of the production capacity since that time, it is far from being back to normal, and we are still unprepared to deal with the continuing pandemic.

While we work to get meat and pork processing facilities back up and running at capacity, we should also be utilizing State-based solutions to help offset the backlog and help provide additional capacity. Specifically, we should include the New Markets for State-Inspected Meat and Poultry Act in the next relief package.

Currently, 27 States operate State meat inspection programs. Meat and poultry inspected at these facilities are already sold for public consumption in the States where they are licensed.

Today, if you have meat or poultry processed at a South Dakota inspection facility in Hudson, SD, you wouldn't be able to sell it across the border just a few miles away in Iowa, but you could sell it a couple hundred miles away in Lemmon, SD.

It really doesn't make much sense, especially since State meat and poultry inspection facilities are required by law to be at least equal to federally inspected processing facilities with regard to their food safety standards.

These products are safe for consumption and should be allowed to be sold nationwide. This will help offset the pressure on federally inspected facilities during the ongoing pandemic and in the future as well.

This is a commonsense solution that has bipartisan, bicameral support. It is time to end this arbitrary regulation restricting the sale of these products to within State lines and allow facilities inspected by State meat inspection programs to increase production and sell their product nationwide.

Including the New Markets for State-Inspected Meat and Poultry Act in future COVID-19 relief legislation is good for producers and very good for consumers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes when the afternoon votes are concluded.

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

#### VOTE ON KAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. 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 North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Further, if present and voting, 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 California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 71, nays 21, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 152 Ex.]

#### YEAS—71

Alexander	Cornyn	Graham
Barrasso	Cortez Masto	Grassley
Blackburn	Cotton	Hassan
Blunt	Cramer	Hawley
Boozman	Crapo	Hoeben
Braun	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Capito	Daines	Inhofe
Carper	Enzi	Johnson
Casey	Ernst	Jones
Cassidy	Feinstein	Kaine
Collins	Fischer	Kennedy
Coons	Gardner	King

Klobuchar	Portman	Shaheen
Lankford	Reed	Shelby
Leahy	Risch	Sinema
Lee	Roberts	Smith
Loeffler	Romney	Sullivan
Manchin	Rosen	Thune
McConnell	Rounds	Tillis
McSally	Rubio	Toomey
Murkowski	Sasse	Warner
Murphy	Schatz	Wicker
Paul	Scott (FL)	Young
Peters	Scott (SC)	

#### NAYS—21

Baldwin	Durbin	Sanders
Bennet	Gillibrand	Schumer
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Stabenow
Brown	Hirono	Udall
Cantwell	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cardin	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Wyden

#### NOT VOTING—8

Booker	Markey	Tester
Burr	Moran	Whitehouse
Harris	Perdue	

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 majority leader.

#### HEALS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on Monday, the Republicans introduced a trillion-dollar proposal to give American families more coronavirus relief. Most urgently, the Republicans want to continue a Federal supplement to State unemployment insurance, which is set to expire, as we all know, tomorrow.

If our Democratic colleagues had acted with the urgency that struggling people deserve, we could right now be finishing up a major bipartisan package for kids, jobs, and healthcare. If our Democratic colleagues had acted with urgency, unemployed Americans wouldn't be facing a total elimination of this extra help.

Instead, jobless Americans are staring down this cliff because Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leader have refused to negotiate. They have refused to move 1 inch from the Speaker's far-left proposal that is so absurd and so unserious that their own moderate Democratic Members began trashing it the instant it came out. This is the multitrillion-dollar boondoggle that would tax and borrow in order to provide a massive tax cut to the rich people in blue States—the SALT giveaway; that would fund diversity studies of the legal pot industry; and that would do 1,000 other things with no relationship whatsoever to the crisis.

Just a few minutes ago, our colleague from Wisconsin tried to get consent to continue the unemployment assistance to prevent it from expiring tomorrow, and the Democratic leader objected unless he got to pass the entirety of the massive wish list. The Republicans want to continue this aid before it expires, but the Democratic leader says: Let them eat SALT.

This is what was written about their proposal: "Privately, several House Democrats concede [the bill] feels like