

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 178 Executive]

#### YEAS—55

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barraso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Burr	Inhofe	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Shelby
Cramer	Loeffler	Sullivan
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	McSally	Toomey
Durbin	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	Young
Ernst	Murphy	
Fischer	Paul	

#### NAYS—42

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Heinrich	Schatz
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schumer
Booker	Jones	Shaheen
Brown	Kaine	Sinema
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Peters	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Reed	Wyden

#### NOT VOTING—3

Capito	Harris	Sanders
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Stephen P. McGlynn, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we have recently seen yet another manufactured crisis by the Democrats for the benefit of the upcoming election. This is in regard to scaring the people about some notion that only Republicans would think about taking away Social Security and Medicare. It is not true that any Member of this Congress will do that, but it always comes up as TV advertising against the Republicans; you are going to scare old people into thinking Social Security is going to be gone if you vote Republican.

So this is another election season. If there are not any real issues regarding Social Security, the Democrats make one up, and they do it, of course, to scare the people into believing that some people want to destroy the program, not realizing that it is such a part of the social fabric of the American population that nobody would think of doing it.

We saw it in the last Presidential election when Secretary Clinton didn't have a basis to attack then-Candidate Trump on Social Security because Trump campaigned on the basis that he wasn't going to cut Social Security, but that didn't stop them from making things up. With their lacking any real ammunition, Clinton's allies here in the U.S. Senate decided to manufacture a crisis.

Now, why does something that happened in 2016 come up now? It is an example that this is an ongoing situation, and it is happening in 2020.

Back in 2016, three prominent Democratic Senators conjured up false claims about a nominee for the position of public trustee of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. That nominee happened to be a Republican who was nominated—can you imagine this?—by a Democratic President. He was already on there as having been nominated for another term.

The false claims published in the Huffington Post were that this nominee, promoted by President Obama, was a Koch brothers-funded individual because he worked at an educational institution that received grants from the Koch Foundation. I don't know whether they even made an attempt to connect this individual to the Koch funds, but it is irrelevant at this point. The Democrats claimed that this single individual somehow duped all of the other trustees, including all of the other Obama administration officials, into buying off on assumptions that would lead to an overstatement of the financial crisis facing Social Security.

According to the three Democratic Senators, this was so bad that the Chief Actuary of Social Security felt compelled to write special notes to trustee reports and identify how shocking the assumptions were. Of course, that would have meant that one single public trustee who happened to be a Republican duped outstanding Democrats who were also trustees: Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell, Labor Secretary Thomas Perez, and then the additional Democratic public trustee. If you had bought into the Democrats' allegations at the time, it would have meant that all of those Obama officials had been duped and had been too inept to see what had been going on and that only the Chief Actuary could have seen the light.

Well, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance at that time investigated those allegations and showed that they were flatout lies. Even the Washington Post identified

the lies in an op-ed titled: "The show-down Democrats don't need to have." The Post concluded that the ultimate victims of what they called "petty politicization" would be "the perceived nonpartisanship and objectivity of key government reports—that is, the very values Senate Democrats claim to be upholding."

The Democrats used their misinformation campaign to run a smear job on a very qualified and well-respected nominee. They also used it to run ads against anyone who voted in favor of that nominee, including ads against me in my most recent reelection.

Unfortunately, even though Social Security's Chief Actuary was clearly implicated in the Democratic lies, he remained silent as then-Chairman Hatch and even the Washington Post identified how ridiculous and false the Democrats' claims were.

The Chief Actuary's position, apparently, is that, even if his office is being implicated as supporting clearly false and very public claims during an election season, he will just sit quietly and let them go by rather than admit to or apologize for being used once it is pointed out to him that he is being used.

All of that was 4 years ago. It is 2020 now, and it is all happening again. Here we are in another Presidential election season, and, of course, like clockwork, we are getting another round of misinformation from the Democratic candidate and his supporters in the Senate. The Washington Post Fact Checker labels the current scheme in a headline that reads: "Biden campaign attacks a Trump Social Security 'plan' that does not exist."

Now, that was a Washington Post article. Not often does the Washington Post talk about things that might defend Republican positions against the Democrats.

This time around, the misinformation stems from a letter written to Social Security's Chief Actuary by four Democratic Senators, including the minority leader, the ranking member of the Committee on Finance, and Senator SANDERS, who has been counseling former Vice President Biden.

In a letter, these Democrat Senators asked the Chief Actuary to analyze hypothetical legislation—now, those words "hypothetical legislation" have to be emphasized—what they say, even they wouldn't support eliminating payroll taxes. Of course, those Senators could easily find the information that they were seeking by looking at the latest Social Security trustees' report. Instead, for purely political reasons, they wanted to draw in the Chief Actuary once again.

The same Actuary of 4 years ago is being used here once again, and the Chief Actuary at Social Security seems to gladly have played along and written a response. He wrote that his office was not aware that anyone had proposed the hypothetical legislation.