House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord of love, lift our hearts above the mundane and ordinary. Inspire our lawmakers with the beauty of Your presence and the majesty of Your power. May Your holiness create in them a transformative hunger for righteousness that enables them to honor Your Name. Lord, empower them to live blameless lives, striving always to do what is right as they seek wisdom from Your word. Grant that, as they receive inspiration from Your sacred precepts, they will hear Your whisper that they are Your children. Fill them today with Your joy.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leadership time is reserved.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the past few weeks in the Senate have been extremely productive. Senate Democrats delivered on our promise to pass bold COVID relief legislation, and we have now confirmed 16 Cabinet-level officials. Today, we will continue moving the ball forward on the President’s nominees by confirming Representative DEB HAALAND to serve as President Biden’s Secretary of the Interior.

Representative HAALAND has already made history as one of two Members to become the first Native American woman to serve in the House of Representatives. She is a citizen of the Laguna Pueblo nation, and her family’s roots in New Mexico can be traced back 35 generations. By her own account, she grew up poor, moving frequently. Her mother served in the Navy, and her father spent a 30-year career in the Marines. While the Federal Government has often mistreated and neglected Indigenous Americans, the Haaland family has proudly and bravely served this country. Now Representative HAALAND is making history twice over as the first Native American Secretary of the Interior and as the first Native American Cabinet official in American history.

Representative HAALAND’s confirmation represents a gigantic step forward in creating a government that represents the full richness and diversity of this country because Native Americans were, for far too long, neglected at the Cabinet level and in so many other places.

Representative HAALAND will have an important task ahead of her. She must refocus the Interior Department on preserving and protecting almost 500 million acres of public lands, combating climate change and environmental degradation, and upholding the Federal Government’s obligations to Tribal nations. The Trump administration did more to undermine the relationship between the Federal Government and the sovereign Tribes than many have in decades—from desecrating sacred burial sites to build a border wall to neglecting the desperate situation of Native Tribes during the pandemic. Shame on them.

In elevating Representative HAALAND to lead the Department of the Interior, we reset the relationship between the Federal Government and Tribal nations to one of cooperation, mutual respect, and trust, which is so different...
Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now on the American Rescue Plan, last week President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan into law. The most significant Federal recovery effort in decades is now underway as $1.4 trillion checks are heading out the door to 85 percent of American households. Relief for schools, businesses, families, and local and State and local governments is starting to arrive. Shots are going into the arms of Americans from coast to coast. More than 135 million doses of the vaccine have now been delivered, and over 100 million doses have now been administered. That is one-third of the population and much more quickly than had been previously projected.

And our economy is poised for its own shot in the arm. As the American Rescue Plan begins to take effect, economists are projecting that American economic growth could more than double as a result of this bold, strong legislation. Already, Americans are more optimistic about businesses being able to reopen, jobs coming back, and the national economy taking off. As one headline read over the weekend, “Americans see better days ahead in the national economy.”

After the American Rescue Plan passed through the Senate, a little over a week ago, I have been highlighting parts of the bill that may have escaped notice, and there are so many. We all know about the $1,400 checks. We all know about the shots in the arm. But, today, I want to take some time explaining how it has been helping Nation’s students.

First of all, the American Rescue Plan provides substantial emergency relief to colleges and universities, weighted toward those colleges and universities without million-dollar endowments. Fully half of that funding must be used for emergency financial aid grants to students—at least $20 billion nationwide. And, of course, many students will benefit from the $1,400 checks. Another way with a young family will benefit from the historic expansion of the child tax credit. But these emergency financial aid grants are another way that students with exceptional need can access relief.

That is not all. The American Rescue Plan also sets the stage for President Biden to deliver incredibly meaningful student loan forgiveness by making all types of student loan forgiveness tax free through December 31.

At the moment, debt cancellation is usually treated as taxable income. So without this provision, forgiving a student’s debt would stick them with a tax bill—giving them the hand and making it easier to start a family, pay taxes, is gone, gone, gone because of the American Rescue Plan into law. The President said:

“I set a goal that many of you said was . . . way over the top. But the benchmark of 100 million vaccines in 100 days was not some audacious goal that was met with great skepticism. A million shots per day was just the pace that the Biden administration inherited and has met the goals at pace with a young family will benefit from the historic expansion of the child tax credit. But these emergency financial aid grants have this debt, future actions won’t do any good in terms of changing the way we finance colleges and how we deal with the for-profits. The best way is canceling $50,000 in student debt, and the good news is that the ARP makes sure no taxes are owed on any of that cancellation.

So no matter how their team performs during March Madness this weekend, the American Rescue Plan gives every student something to cheer about. Go Syracuse. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, last Thursday, I spoke about the pain and disruption this pandemic has caused this past year. I also discussed the optimistic springtime that lies before us. The brighter horizon is not a product of a partisan bill that was signed last week or an administration that was sworn in less than 2 months ago; it was built by the American people and supported by the five historic and completely bipartisan bills that Congress passed just last year.

Later on Thursday, the Nation heard from President Biden. The President spoke in a heartfelt way about grief and loss, but his vision for the days ahead was badly lacking. Late in the day, I discussed the optimistic springtime that lies before us. The brighter horizon is not a product of a partisan bill that was signed last week or an administration that was sworn in less than 2 months ago; it was built by the American people and supported by the five historic and completely bipartisan bills that Congress passed just last year.

Let’s take vaccinations. The President’s speech tried to reinforce the myth that his administration inherited a shambles on vaccines, set goals that nobody believed were achievable, and has met those goals against all odds. This is just not true.

The President said:

I set a goal that many of you said was . . . way over the top.

But the benchmark of 100 million vaccines in 100 days was not some audacious goal that was met with great skepticism. A million shots per day was just the pace that the Biden administration inherited. We averaged more than 1 million shots per day the week in the inauguration. We averaged more than 1.5 million the day the President was sworn in. The groundwork we laid last year is proving a historic success. Where the
Biden administration is continuing to help streamline distribution, they should, of course, get some credit, but their effort to sprint to the front of this yearlong campaign should not fool anybody.

The President announced another supposedly audacious goal on Thursday: that all adults in all 50 States should be eligible to schedule vaccinations by May 1. Here is the problem: Dr. Fauci said a month ago we would be there by April.

I would imagine by the time we get to April, that will be what I would call... ‘open season’... namely, virtually everybody and anybody in any category could start to get vaccinated.

That was Dr. Fauci’s prediction last month. So the President’s announcement of May 1 wasn’t ambitious good news; it was actually a walk-back.

Something tells me that if the last administration had contradicted Dr. Fauci and pushed the vaccine milestone a month, we might have heard about it from the media.

Then there is the K-12 schooling. For months, science has confirmed that schools are remarkably safe and do not surges transmission of the virus. This administration’s own experts amplified this before liberal politics got in the way.

In early February, President Biden’s CDC Director specifically said vaccinating the grownups who work in schools should not be a prerequisite for reopening them, but on Thursday, instead of calling for schools to reopen right now, the President endorsed Big Labor’s moving goalposts. He said that because the Democrats passed their spending plan and because he has tried to move teachers toward the front of the line for vaccines, now—now—schools can move toward reopening. This approach has put liberal interest group politics ahead of vulnerable kids and their parents.

It was reported last week that the following message was posted in a private online group for members of one public school union in California.

Friendly reminder: If you are planning any trips for Spring Break, please keep that off of social media. It is hard to argue that it is unsafe for in-person instruction if parents and the public see vacation photos and international travel.

Further reports from California suggest that public school employees may consider using some of the massive bailouts that Democrats sent them on bonuses. Reportedly, one union argues that grownups should get bonuses for things like ‘an airplane trip to Hawaii when the school is closed over.’ A lot of working-class families in the country are struggling through untenable situations—in large part thanks to the liberal dogma that schools have needed lots more cash to become safe—and now unions are talking about trips to Hawaii.

Every day that the Biden administration does not urge schools to reopen safely right now with simple precautions, it hurts kids who cannot afford these moving goalposts.

President Biden also made news with the big proclamation that maybe—maybe—if citizens behave themselves, we will be able to have small outdoor gatherings by July 4. He made sure to stipulate that politicians reserve the right to clamp down again, however, but that carrot dangled before Americans was small outdoor gatherings about 4 months from now. This was bizarre and problematic on several levels.

No. 1, let’s be clear: The Federal Government does not instruct free citizens how they may gather in small groups with their own families. I have advocated strongly for following science, wearing masks, and taking all the precautions throughout this pandemic. The White House confers a bully pulpit. It does not confer supreme authority over daily life.

Let’s not forget that about 10 months ago, many liberal politicians applauded massive outdoor gatherings because they supported a political cause. I am not sure how much capital these officials have to micromanage backyard barbecues.

No. 2, this strange proclamation was out of step with science. Current CDC guidelines say it is already safe right now—for fully vaccinated people to meet in small groups, not just outdoors but indoors, and they can be joined by an unvaccinated household if they are low risk. That is the CDC’s advice, talking not about July 4 but right now.

So the President went on national TV to move the goalposts way beyond what his own CDC is saying. Why? There is no science-based reason why a few fully vaccinated people couldn’t get together outdoors right now—not July 4; today. And if a healthy young adult who is still waiting for the vaccine wants to meet up with a few vaccinated relatives, that is about a personal assessment of a very small risk, not a matter of presidential policy.

That brings me to point three. The President’s proclamation was far out of step with what is already happening across the country. It was advice for an alternate universe. The President and his advisers may need to get out more. Americans are already getting together in small groups outdoors in blue States and red States, in small towns and big cities. The country is not locked down waiting for April.

In my home State of Kentucky, the Governor has backed indoor gatherings of up to eight people from up to two households. Here in the District of Columbia, as of next week, outdoor gatherings up to 50 people will be permitted—50 people here in the District.

Americans are getting vaccines. They have learned about this disease. They have learned about the low risks of outdoor transmission. They are making their own determinations as free people.

Look, I have been a consistent advocate for following the science, wearing a mask, and taking precautions. I believe we should all keep following the science. Nobody wants to fumble the ball on the 5-yard line. But that doesn’t mean just citizens; it means politicians too. And science doesn’t only run in the direction of more restrictions.

The American people were told 12 months ago that accepting major disruptions for a limited time would flatten the curve and prevent a healthcare collapse, and Americans rose to the occasion.

One year on, if the President and his administration want to continue to give advice to free citizens, I suggest they exit the alternate universe, stick to the actual science, and get acquainted with where the American people actually are.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Debra Anne Halland, of New Mexico, to be Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATIONS OF LISA MONACO AND VANITA GUPTA

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, last week, my friend and colleague, the senior Senator from Texas, came to the floor to speak about two highly qualified nominees seeking senior positions in President Biden’s Justice Department—Lisa Monaco and Vanita Gupta.

I was pleased to hear Senator Cornyn express support for Lisa Monaco. She is nominated to be the Deputy Attorney General. She has vast experience and deep ties to the Department. She has served in multiple roles as both a career employee and a Senate-confirmed official. She is also someone who has predicted and responded to several of the greatest threats of our time, including global pandemics and the rise of domestic terrorism. She has what it takes to serve as the No. 2 person in the Department of Justice along with the Attorney General, Merrick Garland, to restore independence and integrity in that Department.
Unfortunately, my friend from Texas went on to take a different view when it came to Vanita Gupta, who has been nominated to be an Associate Attorney General, the No. 3 position at the Department, Every Senator, of course, has the right to oppose any nominee, even though many of my colleagues across the aisle have spoken about the importance of deferring to President Biden and his choices to lead his Cabinet.

But when opposition turns from beyond just feeling negative toward someone to stating things about that person that may not be altogether accurate, I feel obligated to come to the floor and correct the record. I would like to address a few of the attacks that are being leveled against Ms. Gupta.

She unequivocally stated in her testimony on oath before the Judiciary Committee last week that she opposes defunding the police. Any suggestion to the contrary is patently false. We have seen statement after statement from law enforcement organizations that support Vanita Gupta and her nomination. They admitted plainly that they know she doesn't call for defunding the police.

Yet we also continue to see statement after statement from Republican Senators and many of their allies buying into the fiction ads claiming the contrary. Ask yourself this basic question: If Vanita Gupta wants to defund the police, how would she get the support and endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Major Cities Chiefs Association, National Sheriffs' Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and others? I think we know the answer. She doesn't want to defund the police. It is simply something that is said about her that is not true.

But what Ms. Gupta has called for, and what she reiterated before the Judiciary Committee on that issue, but I would rather be right some of the time than wrong all the time. That is the way I feel about being honest if you change your mind based on new information, new experience, or thinking it through from a different angle.

My friend from Texas also suggested that Ms. Gupta somehow wanted to follow her own personal convictions rather than the law. That is not true. Ms. Gupta is a Justice Department veteran. She spent 3 years leading the Civil Rights Division. She enforced the law regardless of her personal views, and she will do the same as Associate Attorney General.

Senator CORNYN suggested that Ms. Gupta harbors personal views that are hostile to police. I won't recount again all the police organizations that have endorsed her. But he omits the fact that she has already served in the Justice Department. And what was the verdict on her time in the Department? These police groups believe in her. They like her approach. They think she is fair. They have endorsed her. I hope my friends on the Republican side of the aisle will agree, that is the way I feel about being honest if you change your mind based on new information, new experience, or thinking it through from a different angle.

Unlike the prior administration, President Biden has nominated senior Justice Department leaders who are driven by fidelity to the rule of law. They understand their role at the Department as officials who enforce the law, and they will do so. Ms. Gupta is no exception.

Next week, we will vote on Ms. Gupta’s nomination in committee. She has broad bipartisan support across the Justice Department as officials who enforce the law, and they will do so. Ms. Gupta is no exception.

MS. GUTTA'S RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION ON WHETHER SHE SUPPORTED DECRIMINALIZING DRUGS. He asked her this at the hearing: "Is it true that you advocate decriminalizing all drugs?" Ms. Gupta, under oath, responded: "No, Senator, I do not support decriminalizing all drugs."

My friend from Texas suggested this answer was misleading, given that Ms. Gupta wrote 9 years ago that she would support decriminalizing the possession of small amounts of drugs. There was no time. That is the way I feel about being honest if you change your mind based on new information, new experience, or thinking it through from a different angle.

If Vanita Gupta wants to defund the police, the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Major Cities Chiefs Association, National Sheriffs' Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and others, I think we know the answer. She doesn't want to defund the police. It is simply something that is said about her that is not true.

There is one major difference, however, when it comes to filibusters from conservative Republican advocates, when it comes to filibusters from liberal Democratic advocates. The filibuster is still being misused by some Senators to block legislation urgently needed and supported by a strong majority of the American people.

We are a deliberative body. If there is a filibuster, it is a procedural necessity. If there is no filibuster, it is a procedural necessity. It was never meant to be an affront to our Constitution.

Well, the truth was just the opposite. The blatant discrimination of Jim Crow laws was an affront to our Constitution, a stain on our national character, and a threat to our standing in the world. The Civil Rights Act of 1957, which Strom Thurmond filibustered, broke the death grip of Jim Crow on American democracy and led the way, a few years later, even more sweeping equality laws, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Today, nearly 65 years after Strom Thurmond filibustered one of the most transformative was of the 20th century, we are making progress, and America is more united than ever, when it comes to filibusters from conservative Republican advocates, when it comes to filibusters from liberal Democratic advocates. The filibuster is still being misused by some Senators to block legislation urgently needed and supported by a strong majority of the American people.

There is one major difference, however, when it comes to filibusters from conservative Republican advocates, when it comes to filibusters from liberal Democratic advocates. The filibuster is still being misused by some Senators to block legislation urgently needed and supported by a strong majority of the American people.
the days of Strom Thurmond and his long-winded defense of segregation. Strom Thurmond had to sacrifice personally his comfort for his misguided beliefs. He had to actually speak without sitting on the floor for more than 24 hours for his filibuster. On his last day, if you sat down to take a rest or left the floor, the filibuster was over. Today, it is not the same. Senators can literally phone in a filibuster. All a Senator has to do is to tell the clerks in the cloakroom what their intention is as to a filibuster, and then the message is delivered to the floor, and another bill is sent to the Senate's overflowing legislative graveyard. This is what littering legislative rock bottom looks like.

Today's filibuster has turned the world's most deliberative body into one of the world's most ineffective bodies. We are like the giant in "Gulliver's Travels" tied down by a simple majority rule. "Gulliver's Travels" defense of simple majority rule. "Gulliver's Travels"—sound familiar?

By eroding people's faith in the ability of democracy to solve problems that matter the most, misuse of the filibuster may accidentally open the door to autocrats, would-be dictators, who falsely promise to deliver results, even if they ignore all of democracy's rules.

To my friends who count themselves as proud members and supporters of the Republican Party—I am sure you have heard of it—go back and read the Federalist Papers. Read what the Founders thought of the filibusters. They hated the idea. Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, both, penned passages expressing their disapprovals. "The Senate," wrote Hamilton, "is a theater of intrigue; [and] contemptible compromises of the public good." "Tenedious delays; continual negotiation and intrigue;—sound familiar?"

And then there is James Madison, the father of the U.S. Constitution, in Federalist 58. He wrote that if a supermajority were required to pass all new laws "the fundamental principle of free government" would be reversed. It would be no longer the majority that would rule; the power would be transferred to the minority.

Hamilton, Madison, and other of our Founders debated and rejected the idea of supermajority rule. They protected majority rights by creating a government with a President, two legislative Chambers, and a judiciary in which minority views were respected and making a law, even with simple majorities, was a challenge.

Rather than protecting the finely balanced system our Founders created, today's filibuster throws the system out of balance, giving one-half of one branch of government what amounts to veto over the rest of government. It promotes gridlock, not good governance.

As I said, Senators don't have to stand for even 1 minute to shut down the Senate. All they have to do is to threaten it, phone it in, catch a plane, go home from Washington, and come back Monday to see how their filibuster is doing. "Mr. Smith Phones It In," that wouldn't have been much of a movie, would it?

Defenders of today's filibuster offer a second defense of the tradition. They say the filibuster promotes bipartisan cooperation and debate. Well, just look around. Can anyone really claim that we are living in the great age of Senate debate? Last year, calendar year 2020, in the entire year, 12 months, we conducted 29 amendments on the floor of the Senate—29. It is quite an improvement over the previous year, a 30-percent improvement. The previous year we considered 22 amendments on the floor of the Senate. I am not counting the vote-arama spectacles. This is not much of a debate. It is not much of an amendment process. Sixty seconds a side, that is a great debate? Not by my definition.

The truth is, as filibusters and threatened filibusters have increased in recent decades, real debate and bipartisan cooperation have plummeted. Today's filibuster is often used to prevent the Senate from even starting to debate. It is a defense of the filibuster. That is not the guarantor of democracy: it has become the death grip of democracy.

Senator Thurmond's 1957 filibuster marked only the fifth time since 1917 that the Senate had voted to cut off debate. Senator Thurmond's 1957 filibuster was the only one that finally moved President Obama to sign the Dream Act in 2012. The Senate then ruled the measure. The filibuster really literally brought the Senate to a halt. The creation of this two-track system allowed the Senate to take up other matters while the filibuster continued, at least theoretically.

In 1975, the rules were changed again, requiring just a three-fifths majority, 60 votes—not 67 but 60 votes—to end a filibuster. Suddenly, the filibuster became a relatively painless weapon of mass obstruction? The answer is yes. It is easy to phone in a filibuster. It is easy to phone it in, catch a plane, go home from Washington, and come back Monday to see how the filibuster is doing.

From 1917 to 1970, the Senate took 49 votes to break filibusters—49 votes in that period of 53 years. That is fewer than once a year. Since 2010, it has taken the Senate on average more than 80 votes a year to end filibusters.

Filibusters on so-called motions to proceed now regularly prevent us from even discussing proposals supported by the clear wishes of the American people. The modern filibuster has broken the normal legislative process. It was never an essential or even intentional part of democracy, and now it rules the Senate.

Over my last 20 years, I have faced a 60-vote requirement to move a measure which is very important to me and to hundreds of thousands of people in our country. It is known as the Dream Act, the bipartisan Dream Act. It was introduced so we could give to young people who were brought to this country as infants, toddlers, and little kids by their families a chance to earn their way to a path of legalization and citizenship.

Five times since it was first introduced, the Dream Act has been stopped by a filibuster—twice in 2007, once in 2010, twice in 2018. In each instance, the Dream Act received a bipartisan majority vote but was blocked by a minority of Senators. Their opposition prevented the Senate from even debating the measure.

It was repeated rejections to the Dream Act by a minority of Senators that finally moved President Obama to establish the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA.

To our Republican colleagues, let me say this: If you don't want to see this President or any President impose solutions based on Executive orders, shouldn't we be willing to debate the issues at hand and consider actually legislating?
Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I rise today to discuss a piece of legislation we may soon consider in this body called H.R. 1.

H.R. 1 does not solve the problems currently facing our election system; it makes things worse. Democrats have labeled the bill the “For the People Act,” but it really should be called “For the Democrats Act.”

This partisan bill represents the largest Federal power grab in decades, and that is saying a lot after Democrats rammed through a partisan $1.9 trillion stimulus bill just 2 weeks ago. The American people elected 50 Republican Senators, but the Democrats are happy to cut out half the Chamber and the millions of Americans we represent to get what they want.

H.R. 1 would completely rewrite our election laws, hijacking power from the States and giving it to the Federal Government to dictate how our elections are run. This type of top-down approach is the opposite of our founding principles of self-government.

Article I, section 4 of the Constitution grants States the authority to manage their Federal election processes; H.R. 1 would take that away. The changes to our free and Federal elections that H.R. 1 proposes should concern every single American. This bill forces a one-size-fits-all election system on our country by federally mandating how States run their elections. This phrase “for the people” means allowing citizens to choose their own leaders and voting processes, not Washington dictating new rules of the game.

Let’s look at a few examples. H.R. 1 would prohibit States from requiring voters to show identification, photo ID, or otherwise. Currently, 36 States have requirements, which voters need to meet in order to vote. Nearly 75 percent of States agree that that is a good idea to confirm you are who you say you are when you go to exercise one of the most important civic duties. But the people get to decide. They get to decide the laws on their books when it comes to managing their Federal election processes. H.R. 1 would nix the law in those 36 States.

H.R. 1 would also make same-day voter registration mandatory in all 50 States. There are obvious concerns with same-day registration and its potential to be abused. This concept isn’t new. Many States have already had the opportunity to consider it and adopt it or not if they choose. But if H.R. 1 is enacted, it would overrule the laws and choices of 29 States that have already decided they don’t want such a risky provision in their voting process.

Additionally, the Democrats are using this bill to make all the worst practices of pandemic-era elections mandatory in all 50 States: universal mail-in ballots, ballot harvesting, and the drop box-a few.

There may not be much we agree upon here on Capitol Hill sometimes, but I think we all agree that the 2020 Federal elections voting process was a complete disaster in some States.

Many of the States that had the hardest time running their elections were the ones that adopted the same provisions in this bill. Normally, you would seek that, but this bill adopts the worst practices and forces every State to use them. That is the opposite of how our “labs of democracy,” our 50 States, should work.

Every State is different, with different demographics, challenges, opportunities. What works for Alabama may not work for California or Oklahoma and vice versa.

State governments know the needs of their people and communities better than bureaucrats here in Washington, DC. They have different laws, and they have different rules and regulations, including when it comes to voting.

The same goes for the counties within each State. Jefferson County, the most populous county in Alabama, is different from Greene County, the least populous.

While the State sets broad parameters, county governments are given some flexibility to run elections in the way that is accountable and responsive to their people. H.R. 1 fails to recognize the difference in our States and counties.

This bill is not for the people. It is not of the people or by the people. Americans want faith and trust in their elections. They want to feel confident that the process works. H.R. 1 injects distrust into the process, and that is not what Americans want or need.

In H.R. 1, we have a bill that will make States’ voting procedures more susceptible to fraud. There is more we could go into, but I would say these provisions should be more than enough to make the case.

It shouldn’t be controversial to say we should have robust protections against voter fraud. Some States certainly do a better job protecting against fraud than others, but, ultimately, that is up to the State to decide, not the Federal Government.

The Democrats’ repeated response is election fraud doesn’t exist, but they only say this when it benefits them. They want to rewrite the rules for the game for all 50 States from Capitol Hill.

I have been consistent on the question of voter fraud. I believe we need more integrity in our elections, not less. We as a country need to restore confidence in our electoral process. I have joined my colleagues in calling for a bipartisan commission to look into how we can make our elections more secure. But to completely throw away or outlaw many of the safeguards that would destroy that remaining confidence for generations to come. But maybe that is the point of H.R. 1, which is even more reason to oppose this bad bill.

House Democrats are calling this bill the most important voting legislation since the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Voting Rights Act was important, historic, and necessary. H.R. 1 is not. The Voting Rights Act guaranteed millions of Americans the rights granted by the Constitution that is up to the State to decide, not the Federal Government.

The Democrats control of the Presidency, the House, and the Senate. That bipartisan support showed the American people that folks from different backgrounds can come together to work out important issues.

Any reform to the rules of the game must be bipartisan, just like they were with the Voting Rights Act. For one million Senate Democrats to force the rules will destroy the people’s trust in our voting process and their trust in democracy.
Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The sen-
ior Senator from Iowa.

INFORMATION SHARING

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today, I am going to discuss a very im-
portant issue that I started to inves-
tigate during the last Congress, and it is an issue that the executive branch must continue to improve upon. The subject is information sharing between the intelligence community and the Department of Health and Human Services. The connection between those two entities is a critical informa-
tion sharing data point, and it must last beyond the current pandemic.

To state the obvious, the healthcare landscape has evolved considerably in the past several decades. More specifically, the healthcare landscape has changed considerably in just the last year because of the COVID pandemic. Three entities—the Department, its funded partners, and the intelligence community—need access, they would have informa-
tion products and databases. So with those two entities is a critical informa-
tion that is vital to mitigating threats to the Department, its funded partners, and the intelligence community. To their credit, the Trump admin-
istration recognized the need to improve that process during the last Congress, and it is an issue that the executive branch must continue to improve upon.

As pathogens to our homeland and our people increase and be-
come more complex, the Federal Gov-
ernment must prepare well in advance for a very quick response. In order to accomplish that task, the government must focus on the seamless communica-
tion that must exist between and among the various Departments and Agencies. The Federal Government must take a whole-of-government ap-
proach.

One serious barrier to that seamless commu-
nication is overclassification. That is a serious barrier we find too often in our government, particularly when it deals with the pandemic, it be-
comes a problem that can cost a lot of lives.

In January of 2020 when reports began to circulate about COVID, I in-
structed my investiga-
tive staff to get a classified briefing from the Office of National Security. After that briefing, I made clear in a publi-
c way that overclassification during a public health emergency could have deadly consequences.

If a certain intelligence work product is classified in a certain way, some-
times other government Agencies won’t then have access. The Federal Government must guard against this type of overclassification, and that is especially important during emergency situations that demand quick action.

To the extent that disagreements exist between Agencies, which they often do in complex and ever-changing fact patterns, discussion must be had between and among the government. From that, the facts will bear out, and the best decisions can then be made. That process can’t take place if the government puts information in silos that Federal Health Agencies are un-
able to access.

Overclassification is more of a prob-
lem when China’s Government refuses to share relevant data with research-
ers. At least this government—the United States Government—can and should share information between and among its Agencies.

This administration must advance and improve upon the cooperative gains created by the Trump admin-
istration and make sure that the left hand continues to communicate with the right hand. The last thing that we should do is to revert to the lack of co-
operation that existed before, espe-
cially in light of the current pandemic and the lessons that have been learned from this pandemic.

The cooperation between Federal health Agencies and the intelligence community will strengthen ties between them for decades to come, and the American people will be better served by the increased communication. Simply put, increased communica-
tion will save lives.

SUNSHINE WEEK

Now, Madam President, on another point, our democracy won’t last as we all know, for the people, by the people, and, hence, is accountable to the peo-
ple. The best way to be accountable is through transparency. So I come to the floor today, like I have a lot of years at this time of the year, to celebrate an important week that we celebrate then, regularly, and it is known as Sunshine Week.

During this week, we celebrate the birth of the fourth President of the United States, James Madison. Mad-
son, as we all know, was the father of the Constitution, and maybe we don’t know so much about him, but he also happens to be a father of the Constitu-
tion that believed in open government. He believed that access to information and meaningful oversight and account-
ability are foundational to the Amer-
ican system of government. In other words, the public’s business ought to be public.

This year, I am continuing the Madison legacy by introducing several pieces of legislation. I am also asking the Government Accountability Office to look into how the Freedom of Infor-
mation Act, or FOIA as we call it, has been impacted by the pandemic.

First, on the judicial side of things, I am again advocating for cameras in the courts. In the last year, nearly every major institution, from schools to Con-
gress, have adapted to the pandemic by being virtual. So I believe bringing cameras into the courts would also bring in the public and open up access to our third branch of gov-
ernment.

At the same time, I am also asking the courts to provide transparency into our civil justice system by requiring the disclosure of all parties in a case. Litigation funders, such as hedge funds, are providing money to plain-
tiffs to bring lawsuits. This is all done in secret.

For many reasons, everyone involved in the case, including the judge and in-
cluding the defendant, should know that these parties funding these laws-
suits exist—in other words, who they are. They are big players, or maybe you wouldn’t have those cases.

On the executive side, one of the most important tools the public has to hold its government accountable is the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA. Be-
fore its passage, people had to justify the need for information to the gov-
ernment.

Can you believe there was a time when, for the public’s business, which
ought to be public, you had to justify the need for information? So FOIA was passed. After that passage, the government now has to justify its refusal to release information to you.

In 2016, we took FOIA one step further by requiring the government to proactively disclose information. These obligations are mandatory, even during unforeseen circumstances. I am deeply concerned that those obligations of that recent legislation are not being met. Even before the pandemic, the Government Accountability Office reported a significant increase in the number of FOIA requests and a big backlog in addressing those requests.

Last May, the Department of Justice reported that the coronavirus impacted FOIA processing governmentwide, as many agencies had limited ability to retrieve and process FOIA requests. That is why I am joining Senators DURBIN, LEAHY, and CORNYN in asking the GAO to examine FOIA processes and procedures in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

Our hope is to continue refining FOIA to make government information accessible in good times and in bad. The public’s business should be public, maybe even except for national security reasons or privacy reasons.

Many of you know I am an Iowa farmer. I know that without sunshine, there cannot be growth, and both corn and democracy thrive in the light. Remember, once again, this is Sunshine Week. Transparency brings accountability. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last Thursday night, I was able to return home to Texas, and on Friday, I went to the southern border. Texas has 100 miles of common border with Mexico, and, obviously, we are at ground zero whenever there is a border crisis.

I was glad to be joined by my friend Congressman HENRY CUELLAR, who has been a partner of mine on bipartisan, bicameral border security and immigration reform legislation in the past, and we were also joined by Congressman MICHAEL BURGESS, our friend from North Texas.

We visited a holding facility in Carrizo Springs, which houses young boys, ages 13 through 17, who were apprehended along the border. We were able to see the facility, which includes medical care, classroom space, dining facilities, and legal services for these young men. And we heard from the Health and Human Services workers who are doing everything they can to care for these children, despite being completely overwhelmed.

When we visited, there were 679 children between the ages of 13 and 17, but the facility is expected to reach capacity by today. This is no accident that we are anticipating minors coming across the border because the human smugglers and the drug traffickers understand our laws perhaps better than we do. And they know that if you are able to flood the zone with unaccompanied children, the Border Patrol are going to be distracted and diverted from their border security mission to take care of these children and to make sure that they are safe.

In the meantime, the drug smugglers exploit those gaps left when the Border Patrol leaves the frontlines to handle and process these unaccompanied children. Last year, more than 80,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in this country, and, unfortunately, a significant risk of spiking the methamphetamine, the fentanyl, the heroin, and the cocaine that comes up through the southern border in the hands of the same criminal organizations that move people, traffic in human beings, and, again, smuggle drugs.

In the 2 months since President Biden took office, the situation along the border has come to rival the largest surges that we have seen in previous years. We remember the border crisis of 2014, when an alarming number of unaccompanied children and families came across the southern border and completely overwhelmed the system. That summer, the situation was so dire that President Obama called it a humanitarian crisis.

Then came the surge in 2019. That May, Customs and Border Protection reported a recordbreaking 144,000 encounters with migrants along the southwest border, more than double the amount we experienced during the 2014 humanitarian crisis.

So if 2014 was a humanitarian crisis, 2019 was a humanitarian crisis on steroids. And I am afraid the current situation is going to get nothing but worse and perhaps outpace even the humanitarian crisis of 2019. And when you add the operational challenges and risks associated with the COVID–19 pandemic, it becomes even more difficult to provide the kind of care for these migrants, especially the children.

The facilities like Carrizo Springs were previously at a 40-percent capacity to allow for social distancing—something we have heard a lot about in the last year—but the number of unaccompanied children has climbed so high that the Biden administration is now allowing those facilities to operate at 100-percent capacity, despite the obvious risk of spreading COVID–19 because of a failure or inability to socially distance.

At one point last week, there were more than 3,700 children in the custody of the Border Patrol. By comparison, there were about 2,600 children in custody at the peak of the 2019 crisis. So the numbers are significantly higher.

Reports over the weekend show that the number has increased to more than 4,200, with nearly 3,000 held beyond the 72-hour legal limit imposed by a court settlement.

While these migrant children are without a doubt the biggest victims of this crisis, there are cascading consequences. In Brownsville alone, more than 200 migrants were released from the Border Patrol’s custody, having tested positive for COVID–19—200 positive for COVID–19, ushered into the country.

So despite the obvious health risks, many of these individuals continued their travels to their ultimate destinations, both within and outside the State of Texas. Some traveled, we know, as far north as Maryland, North Carolina, and New Jersey. And this rapid-pace catch-and-release practice places a serious strain on the resources of our border communities.

During the deadly winter storm last month, the mayor of Del Rio pleaded for the administration to stop releasing migrants into the city and surrounding area. The city’s capacities were already stretched thin. The mayor, Bruno Lozano, said: “We will be forced to make a decision to leave them without resources under these dire circumstances.”

When the President’s Chief of Staff was asked recently about the border crisis in a recent interview, he said: “We inherited a real mess.”

Well, that is not the way I see it. The policies the administration inherited made the human smugglers, the coyotes, and cartels from even attempting to smuggle children into the United States, particularly during the
COVID-19 pandemic. They required, under the Migrant Protection Program, migrants to remain in Mexico while their asylum claims were being processed.

Of course, the Biden administration has, in sort of a reflexive manner, reversed all of the previous administration’s policies with any plan to put in its place and without regard to the consequences.

We, the Migrant Protection Program, which was negotiated with the government of Mexico, worked pretty well. It allowed border communities to know that they wouldn’t have to hear the brunt of thousands of migrants coming across the border into their communities while simultaneously battling a pandemic.

The Biden administration didn’t inherit this mess; it helped create it. President Biden campaigned on the basis of policies that would lead to this very outcome.

One woman who crossed the Rio Grande on a smuggler’s raft said the Biden administration is the reason she and her two-year-old son attempted the journey at all. She said: “That gave us the opportunity to come.” And come they did.

Whether you call this a mess, as the President’s Chief of Staff did, or a humanitarian challenge, as the Secretary of Homeland Security did, I can tell you one thing: Unless the Biden administration reverses course, it will only get worse. We usually see the peak numbers of migration happen during the spring and the early summer; frankly, because of the weather and the ease of passage. So we haven’t seen nothing yet compared to what we will see unless action is taken.

During my visit last Friday, one of the people involved in the operation of the Carrizo Springs facility said: This is a category 5 hurricane with tropical storm force winds on the coast. It is coming.

Well, we have seen this before, as I said—many times, in fact. And unless action is taken to stem the flow of migrants across the border, that category 5 hurricane is going to break the entire system.

In my time in the Senate, I have always looked to the men and women on the ground—the Border Patrol who wear green uniforms, the Customs and Border Protection officials who wear blue uniforms. I have looked to them to lead the way. The way they are going and how Congress and other policymakers can provide support.

As I said, we share a 1,200-mile border with Mexico, and our border communities are made up of incredible networks and community leaders, and nongovernmental organizations that work together to help keep the migrants safe, as well as communities safe. Many of them are motivated solely by their humanitarian impulses, and we can do no harm as well as we are doing without them.

One frustration I have heard in recent weeks is over vaccine distribution for Border Patrol and other Federal officers who have no choice but to come in contact with COVID-19-positive migrants coming across the border. These men and women—Federal employees, Federal law enforcement officers—are at significant risk of contracting COVID-19 while working with detained and vulnerable populations.

We know that more than 8,000 Customs and Border Protection employees have tested positive for COVID-19, and many of them have died of the pandemic. More than 2,800 of these 8,000 cases have been in my State of Texas. But despite this knowledge, the administration has not made vaccinating these men and women on the frontline a priority.

Last week, Senator Sinema of Arizona and I sent a letter to Secretary Mayorkas to advocate for Border Patrol and the Department of Homeland Security’s other Federal law enforcement officers to be prioritized for vaccination. I want to commend Catholic Charities of Laredo, the Holding Institute Community Centers of Laredo, the Sisters of Mercy, and a range of community leaders for a discussion on the ways this crisis is impacting them.

We discussed the bungled mess of the immigration courts, which have a backlog of 1.2 million cases. In fact, the human smugglers and drug cartels know that because of our laws and our failure to offer consequences associated with illegal entry into the United States, that we will never get to those 1.2 million backlog cases and that people can simply evade the law by refusing to show up for their court-appointed date.

Well, we talked about how the biggest beneficiaries of the crisis weren’t the migrants crossing the border but, rather, the transnational criminal organizations—the cartels, the human smugglers, and coyotes who bring them here. Border Patrol told me that the average smuggling fee for cartels to bring a single unaccompanied child into the Del Rio Sector was more than $7,300—$7,300 per child. The Chief of the Border Patrol sector there in Del Rio told me that just this year, they have detained people from 54 separate countries—54 separate countries—coming through the Del Rio Sector of the Border Patrol. So this is like the United Nations coming across our border, and, quite frankly, it is such a financially rewarding business for the human smugglers and the criminal networks, they will literally bring people from anywhere around the world across our southern border into the United States. That ought to concern all of us.

Well, the Border Patrol is mounting a struggle against the border crisis and the pandemic simultaneously. Like citizens across the country, our border communities have already had a very difficult year battling COVID-19. They had to cover a range of expenses created by the pandemic in order to keep their communities safe and healthy.

But, unlike other communities across the country, their economic hardship created by nearly a year of legal limits on nonessential cross-border travel.

Prepandemic, visitors from Mexico would travel across the border to shop, eat at restaurants, and visit their family members. They were a huge economic driver in our border communities from El Paso all the way down the Rio Grande to the Rio Grande Valley. But the “pause” on legitimate nonessential travel threatened these communities with serous economic strain on these communities, and those leaders are struggling to understand the disconnect between the Biden administration’s two different approaches.

One participant at the roundtable said: “I don’t understand how you can catch-and-release and not let our neighbors across the border come over and spend money in our communities to help [grow] our economy.”

This conference call is one-two punch for our border communities, and it is unfair that they are expected to carry the burden of a crisis that should be the responsibility—is the responsibility of the Federal Government.

In many cases, nongovernmental organizations carry a significant amount of weight that, quite frankly, is unfairly placed on their shoulders. Congressmen Cuellar and I traveled to Laredo with three incredible NGOs: Catholic Charities of Laredo, the Holding Institute Community Centers of Laredo, the Sisters of Mercy. They have done so much work in managing this humanitarian crisis.

I want to commend Catholic Charities of Laredo, the Sisters of Mercy, the Holding Institute Community Center, and other NGOs along the Texas border for everything they have done to respond to the humanitarian crisis. I encourage anyone who is interested in understanding the crises and work to find solutions, including President Biden, to visit our border and to hear from these same individuals first-hand.

No matter what party controls the Senate, the House, or the White House, there is law enforcement, local leaders, and NGOs are doing everything they can to keep both migrants and their communities safe. They are currently overwhelmed, frustrated, and eager for change, and their voices must be heard.

We are at an inflection point in the humanitarian crisis, and unless the administration acts and acts quickly, we are headed down a very dangerous
path. We have seen enough of these surges in the past to know what to expect.

If you are opposed to human trafficking, human suffering, drug smuggling, pushing migrants into the shadows, this bill should be absolutely repudiated by what is happening along the border today.

The hurricane is on the way. I hope the administration and Congress will take a serious interest in acting before it makes landfall. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF DEBRA ANNE HAALAND

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am here to say a few words on behalf of DEB HAALAND to be Secretary of the Interior.

There is something wonderfully beautiful and symmetrical about her appointment to this position because of the Department of the Interior’s role supervising the country’s public lands. Well, of course, before America’s public lands were America’s public lands, they were Native American lands, and DEB HAALAND will be the first Native American to serve in any President’s Cabinet and the first to serve as the Secretary of this Department. So that is kind of a wonderful harmony with history, and I hope we appreciate that here.

The second thing that I want to say is that it is, to me, deeply ironic how much of the opposition to her as Secretary has come on the theory that she won’t be fair to fossil fuels. We have lived through 4 years of a Trump administration with Secretaries of the Interior who were out-and-out operatives of fossil fuel. The fossil fuel hand in the Secretary’s glove was obvious.

The idea that anything other than fossil fuel was treated fairly in the Trump administration is a preposterous notion. Basically, anything that wasn’t nailed down, they gave to the fossil fuel industry with no consideration for any of the competitors, and they did it so badly and so shabbily and so sloppily because they were so greedy that a lot of the stuff they did got thrown out by courts because they didn’t even bother to do their homework.

So, please, let’s not talk about fairness after the last 4 years. Our friends on the other side lost their standing to talk about fairness after what they did for fossil fuel in the last 4 years, including outright lies about climate change.

My good friend from Texas talks about hurricanes. He has real hurricanes coming because of climate change. Yet where is the climate plan from the other side? None, because the fossil fuel industry won’t let them.

Let me last say as I conclude, I come from the Ocean State. Representative HAALAND comes from one of those interior square States. Her Agency is called the Department of the Interior.

When you look at things like the Land and Water Conservation Fund, floods of money go to inside America, interior America, upland and inland America, and the coasts always get overlooked. I have made it very clear to Ms. HAALAND that has to change, with climate change coming, with fisheries moving about, with sea levels rising, with oceans warming, with actual seas acidifying in front of our eyes, to overlook the coast can happen no more, I truthfully shall not do. I will take her at her word, but I also intend to work very hard to make sure that I can support her in keeping her word that oceans and coasts will matter.

I yield to my friend from Minnesota, the PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, I rise today in strong support of the historic nomination of DEB HAALAND to serve as Secretary of the Interior. When Representative HAALAND appeared before the Senate for her confirmation hearing, she opened by saying: “My story is unique.”

HAALAND is a 35th-generation New Mexican, an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo, and will be the first-ever Native American to serve as a Cabinet Secretary.

National Congress of the American Indians President Fawn Sharp noted that it is fitting that as we celebrate Women’s History Month, DEB HAALAND is poised to make it. Her nomination is a historic choice and a moment of deep meaning to Tribal nations and Indigenous people across the country who have seen over and over again the Federal Government fail to keep its promises to Native people, promises made in law and treaty.

It is clear to me that we need Representative HAALAND’s strong voice of stewardship for our public resources, cultural resources, and public lands, for action on the climate crisis, and for making sure the Federal Government lives up to its treaty and trust responsibilities for Tribal nations and their citizens.

Representative HAALAND’s background and her life experiences make her perfect for this job. As HAALAND said during her confirmation hearings, “If an Indigenous woman from humble beginnings can be confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, our country holds promise for everyone.”

Her nomination includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which manages the Federal Government’s relations with American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities. Indigenous leaders across the country have expressed bipartisan support for Representative HAALAND’s nomination because they know that she will bring a personal commitment to lifting up Native voices and addressing deep inequities and longstanding funding challenges on Tribal lands.

The Department is also responsible for public lands, energy resources, and wildlife conservation, and so it requires a leader who understands the cultural and economic value of these resources and the importance of conserving them. Representative HAALAND grew up with a deep affinity for public lands, for responsible use, and for hunting and fishing. In Indiana, a county on her father’s side is from Minnesota, where she tells me she learned a lot about the joys of walleye fishing.

In the House, Representative HAALAND served as the chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, and she has earned the support of hundreds of groups working on climate change, conservation, and public lands management.

Representative HAALAND has been a champion for the tragic crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Here we have a strong, capable, competent leader ready to serve our country as the first Native woman to lead a major Cabinet Department. I can’t help asking here during Women’s History Month, why is it that almost 2 months after President Biden’s inauguration, Representative HAALAND is one of the last three core Cabinet members to be confirmed?

Why is it that she has faced such ferocious opposition from some Republicans?

Colleagues, over the last 3 months, Representative HAALAND has been called an “extremist.”

One Republican Senator I serve with on the Indian Affairs Committee labeled HAALAND a “hardline ideologue with radical views”—this from a person who spent months promoting the false and widely debunked conspiracy theories about voter fraud in our election. Another Republican Senator called Representative HAALAND a “socialist, left-of-Lenin whack job”—though, later, he said he merely meant to call her an “extremist.”

In the House, a Member of my own Minnesota congressional delegation orchestrated a hit campaign on Representative HAALAND by attacking her position on natural resources management and boundary waters. Strangely, this same Member happily supported Secretary Vilaseck’s confirmation even though he holds exactly the same positions.

As our former colleagues Tom Udall and Mark Udall said in a op-ed in USA Today, it is hard to imagine that either of them, had they been nominated to lead Interior, would have faced the same attacks for radical ideas.

I just find it difficult to take these Republican attacks at face value. My colleagues should know that Representative HAALAND was named the most bipartisan House freshman in the last Congress. If that is what a hardline ideologue looks like, maybe we should all aspire to be the role model that DEB HAALAND is.

Colleagues, I think we need to be honest with ourselves about what is going on here. Once again, a woman—
and a woman of color—is being held to a different standard, and we need to name it. We have to come to grips with the reality that, time after time, strong women, especially women of color, are attacked when White men with the same views are welcome to walk right through that door, unopposed.

At their worst, these efforts—these attempts—to portray Representative HAALAND as extreme and unqualified show how much work we still have to do to make our country’s history of disparaging, disrespecting, and erasing Native people and how this tragic history has been reflected in the biases on exhibit during Representative HAALAND’s confirmation. This is clear when we see how few Republicans could even acknowledge the historic nature of Representative HAALAND’s nomination, choosing, instead, to focus on hostile questions about marriage and her gender. No Senator asked about policy goals and experience. No Senator referred to these nominees as “extremists” or “radicals.”

Yet how did the women of color fare?

In the Banking Committee, my Republican colleagues grilled Secretary FUDGE, our new Secretary of Housing and Urban Development—and a Black woman—about her inexperience comments on race. This was less than 3 weeks after our former President initiated an insurrection of White supremacists, among others, and faced essentially no consequence from his own party. In this hearing, we withdrew her nomination to lead the Office of Management and Budget after some declared that her Twitter account was too divisive.

Well, if we had only known that mean tweets could disqualify you from public office, we could have saved ourselves 4 years of division and chaos and two impeachment trials after a torrent of inflammatory and hateful rhetoric from the former Twitter account of our former President, which most of my Republican colleagues said they tried to ignore or just hadn’t read. Strong opinions from strong women of color are deemed unacceptable and cause for disqualification. I am just not buying it.

In my first floor speech in this Chamber, I said that, when you really listen to women, you begin to understand all the ways in which women are made less and are denied opportunities to contribute to their communities and to their country.

So I urge my colleagues: Don’t let this be one of those times. Let’s not silence these women and deny them opportunities to lead because we are uncomfortable with their power.

During Representative HAALAND’s confirmation process, I started to get text messages from women friends, especially from Native women, who were horrified by the well-timed and condemnatory questions that were directed her way. We were proud of how she responded—with grace and with dignity—and we all knew how it felt.

I would bet that every woman in this Chamber knows what it feels like when this happens. A man talks down to you. He uses his power to explain something that you already know and signals in a hundred different ways that you don’t belong in the room where it happens.

Well, for a long time, women have found ways to respond to these affronts with grace as did Representative HAALAND, MARCIA FUDGE, Vanita Gupta, and Neera Tanden. When I was a young woman, my mother was a very strong woman her whole life. It’s not just ignore these folks and go about my business. Even today, as I worked on this floor speech, I wondered: Am I going to offend anybody? Am I going to sound too shrill? I bet there is not a man in this room who has ever worried about sounding too shrill.

So, colleagues, tonight, we will vote on Representative DEB HAALAND’s confirmation to Secretary of the Interior, and we will all have a chance to restore dedicated, capable, passionate leadership to this important Department.

The choice to confirm Representative HAALAND is, indeed, historic, but it is not an abstract opportunity. As Secretary, Representative HAALAND will play a consequential role in combating climate change. She will also honor Tribal sovereignty and strengthen the government’s relationship between the United States and Tribal nations. Maybe, just maybe, her leadership will help lift up Native women and of all women and to not be threatened by that. Our country will be the better for it. I urge my colleagues to support the confirmation of DEB HAALAND for Secretary of the Interior. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

MAIDEN SPEECH

MR. PADILLA. Madam President, on behalf of the people of California, it is my honor to address this body today. I stand here today humbled and inspired by this moment in our Nation’s history, as the Senator from the most populous and most diverse State in the Nation and as the first Latino Senator from the State of California. Let me begin by saying what a great country this is.

My name is ALEX PADILLA. (English translation of statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

I am the son of Santos and Lupe Padilla. I am also the proud husband of Angela Padilla and the proud dad of Roman, Alex, and Diego.

I love you guys. Colleagues, my family’s journey is central to my public service. My parents immigrated to California from Mexico in the 1960s in search of a better life. They arrived from different regions of Mexico, with little formal education, but with a work ethic and big dreams. They met in Los Angeles. They fell in love. They decided to get married and apply for green cards—in that order.

For 40 years, my father worked as a short order cook—hard work, honest work—and as he will proudly tell you, his kitchen never failed an inspection. For the same 40 years, my mom worked tirelessly cleaning houses. It seemed like she never had a day off, but, together, they raised three of us—my sister, my brother, and me. We worked at the U.S. Government every day for saying yes to those applications, because, if they had been denied, no doubt my life story would be a lot different.

For 40 years, my father worked as a short order cook—hard work, honest work—and as he will proudly tell you, his kitchen never failed an inspection. For the same 40 years, my mom worked tirelessly cleaning houses. It seemed like she never had a day off, but, together, they raised three of us—my sister, my brother, and me. We worked at the U.S. Government every day for saying yes to those applications, because, if they had been denied, no doubt my life story would be a lot different.

Now, our neighborhood had more than its share of challenges—from poverty to crime to unhealthy air. It might not have been the safest neighborhood, but my mom felt blessed that we had the sanctuary of a backyard and a strong sense of community. It made me believe that my parents taught us about the values of service to others and of getting a good education.

Today, my sister, my brother, and I are all public servants. My sister has been a teacher, a principal, and, today, she works in administration for the Los Angeles Unified School District. My brother serves as chief of staff to Los Angeles City Council President Nury Martinez. If you pay close attention there, yes, I am the middle child.

Think about that. In one generation, our family has gone from being immigrant cooks and house cleaners to serving in the U.S. Senate. That is the California dream. That is the American dream. That is the dream I was raised to believe in and the dream that Angela and I are working hard to keep alive for our children and for future generations.

I think about my parents often, and I think about all of the hard-working people in our State and in our Nation who are hurting right now. I rise today on their behalf.

I rise on behalf of the cooks, the dishwashers, and the domestic workers who have seen their jobs and their lives upended by the COVID–19 pandemic. I rise on behalf of the farmworkers and delivery drivers and nurses who have been on the frontlines of this pandemic and who have never stopped showing up.

I rise on behalf of the 4 million small businesses in California and the business owners, many who are hanging on by a thread and stretching like they
have never stretched before to meet payroll.

I rise on behalf of the nearly 2.5 million California families who are behind on their rent or behind on their mortgage, with bills piling up, wondering how they will ever climb out of the hole.

I rise on behalf of the 11.2 million California adults who struggled to meet basic household expenses last year, including many who relied on food pantries just to get by.

I rise on behalf of the 56,000 California families and the more than 530,000 families across America who have lost a loved one, many who died alone in a hospital room or a nursing home, deprived of the last chance to hold hands or say goodbye.

The people of my State are hurting; the people of our country are hurting, and we have a long way to go before we get back to where we were before this crisis. At times demands bold action. “Building back better” demands that we build back better for everybody and that we leave nobody and no community behind.

Yes, dignity, respect, and a pathway to citizenship for essential workers is personal to me, but it is also in the best interest of our Nation.

These immigrants are paying more than their fair share. They are deemed essential by the Federal Government for good reason, and they have earned the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. We cannot allow the American Dream to be a casualty of this pandemic.

Relief and recovery must be for everyone.

Now, the American Rescue Plan that this body passed and President Biden just signed into law is a $1.9 trillion downpayment on this promise. It will speed vaccination production and distribution, expand testing and contact tracing, outfit our schools so kids and teachers can safely return to the classroom, provide emergency mortgage and rental assistance to families in need, and it will launch a lifeline to keep millions of American small businesses from going under.

Now, I will tell you what it means for my home State. In addition to what this bill will deliver to fight the virus, it also means immediate food assistance for 4.3 million families, an increase in the standard of living for 8 million California children, $15 billion for California schools, $590 million to help combat homelessness on the streets of California, and billions in direct aid for our most remote and rural communities.

The American Rescue Plan provides a lifeline for American families, workers, and businesses to survive what we all hope will be the last months of this crisis.

It is one of the most transformational and progressive pieces of legislation in our history, which will cut child poverty in half, including for half a million children in California.

But our work is far from over. I believe now is the time to lead an American comeback that leaves no working family behind—a comeback that heals the longstanding divides in our society and unites our country, a comeback that confronts the systemic injustices in our country so that we can build back equitably.

It took almost 10 years to recover from the great recession. We lived through the consequences of the moderate response to the financial crisis—slow growth, poor pay, and millions without jobs. We cannot let that happen again. We can and must build back better.

That means investing trillions in our infrastructure in a way that uplifts communities and provides millions of good-paying union jobs and in a way that addresses our climate crisis to help ensure that every person has access to clean air and clean water.

It also means passing commonsense immigration reform that brings humanity to our immigration system and recognizing that providing a pathway to citizenship for people living and contributing to our country is part—a strategic part—of our economic recovery as well.

That means protecting and strengthening our democracy by passing voting rights and civil rights legislation. We should be making it easier, not harder, for eligible people to register to vote, to stay registered to vote, and to vote in every State in the country.

But as President Obama said in his farewell address, “the work of democracy has always been hard. It’s always been contentious, sometimes it’s been bloody. For every two steps forward, it often feels like we take one step back.”

It is no surprise that reactionary State leaders around the country, fearful of losing elections, fearful of losing power, are mobilizing to suppress the vote as we speak.

Enough is enough. This Senate must act aggressively to protect the right to vote, to strengthen the right to vote—no more steps back, only steps forward.

We must act boldly for what is right for the American people. We must act boldly for what this moment demands of us. We can’t let anything keep us from bold action and progress, including outdated rules and traditions.

We must end the filibuster. For decades, the filibuster has been leveraged to obstruct progress. It helped maintain Jim Crow segregation, and it continues to entrench inequality in America today. We cannot allow the filibuster to prevent us from doing what is necessary to lift up working families in every corner of the country.

I believe we will beat this pandemic and get through this crisis. We will do it the same way we always have, the same way my parents did, the same way that American families and million of immigrants. Sometimes it’s hard, but we’ve done it before—going to work and getting the job done.

To my colleagues, I am so honored to serve with you and look forward to working alongside you for years to come.

To my constituents, I am honored to represent you, and I will work hard every day to make you proud.
And to Angela, Roman, Alex, and Diego, I love you. Thank you for your love and your support of my public service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators LUJÁN, CARPER, and myself be allowed to complete our remarks before the roll call vote.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you, Madam President.

The southern border. The situation at our southern border has devolved into chaos. That is what I am hearing from some of my former House colleagues who have been on that border today.

According to them, we are once again facing a crisis. Thirteen days ago, Customs and Border Protection announced that they were deploying more agents to help manage the spike and apprehensions of adults and unaccompanied alien children.

Then, last Monday, news broke that Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas had sent an email to DHS staff begging for volunteers to go to the border and help with logistics and humanitarian aid.

It is obvious they need help on the border. In January alone, the Customs and Border Patrol detained nearly 78,000 people—more than double the number of apprehensions in January of 2020.

In February, that number jumped to more than 100,000 arrests and detentions. CBP took more than 9,000 unaccompanied minors into custody that month, prompting the administration to open two overflow detention centers to house them.

Look at these numbers: 100,000 arrests and detentions in February; 9,000 unaccompanied minors being taken into custody that month—having to open 2 overflow detention centers.

New data released last Wednesday shows that our agents are now detaining more than 4,000 people along the border every single day—4,000 every day.

Our facilities and resources are exhausted, and so are the agents responsible for controlling this out-of-control situation.

It did not have to be this way. Secretary Mayorkas has accused the Trump administration of “dismantling our Nation’s immigration system.” That is his quote. But if he wants to know who is really responsible, he should look to the current White House.

I have stated time and again how disastrous President Biden’s policy of governing by Executive fiat has been. Thirty-four Executive orders in his first 50 days—34.

Also, he has suspended construction of the border wall, jeopardizing our national security. He has embraced DACA. He halted most deportations. He cut domestic immigration arrests by 60 percent and dismantled the migrant protection protocols.

This administration threw our existing immigration laws out the window and let the world know that when it comes to illegal entry, not only will we look the other way, this administration is encouraging them to come. Even their Cabinet nominees are playing by these new rules of encouraging individuals to break the law to come to the country illegally. They are encouraging this.

Last week, this Chamber voted to discharge Xavier Becerra’s nomination from committee. I voted no. He is one of the most flagrant offenders out there when it comes to sending these signals. He has openly admitted he would like to decriminalize illegal entry and offer Medicaid to anyone who manages to get across the border.

This has created a lot of promises that they know they are not going to be able to live up to, and now they are trying to walk it all back, walk back the hope that sparked in thousands of people because they have heard that the border was going to be open. They are even wearing the T-shirts with the slogan, “Biden, let us in.”

They are going to have to walk back the mess that is there on the border, and I am fearful and concerned that the administration is going to work because from what we are hearing about the border, they have lost control of that border.

I look forward to traveling to the border for a briefing on the situation. This administration does not want their critics to see what is happening down there. There are days you would think they have got a news blackout going at the border.

This isn’t just a problem in Texas or California or Arizona or New Mexico. It goes to the border and help with logistics and humanitarian aid.

This is not a problem in Texas or California or Arizona or New Mexico. It goes at the border. This administration does not want their critics to see what is happening down there. There are days you would think they have got a news blackout going at the border.

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This isn’t just a problem in Texas or California or Arizona or New Mexico. It goes at the border. This administration does not want their critics to see what is happening down there. There are days you would think they have got a news blackout going at the border.
There was no real negotiation. The Ojibwa has two choices: Accept the terms, or face annihilation. So the two chiefs, whose English names were Buffalo and Flat Mouth, signed the treaty and hoped that they had salvaged some future for their people. It was one of more than 500 treaties that Indian nations signed with the U.S. Government between 1778 and 1871. Like every one of those 500-plus treaties, the 1855 treaty with the Ojibwa Nation was violated by the U.S. Government. The part of our government most responsible for carrying out treaty obligations and maintaining government-to-government relations with Tribal nations was—and still is—the U.S. Department of the Interior. That is part of what makes the vote we will take today so historic and important.

It has taken too long—244 years—for a Native American to be included in a President's Cabinet. DEB HAA LAND is a leader of honor, integrity and vision, and I commend President Biden for nominating her to this important post. As Secretary of the Interior, she will oversee the department that manages America's national parks and public lands. She will also lead the Bureau primarily responsible for maintaining relations between the U.S. Government and the nearly 600 federally recognized, sovereign Tribes within our national borders.

Her nomination has the strong backing of more than 500 national and regional Tribal leaders, civil rights organizations, and environmental and conservation groups. She received bipartisan support in the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

She is a thoughtful and inclusive leader who will search for balanced solutions on energy, climate, and natural resources. She also hopes and expects—that she will correct mistakes the previous administration made in removing protections for vast amounts of land, including large portions of Bears Ears and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah. These natural and cultural treasures are part of our shared national inheritance and must be protected. Deb Haaland understands that.

In 2018, she became one of the first two women ever elected to Congress. She is a 35th-generation New Mexican and an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo, a Tribe of people who have lived on the land that is now New Mexico for 900 years. Defending this Nation is in her blood. Her father was a marine who received the Silver Star for his service in Vietnam and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Her mother is a Navy veteran who worked for a quarter century at the Bureau of Indian Education, an Interior Department Agency.

This historic nomination is an important step towards healing a deep wound of our past, and it offers hope for a better future. I am honored to support Deb Haaland to serve as U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. LUJAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware, Mr. CARPER.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I rise today to support the historic nomination of Deb Haaland to be Secretary of the Interior.

If confirmed, Congresswoman Haaland will be the first Native American Cabinet Secretary. And how fitting it would be at the Department of the Interior. After all, American Indians and Alaska Natives were the first stewards of this land. I know Representative Haaland will carry on that commitment as Interior Secretary.

This nomination is important for all States, especially the States of Delaware, which I am privileged to represent in the U.S. Senate. The First State, as we are known, may be small, but the Department of the Interior’s presence there is not. We are proud of our two National Wildlife Refuges and one of America’s newest national parks, the First State National Historical Park, which helps tell the story of the founding of our Nation leading up to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

As I’ve gotten to know Deb Haaland this year, I’ve been convinced that she is the right person to lead the Department of the Interior. We are at a critical juncture in our quest to protect our public lands, waters, and monuments for future generations. She has spent her career fighting for these things. As Interior Secretary, I know she will continue that fight with compassion and integrity. And, as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I look forward to working with her and the team she will lead on restoring protections for migratory birds and our nation’s most imperiled and rare species, like those in Delaware. The idea that she will be the first Native American, how appropriate, how appropriate. When you think about it, who were the original stewards of this land, our water, the birds and the animals and fish that all live here and populate this land of ours? Native Americans were the first stewards. Native Alaskans were the first stewards. And it is only appropriate that, finally, we picked one of them.

She has been nominated by the President, gone through her confirmation hearing, and we have a chance, today, to complete the process by confirming the nomination of Deb Haaland to be Secretary of the Interior. Those of us in the State of Delaware are proud to be the “First State.” We will always honor our Native American heritage by preserving our National Wildlife Refuges. We have a national park, one of the newest ones in the country, that really helps tell the story of the settlement of our country from the early days of colonial settlements, right up to the ratification of the Constitution.

The Constitution lays out what is expected of us serving here and in the administration and also what is expected of Cabinet Secretaries, and it is seen in the oath we take. If you will, the beginning of the Constitution, where it says: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union...”

We can do better than what we are doing. We can do better than what we are doing with respect to protecting our National heritage, our wildlife, our migratory birds. We can do better in all of this. She will bring that commitment to doing better.

I will end with this. I don’t believe we have ever had, in the history of our country, a Native American who has been nominated to serve as a Cabinet Secretary. I think she is the first, and I think she is the first. I think it is fitting that the first one is from Delaware. The idea that she will be the first Native American, how appropriate, how appropriate. When you think about it, who were the original stewards of this land, our water, our air, the birds and the animals and fish that all live here and populate this land of ours? Native Americans were the first stewards. Native Alaskans were the first stewards. And it is only appropriate that, finally, we picked one of them.

She has been nominated by the President, gone through her confirmation hearing, and we have a chance, today, to complete the process by confirming the nomination of Deb Haaland to be Secretary of the Interior. Those of us in the State of Delaware will do that, and I thank you very much for allowing me to give these remarks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. LUJAN.) The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Haaland nomination?
Ms. BALDWIN. I call 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted “nay,” and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted “nay.”

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 40, as follows:

NOT VOTING—9

Barrasso  Hickenlooper  Marshall
Bennet  Hirono  Rubio
Hagerty  Lummis  Toomey

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONFIRMATION OF DEBRA ANNE HAALAND

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, just a word about the history-making nomination that was just approved by the Senate. We have now made history twice in the last few minutes. We have made history twice because we have nominated the first Native American Secretary of the Interior and the first Native American Cabinet official in American history.

The confirmation of DEB HAALAND is amazing. It is a huge step forward, and now it creates a government that more embodies the full richness and diversity of this country. We have known for so long the Native American community was treated badly, and we have a long way to go but we have begun with the ARP. And now with the approval of DEB HAALAND to be the Secretary of the Interior, we are moving forward, and she will do a great job as Interior Secretary. She represents a turnaround because the Trump administration did more to undermine the relationship between the Federal Government and Tribes than has been done in a long time. DEB HAALAND will reverse that and move much further along. So we are proud of what the Senate has done.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 17. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Martin Joseph Walsh, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Labor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 37. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, March 15, be waived.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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 Executive Calendar No. 37, Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.


EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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 Executive Calendar No. 37, Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.


EXECUTIVE SESSION
LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of twenty minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

CONFIRMATION OF DEBRA ANNE HAALAND

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I rise in support of the historic nomination of DEB HAALAND to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior. When confirmed, Congresswoman HAALAND will be the first Native American to serve in a Cabinet position.

DEB HAALAND’s nomination to become Secretary of the Interior means so much to the future of this country.

For the historically underrepresented and underserved indigenous communities of these United States, it means that their experiences and perspectives will be valued and represented at the highest ranks of our Federal Government. This important milestone and this reflection of their stories cannot be overstated.

It means that young Americans and perhaps especially young people in indigenous communities, who put themselves through school, take out student loans, raise children, and run a business, will see their struggles in this nominee and realize that they, too, can work their way to high-ranking government positions.

DEB HAALAND’s confirmation means that our country will, after 4 years of neglect and catering to the fossil fuel industry, work again to ensure that our natural resources are conserved for the next generation.

It means that the Federal Government will take swift, meaningful actions to address climate change.

It means that trust and relationships between local communities, Tribes, and the Federal Government will be restored and strengthened.

My Republican colleagues have gone to great lengths to smear Congresswoman HAALAND as an extremist. They have repeatedly committed to working with Senators and stakeholders in their respective States on issues that they care about.

They don’t talk about the impacts of climate change on American communities, how climate change is an environmental justice issue, or the benefits of expanding our country’s clean energy production. Instead, their message is simple—if the nominee is not beholden to the fossil fuel industry, they won’t support them.

Yes, President Biden’s environmental agenda is bold. His commitments to addressing climate change, which he identified as a crisis, are strong.

As a country we cannot afford to continue with the fossil fuel extracting, carbon emitting status quo. We cannot keep burying our heads in the sand and kicking the can down the road, expecting our children and grandchildren to clean up our messes.

President Biden committed to tackling some of the greatest challenges of our lifetime, and he named climate change as one of the four great crises of our time.

Major changes will need to happen, including our old ways of thinking. We need to be bold, innovative, and think outside the box.

As our country takes on these issues, challenges and opportunities are inevitable. By having DEB HAALAND at the helm, I know that our local communities from Hawaii, to Alaska, to Maine, and everywhere in between, will have a Secretary willing to listen, a Secretary who will take the time to understand their issues.

Our country can successfully transition from overreliance on fossil fuels, increase our clean energy production, protect our environment, and make real progress on climate change by working together.

Mr. President, a family emergency has kept me from being in attendance for today’s vote. If I were present, I would have voted to confirm DEB HAALAND as Secretary of the Interior. It is not only a historic vote but one of hope. I urge my colleagues to join me in my support.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I was necessarily absent for a vote on March 15, 2021, so I could return to Hawaii to tend to a family matter.

On March 15, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the confirmation of DEBRA ANNE HAALAND to be Secretary of the Interior, rollover vote 119.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee’s intent, I would like to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY, Arlington, VA.

Hon. ROBERT MENENDEZ, Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 21–24 concerning the Navy’s proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Germany for Defense Assistance. The letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Germany.

(ii) Total Estimated Value: Major Defense Equipment*: $1.10 billion. Other $0.67 billion. Total $1.77 billion.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quan-

ties of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

(MD–JSOC 5).


Non-MDE: Also included are commercial engines: Tactical Open Mission Software (TOMS); Electro-Optical (EO) and Infrared MX–23HD; AN AAQ–2(V) I Acoustic System; AN/ PPS–10; AN/ APY–1; Crotalus; Tactical Open Mission Software (MIDS JTRS 5).

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I was necessarily absent for a vote on March 15, 2021, so I could return to Hawaii to tend to a family matter.

On March 15, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the confirmation of DEBRA ANNE HAALAND to be Secretary of the Interior, rollover vote 119.
MPE-S type II with SASSM 3.7; Global Positioning Systems (GPS) 52D Precise Positioning System (PPS) for APY–10 Radar; AN/ALQ-213 Electronic Counter Measures; AN/LQ-135-LQ-139 Interrogator and Dispenser; AN/LQ-137/139/142 Interrogator and Dispenser System; AN/UPX-IFR Interrogators; APX-123A(C) IFF Digital Transponders; KIV–78 IFF Mode 5 Cryptographic Appliances; CCM–701A Cryptographic Core Module; MX–20HD. The EO/IR system processes visual and infrared sensor inputs to provide accurate location information for navigation and targeting.

2. Tactical Open Mission Software (TOMS). Functions include environment planning, tactical aids, weapons planning aids, and data correlation algorithms for track fusion which automatically correlates tracks produced by on board and off board sensors.

3. Electro-Optical (EO) and Infrared (IR) MX–20HD. The EO/IR system processes visible and IR spectrum (IR Focal Plane Array (FPA) and Turret Stabilization) to detect and image objects.

6. AN/AAQ-2/2 V/1 Acoustic System. The Acoustic sensor system is integrated within the mission system as the primary sensor for the aircraft. The system has a multi-static active (MAC) 64 sonobuoy processing capability and acoustic sensor pre-diction tools.

7. AN/UPX–10 Radar. The aircraft radar is a direct derivative of the legacy AN/APS 137(V) installed in the P–3C. The radar capability includes selectable availability anti-countermeasures (SAASM), SAR and ISAR imagery resolutions, and periscope detection mode.

8. AN/ALQ-213 Electronic Support Measures (ESM). This system provides real time capability for the automatic detection, location, measurement, and analysis of RF-signals and data communications. The system is equipped with a library of known emitters to perform emitter classification.


10. AN/PRC–117G Radio. The AN/PRC–117G is a tactical radio that extends communications beyond-Line-Of-Sight (BLOS) with abilities for simultaneous SATCOM voice and data transmission. Situational Awareness is enhanced by an embedded Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM) 3.7 GPS receiver.


12. AN/UPX IFR Interrogator. The Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) AN/UPX–43 Inertial Navigation System provides the capability for timely and accurate display of both civil and military air traffic.

13. AN/UPX–130A(C) IFF Transponder Digital. The Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) AN/UPX–130A transponder is capable of both Mode 5 and Mode 8 secure modes and provides own ship positional information.

14. KIV–78 IFF Mode 5 Cryptographic Appliance. The KIV–78 is Type 1 NSA-certified COMSEC for IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) data protection. It provides cryptographic and time-of-day services, concurrent IFF operations as well as concurrent interrogator/ transponder operations. KIV–78 IFF system deployed to identify cooperative, friendly systems.

15. CCM–701A Cryptographic Core Module. Common Data Link is used for line of sight secure transmission of video imagery to Ground Terminals, and Ships.

16. KY–100M. The KY–100M is a narrowband/wideband (N/WB) terminal that incorporates the TACTERM (CV–359/1301), the MINTERM (KY–99A), the VINSION (KY–57), and the SINGOAPR. A self-contained terminal inclose with intra-comms and inter-comms, it provides secure voice and data communications in tactical airborne/ground environments.

17. AN/UPY–20 V3 Simple Key Loaders (SKL) with KOV–21 Cryptographic Appliances. The Simple Key Loader (SKL) is a ruggedized, portable, hand-held unit, for secure receiving, storing, and transfer of cryptographic and communications equipment. Provides streamlined management of COMSEC key, Electronic Protection (EP) data, and Signal Operating Instructions (SOI). Cryptographic functions are performed by an embedded KOV–21 card.

18. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

19. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain know-how of the hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures or equivalent systems which might reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.
20. A determination has been made that Germany can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the technology being released as the U.S. Government. This potential sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives as outlined in the Policy Justification.

21. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Germany.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitted by his offices, which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communication was laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and was referred as indicated:

EC–618. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program: Revisions to the Vaccine Injury Table” (RIN0906–AB24) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 4, 2021; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time, and ordered to be printed:

S. 742. A bill to modify the exemption for trade secrets and commercial or financial information in the Freedom of Information Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. 741. A bill to amend section 222 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 to require the Secretary of Defense to initiate investigations and to provide for congressional disapproval of the basis for each report and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 747. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for the adjustment of status of essential workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. 748. A bill to provide for an extension of the temporary suspension of Medicare sequestration during the COVID–19 public health emergency; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 750. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require that return information from tax-exempt organizations be made available in a searchable format and to provide the disclosure of the identity of contributors to certain tax-exempt organizations; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 751. A bill to establish a 5-year ban on individuals appointed to Executive Schedule positions and Members of Congress engaging in lobbying activities at the Federal level; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. Res. 11. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to clarify the authority of Congress to regulate congressional corporations, limited liability companies, and other corporate entities established by the laws of any State, the United States, or any foreign state; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. Res. 110. A resolution designating April 5, 2021, as “Gold Star Wives Day”; considered and agreed to.

S. Res. 112. A resolution to provide for the printing of the Senate Manual for the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress; considered and agreed to.

S. Res. 113. A resolution authorizing the printing of a collection of the rules of the committees of the Senate; considered and agreed to.

S. Res. 114. A resolution commending the United States African Development Foundation on the occasion of its 40th anniversary for creating pathways to prosperity for underrepresented communities on the African continent through community-led development; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 134

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 196, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish an energy efficiency materials pilot program.

S. 212

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 212, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refundable tax credit against income tax for the purchase of qualified access technology for the blind.

S. 215

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 215, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to require certain tax-exempt organizations to include on annual returns the names and addresses of substantial contributors, and for other purposes.

S. 306

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 306, a bill to provide a process for granting lawful permanent resident status to aliens from certain countries who meet specified eligibility requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. MORA, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOVENV), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. Smith) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr.
At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 377, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 377, supra.

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to establish the Office of the Ombudsperson for Immigrant Children in Government Custody, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 452, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Willie O’Ree, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions and commitment to hockey, inclusion, and recreational opportunity.

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 457, a bill to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to prohibit the imposition of the death penalty for any violation of Federal law, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. GRASSEY, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 587, a bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to provide that the President or certain agency heads may remove the Inspector General, or place an Inspector General on non-duty status, only if certain conditions are satisfied, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRANO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 590, a bill to establish limitations regarding Confucius Institutes, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 517, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the bicentennial of Harriet Tubman’s birth.

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGEEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 682, a bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to remove the prohibition on States and territories against lowering their taxes.

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 720, a bill to amend title VII of the Defense Authorization Act to remove the prohibition on States and territories against lowering their taxes.

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 99, a resolution observing the 10th anniversary of the uprising in Syria.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 109—DESIGNATING APRIL 2021 AS ‘NATIONAL NATIVE PLANT MONTH’

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. HYDE-SMITH) submitted a resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

Whereas native plants are indigenous species that have evolved and occur naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, and habitat; Whereas there are more than 17,000 native plant species in the United States, which include trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, and wildflowers; Whereas native plants help prevent flooding, drought, and erosion and can help restore damaged ecosystems; Whereas native plants provide shelter as well as nectar, pollen, and seeds that serve as food for native butterflies, insects, birds, and other wildlife in ways that non-native plants cannot; Whereas more than 200 of the native plant species in the United States are estimated to have been lost since the early 19th century; Whereas habitat loss and degradation, extreme weather events, and invasive species have contributed to the decline of native plants in the United States; and Whereas native plants are essential components of resilient ecosystems and our natural heritage: Now, therefore, be it

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S 636

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 636, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on projects that are over budget and behind schedule, and for other purposes.

S 656

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 656, a bill to require that, after June 1, 2021, organizations with religious or moral convictions are allowed to continue to provide services for children.

S 664

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 664, a bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to review certain legislation in order to identify potential risks of duplication of and overlap with existing Federal programs, offices, and initiatives.

S 682

At the request of Mr. Tester, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 682, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish a vaccine for COVID–19 to certain individuals who are not enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

S 677

At the request of Mr. Tester, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 677, a bill to advance a policy for managed strategic competition with the People’s Republic of China.

S 679

At the request of Mr. Portman, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGEEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 682, a bill to allow unfettered humanitarian access, and cooperate with independent investigations of credible atrocities allegations pertaining to the conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia.

S 683

At the request of Ms. Ernst, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 723, a bill to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to extend the covered period for the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes.

S 720

At the request of Mr. Braun, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. young), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) were added as cosponsors of S. 730, a bill to amend title VI of the Defense Authorization Act to remove the prohibition on States and territories against lowering their taxes.

S RES. 97

At the request of Mr. Risch, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. Merkley), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. Wyden) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Markey) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 97, a resolution calling on the Government of Ethiopia, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, and other belligerents to cease all hostilities, protect human rights, allow unfettered humanitarian access, and cooperate with independent investigations of credible atrocities allegations pertaining to the conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia.

S RES. 99

At the request of Mr. Menendez, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. Crapo) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. Rounds) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 99, a resolution observing the 10th anniversary of the uprising in Syria.
Resolved, That the Senate—
(1) designates April 2021 as "National Native Plant Month"; and
(2) recognizes the benefits of native plants to the environment and economy of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 110—DESIGNATING APRIL 5, 2021, AS "GOLD STAR WIVES DAY"

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 110

Whereas the Senate honors the sacrifices made by the spouses and families of the fallen members of the Armed Forces of the United States;
Whereas Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. represents the spouses and families of the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who have died on active duty or as a result of a service-connected disability;
Whereas the primary mission of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. is to provide services, support, and friendship to the spouses of the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States;
Whereas, in 1945, Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. was organized with the help of Eleanor Roosevelt to assist the families left behind by the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States;
Whereas the first meeting of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. was held on April 5, 1945;
Whereas April 5, 2021, marks the 76th anniversary of the first meeting of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.;
Whereas the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States bear the burden of protecting the freedom of the people of the United States; and
Whereas the sacrifices of the families of the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States should never be forgotten: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—
(1) designates April 5, 2021, as "Gold Star Wives Day";
(2) honors and recognizes—
(A) the contributions of the members of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.; and
(B) the dedication of the members of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. to the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States; and
(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe Gold Star Wives Day to promote awareness of—
(A) the contributions and dedication of the members of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. to the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States; and
(B) the important role that Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. plays in the lives of the spouses and families of the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 111—DESIGNATING MARCH 29, 2021, AS "VIETNAM VETERANS DAY"

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 111

Whereas the Vietnam War was fought in the Republic of Vietnam from 1955 to 1975 and involved regular forces from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Viet Cong guerrilla forces in armed conflict with the Armed Forces of the United States, the Republic of South Vietnam, and other United Nations' forces; and
Whereas the Armed Forces of the United States became involved in Vietnam because the United States Government wanted to provide direct support by the Armed Forces to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to defend the growing threat of Communism from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam;
Whereas members of the Armed Forces of the United States began serving in an advisory role to the Government of South Vietnam in 1955;
Whereas, as a result of the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin on August 2 and 4, 1964, Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law 88–408) by an overwhelming majority on August 7, 1964, which provided to the President of the United States the authority to use armed force to assist the Republic of Vietnam in the defense of its freedom against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam;
Whereas, in 1965, ground combat units of the Armed Forces of the United States arrived in the Republic of Vietnam to join approximately 23,000 personnel of the Armed Forces who were already present there;
Whereas, between 150,000 and 190,000 troops of the Armed Forces of the United States were in Vietnam, and by 1969, the number of such troops reached a peak of approximately 549,500, including members of the Armed Forces who were supporting the combat operations from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and aboard Navy vessels;
Whereas, on January 27, 1973, the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam (commonly known as the "Paris Peace Accords") was signed, which required the release of all prisoners of war of the United States held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal of all Armed Forces of the United States from South Vietnam;
Whereas, on March 29, 1973, the Armed Forces of the United States completed the withdrawal of combat units and combat support units from South Vietnam;
Whereas, on April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese regular forces captured Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, effectively placing South Vietnam under Communist control;
Whereas more than 58,000 members of the Armed Forces of the United States lost their lives during the Vietnam War, more than 300,000 members of the Armed Forces of the United States were wounded in Vietnam;
Whereas, in 1962, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., was dedicated to commemorate the members of the Armed Forces of the United States who died or were declared missing in action in Vietnam;
Whereas the Vietnam War was an extremely divisive issue among the people of the United States and a conflict that caused a generation of veterans to wait too long for the public of the United States to acknowledge and honor the efforts and services of those veterans;
Whereas members of the Armed Forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were often wrongly criticized for the decisions of policymakers that were beyond the control of those members; and
Whereas designating March 29, 2021, as "Vietnam Veterans Day" would be an appropriate way to honor the members of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in South Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—
(1) designates March 29, 2021, as "Vietnam Veterans Day";
(2) honors and recognizes the contributions of the veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in Vietnam during World War II; and
(3) encourages States and local governments to designate March 29, 2021, as "Vietnam Veterans Day";
(4) encourages the people of the United States to observe Vietnam Veterans Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that—
(A) provide the appreciation that veterans of the Vietnam War deserve;
(B) demonstrate the resolve that the people of the United States shall never forget the sacrifices and service of a generation of veterans who served in the Vietnam War;
(C) promote awareness of the faithful service and contributions of the veterans of the Vietnam War;
(i) during service in the Armed Forces of the United States; and
(ii) to the communities of the veterans since returning home;
(D) promote awareness of the importance of entire communities empowering veterans and the families of veterans in helping the veterans readjust to civilian life after service in the Armed Forces; and
(E) promote opportunities for veterans of the Vietnam War—
(i) to assist younger veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in rehabilitation from wounds, both seen and unseen; and
(ii) to support the reintegration of younger veterans into civilian life.

SENATE RESOLUTION 112—TO PROVIDE FOR THE PRINTING OF THE SENATE MANUAL FOR THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 112

Resolved, That a revised edition of the Senate Manual for the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress be prepared by the Committee on Rules and Administration and printed, as a Senate document, and that fifteen hundred additional copies shall be printed and bound for the use of the Senate, bound and delivered as may be directed by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

SENATE RESOLUTION 113—AUTHORIZING THE PRINTING OF A COLLECTION OF THE RULES OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 113

Resolved, That a collection of the rules of the committees of the Senate, together with related materials, be printed as a Senate document, and that there be printed 250 additional copies of such document for the use of the Committee on Rules and Administration.
SENATE RESOLUTION 114—COMMENDING THE UNITED STATES AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY FOR CREATING PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY, MENDING THE UNITED STATES, AND UNDERSEEN COMMUNITIES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT THROUGH COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

WHEREAS December 16, 2020, marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the United States African Development Foundation (referred to in this preamble as the “USADF”);

WHEREAS, on December 16, 1980, the President signed the African Development Foundation Act (22 U.S.C. 290h et seq.), which established the USADF as an independent Federal agency with the goal to—

(1) strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between the people of the countries of Africa and the United States;
(2) support local capacity building to create opportunities for the people of the countries of Africa in their development process; and
(3) foster the establishment and growth of indigenous development institutions that are equipped to respond to local needs;

WHEREAS, for 40 years, the USADF has invested in a pan-African network of local implementing partners that employ a community-led development approach to support African-designed and African-delivered solutions;

WHEREAS the USADF has provided more than 3,400 grassroots and community enterprises grants in more than 40 sub-Saharan African countries;

WHEREAS the USADF strengthens food security, empowers smallholder farmers, and creates economic growth in rural, hard-to-reach communities by investing primarily in agricultural enterprises to increase access to larger markets for those rural communities and enhance the business management skills of beneficiaries through training and marketing capabilities of those rural communities;

WHEREAS the USADF has maintained a strong emphasis on women and women entrepreneurs, and women represent up to 65 percent of the direct beneficiaries of grants from the USADF;

WHEREAS, on February 20, 2020, the USADF partnered with the Academy for Entrepreneurs of the Department of State under the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative to provide seed funding to graduates of the Academy for Entrepreneurs to advance the global economic empowerment of women;

WHEREAS the USADF prioritizes partnerships with youth and supports nearly 300 social enterprises of Young African Leaders Initiative fellows and alumni that initiated in 37 sub-Saharan African countries by providing seed capital, technical assistance, and skills training to help young entrepreneurs create businesses that generate new jobs and incomes for thousands of young Africans;

WHEREAS the work of the USADF in the off-grid energy sector, which is authorized under the Electrify Africa Act of 2015 (22 U.S.C. 2293 note), has helped bring renewable energy solutions to communities with limited or no connections to the national power grids and improve energy access for nearly 370,000 individuals in 15 sub-Saharan African countries;

WHEREAS the USADF’s model of using 100 percent African staff and implementing partners on the African continent gives the USADF the ability to work in fragile and conflict-affected areas in the Great Lakes, Horn, and Sahel regions of Africa;

WHEREAS the small size of the USADF and the use of local implementing partners by the USADF have allowed the USADF to be ranked as one of the most efficient providers of foreign aid by the Center for Global Development;

WHEREAS the partnerships of the USADF with agencies of the Federal Government, including the Department of State, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the United States Agency for International Development, along with the alignment of the USADF with the priorities of Congress, have allowed the USADF to extend the reach of critical development initiatives of the United States, such as initiatives authorized by the Global Food Security Act of 2016 (22 U.S.C. 9301 et seq.), the Electrify Africa Act of 2015 (22 U.S.C. 2293 note), and the African Growth and Opportunity Act and Millennium Challenge Act Modernization Act (Public Law 115-167, 132 Stat. 1276);

WHEREAS the partnerships between the USADF and private sector corporations and foundations, as well as African national and sub-national governments, have allowed the USADF to extend its reach and development impact in addressing food insecurity, insufficient access to energy, and unemployment through youth and women entrepreneurship and job skills training and placement in Africa, while leveraging funding to help the dollars of taxpayers in the United States go further; and

WHEREAS investments made by the USADF have developed and strengthened an extensive network of grassroots enterprises and social enterprises that are positively disposed to the United States and are better positioned to partner with other Federal agencies and public and private funders: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the United States African Development Foundation on the occasion of its 40th anniversary for creating pathways to prosperity for communities on the African continent through community-led development;

(2) recognizes that, by supporting Africa-led development that grows community enterprises, the United States African Development Foundation empowers individuals who are least served by existing markets or assistance programs to become a part of the growth story of Africa;

(3) recognizes that the United States African Development Foundation advances the foreign policy of the Federal Government and contributes directly to the national interests of the United States; and

(4) commits to continue to support the vital work of the United States African Development Foundation as an independent agency.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today’s session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to the authority of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH
Ms. ERNST. Madam President, in this country we are so blessed to call home, every woman, no matter her background—like growing up on a small farm in Iowa—can be the next first.

After serving in the U.S. Army Reserve and the Iowa Army National Guard—a historically male field—I became the first female combat veteran elected to serve in the U.S. Senate. I was also the first woman to represent the great State of Iowa in Congress. Now, just 6 years later, women make up a majority of the Iowa congressional delegation. Iowa is also blessed with a fierce female Governor in Kim Reynolds and some extremely talented and strong women leaders in our State legislature. Today, there are over 110 women serving in Congress—more than ever before in U.S. history.

Because of the suffragettes and so many other determined women who stepped up and broke the barriers society placed on us, female trailblazers across this country are writing new pages in history books every single day. Women have made strides in the boardroom, on the playing field, in the military, and through elected office. Whether that is in your local community or your background, will see the young woman, no matter your hometown or your background, will see the opportunity and potential that lie ahead. Many of us have heard this really outdated quote: “Act like a lady, but think like a man.” Well, I think history has proven that, instead, we should say: “Act like a woman, and think like a woman” because we are powerful, we are fearless, we are smart, and we are strong just the way we are.

Second, women tend to work in fields that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic, such as the hospitality industry, restaurants, education, and retail.

We absolutely need to focus on getting these women back into the workforce and on their feet so that they can support themselves and their families. The focus needs to be on three things: first, safely reopening our schools; second, expanding access to childcare, which I have worked with the Presiding Officer on—thank you very much; and producing, distributing, and administering the vaccine as quickly as possible so folks can get back to work safely.

If I were able to choose the theme for Women’s History Month based off of this past year struggling through the pandemic, it would be “Overcomer.” Woman to woman, we all, no matter what we do, are overcomers by nature. Moms, you overcome so much every single day when you work tirelessly at the thankless and never-ending job of caring for your children and for your families. You have the one and only job that you cannot simply clock out of, especially this year, when many of you had to balance being a teacher for the first time in your life.

Women in the workforce, you overcome stereotypes daily and have continued to smash glass ceilings and set new standards in corporate America. Your resilience and strength alongside our historic women’s rights heroes continue to shape a bright future for all young girls across this country.

In honor of Women’s History Month, I challenge everyone to remember the sacrifices it took to secure the freedoms and opportunities we women enjoy today and continue to build on these opportunities for the next generation.

Whether that is in your local community or State or Federal Government, we are a better nation because of the contributions of women in all walks of life, in all fields of service, and in both Chambers of Congress, and it is important to continue to remind folks of that.

It is my hope that each and every young woman, no matter your hometown or your background, will see the opportunity and potential that lie ahead.

It is my hope that each and every young woman, no matter your hometown or your background, will see the opportunity and potential that lie ahead. Many of us have heard this really outdated quote: “Act like a lady, but think like a man.” Well, I think history has proven that, instead, we should say: “Act like a woman, and think like a woman” because we are powerful, we are fearless, we are smart, and we are strong just the way we are.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 10 a.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:35 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS
Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BONNIE D. JENKINS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, VICE ANDREA L. THOMPSON, RE-SIGNED.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
ANTON GEORGE HAJJAR, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2023, VICE AMBER M. WILLIAMS, TERM EXPIRED.

AMBER FAYE MCREYNOLDS, OF COLORADO, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2028. (RE-APPOINTMENT)

RONALD STROMAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2021, VICE RONALD STROMAN, TERM EXPIRED.

CONFIRMATION
Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate March 15, 2021:

DEERAN HULL, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.
EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021 may be found in the Daily Digest of today’s RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 17

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Business meeting to consider the nominations of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Florida, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, and Rachel LeLand Levine, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of Health and Human Services, and other pending calendar business.

SD–430

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Business meeting to consider S. 231, to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop guidance for firefighters and other emergency response personnel on best practices to protect them from exposure to PFAS and to limit and prevent the release of PFAS into the environment, S. 272, to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to require the budget justifications and appropriation requests of agencies be made publicly available, S. 383, to promote innovative acquisition techniques and procurement strategies, S. 517, to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, S. 671, to require the collection of voluntary feedback on services provided by agencies, S. 692, to amend title I, United States Code, to provide for the halt in pension payments for Members of Congress sentenced for certain offenses, S. 658, to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with cybersecurity consortia for training, S. 638, to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on projects that are over budget and behind schedule, S. 688, to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, S. 122, to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100 word plain language summary of the proposed rule, S. 111, to establish the Federal Clearinghouse on School Safety Best Practices, S. 664, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to review certain legislation in order to identify potential risks of duplication of and overlap with existing Federal programs, offices, and initiatives, S. 566, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 42 Main Street in Slatersville, Rhode Island, as the “Specialist Matthew R. Turcotte Post Office”, H.R. 298, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 West Main Street, Suite 102 in Tupelo, Mississippi, as the “Colonel Carlyle ‘Smitty’ Harris Post Office”, and H.R. 264, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1101 Charlotte Street in Georgetown, South Carolina, as the “Joseph Hayne Rainey Memorial Post Office Building”.

SD–342

10 a.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine recent Federal actions to expand broadband.

SR–253

Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water
To hold joint hearings to examine the challenges facing drinking water and waste water infrastructure projects.

SD–50

Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine COVID–19 in the Nation’s nursing homes.

WEBEX

Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine China’s challenges and competition with China in the twenty-first century.

SD–106

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the Equality Act, focusing on LGBTQ rights.

SD–226

11 a.m.
Committee on the Budget
To hold hearings to examine the income and wealth inequality crisis in America.

SH–216

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
To hold hearings to examine the Paycheck Protection Program, focusing on performance, impact, and next steps.

SR–301

MARCH 18

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To receive a closed briefing on the planning, programming, budget, and execution process of the Department of Defense.

SD–450

Special Committee on Aging
To hold hearings to examine COVID-19 one year later, focusing on addressing health care needs for at-risk Americans.

VTC

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the 21st century economy, focusing on protecting the financial system from risks associated with climate change.

WEBEX

Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine fighting forced labor, focusing on closing loopholes and improving customs enforcement to mandate clean supply chains and protect workers.

WEBEX

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the COVID-19 response, focusing on an update from Federal officials.

SH–216

Committee on the Judiciary
Business meeting to consider S. 632, to amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors, S. 169, to amend title I, United States Code, to require the Register of Copyrights to waive fees for filing an application for registration of a copyright claim in certain circumstances, and the nominations of Lisa O. Monaco, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Attorney General, and Vanita Gupta, of Virginia, to be Associate Attorney General, both of the Department of Justice.

SD–106

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
To resume joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of veterans services organizations.

WEBEX

10:15 a.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the SolarWinds supply chain attack, focusing on the Federal perspective.

SD–342/WEBEX
HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Debra Anne Haaland, of New Mexico, to be Secretary of the Interior.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1509–1530

Measures Introduced: Ten bills and seven resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 742–751, S.J. Res. 11, and S. Res. 109–114. Page S1526

Measures Passed:

Gold Star Wives Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 110, designating April 5, 2021, as “Gold Star Wives Day”. Page S1529

Vietnam Veterans Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 111, designating March 29, 2021, as “Vietnam Veterans Day”. Page S1529

Printing of Senate Manual: Senate agreed to S. Res. 112, to provide for the printing of the Senate Manual for the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress. Page S1529

Printing of Committee Rules: Senate agreed to S. Res. 113, authorizing the printing of a collection of the rules of the committees of the Senate. Page S1529

Becerra Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. Page S1523

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. Page S1523

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. Page S1523

Walsh Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Martin Joseph Walsh, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Labor. Page S1523

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. Page S1523

Guzman Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 10 a.m., on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, Senate resume consideration of the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration; and that the motion to invoke cloture with respect to the nomination ripen at 12 noon. Page S1529

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 51 yeas to 40 nays (Vote No. EX. 119), Debra Anne Haaland, of New Mexico, to be Secretary of the Interior. Pages S1511–23, S1530

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Bonnie D. Jenkins, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. Anton George Hajjar, of Maryland, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2023.
Amber Faye McReynolds, of Colorado, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2026.

Ronald Stroman, of the District of Columbia, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2028.

Ronald Stroman, of the District of Columbia, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2021.

Executive Communications: Page S1530

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S1526–27

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S5527–29

Additional Statements:

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S1529

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—119) Page S1523

Adjournment: Senate convened at 3 p.m. and adjourned at 6:35 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 16, 2021. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S1529.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 117th Congress:

Subcommittee on Commodities, Risk Management, and Trade: Senators Warnock (Chair), Brown, Durbin, Smith, Gillibrand, Luján, Hoeven, McConnell, Hyde-Smith, Tuberville, Grassley, and Thune.

Subcommittee on Rural Development and Energy: Senators Smith (Chair), Klobuchar, Luján, Brown, Bennet, Durbin, Ernst, McConnell, Tuberville, Grassley, Fischer, and Braun.

Senator Stabenow and Boozman serve as ex officio members of each subcommittee.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 117th Congress:

Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Senators Cardin (Chair), Sanders, Whitehouse, Merkley, Duckworth, Stabenow, Kelly, Padilla, Cramer, Inhofe, Lummis, Shelby, Boozman, Wicker, Sullivan, and Graham.

Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Safety: Senators Markey (Chair), Cardin, Sanders, Whitehouse, Merkley, Duckworth, Stabenow, Padilla, Inhofe, Cramer, Lummis, Shelby, Boozman, Wicker, Ernst, and Graham.

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water: Senators Duckworth (Chair), Cardin, Whitehouse, Merkley, Duckworth, Stabenow, Padilla, Inhofe, Cramer, Lummis, Shelby, Boozman, Wicker, Ernst, and Graham.

Subcommittee on Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight: Senators Merkley (Chair), Sanders, Markey, Kelly, Padilla, Wicker, Shelby, Sullivan, Ernst, and Graham.

Senators Carper and Capito serve as ex officio members of each subcommittee.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House is scheduled to meet at noon on Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.
NEW PUBLIC LAWS
(For last listing of Public Laws, see Daily Digest, p. D55)
H.R. 1319, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 5. Signed on March 11, 2021. (Public Law 117–2)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY,
MARCH 16, 2021
(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate
Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine United States Southern Command and United States Northern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2022 and Future Years Defense program, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the state of housing in America, 2 p.m., WEBEX.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine ways to strengthen research and development in innovative transportation technologies with a focus on solutions that decrease emissions, reduce our reliance on foreign supply chains, and increase manufacturing in the United States, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.
Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the effect of the U.S. tax code on domestic manufacturing, 10 a.m., WEBEX.
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Julie A. Su, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, 10 a.m., SD–106.
Select Committee on Intelligence: closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

House
Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations, hearing entitled “Disinformation in the Gray Zone: Opportunities, Limitations, and Challenges”, 11 a.m., 2118 Rayburn and Webex.
Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, hearing entitled “The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction’s 2021 High-Risk List”, 11 a.m., Webex.
Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 1868, to prevent across-the-board direct spending cuts, and for other purposes; H.R. 1620, the “Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021”; H.J. Res. 17, re-moving the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment; H.R. 6, the “American Dream and Promise Act of 2021”; and H.R. 1603, the “Farm Work-force Modernization Act of 2021”, 11 a.m., Webex.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD
Week of March 16 through March 19, 2021

Senate Chamber
On Tuesday, Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, with a vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 12 noon.
Also, Senate expects to vote on confirmation of the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, to be followed by a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador.
During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees
(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)
Committee on Armed Services: March 16, to hold hearings to examine United States Southern Command and United States Northern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2022 and Future Years Defense program, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.
March 18, Full Committee, to receive a closed briefing on the planning, programming, budget, and execution process of the Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: March 16, to hold hearings to examine the state of housing in America, 2 p.m., WEBEX.
March 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the 21st century economy, focusing on protecting the financial system from risks associated with climate change, 10 a.m., WEBEX.
Committee on the Budget: March 17, to hold hearings to examine the income and wealth inequality crisis in America, 11 a.m., SH–216.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: March 17, to hold hearings to examine recent Federal actions to expand broadband, 10 a.m., SR–253.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: March 16, to hold hearings to examine ways to strengthen research and development in innovative transportation technologies with a focus on solutions that decrease emissions, reduce our reliance on foreign supply chains, and increase manufacturing in the United States, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.
Committee on Environment and Public Works: March 17, with the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water, to hold joint hearings to examine the challenges...
facing drinking water and waste water infrastructure projects, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Finance: March 16, to hold hearings to examine the effect of the U.S. tax code on domestic manufacturing, 10 a.m., WEBEX.

March 17, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine COVID–19 in the Nation’s nursing homes, 10 a.m., WEBEX.

March 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine fighting forced labor, focusing on closing loopholes and improving customs enforcement to mandate clean supply chains and protect workers, 10 a.m., WEBEX.

Committee on Foreign Relations: March 17, to hold hearings to examine advancing effective U.S. policy for strategic competition with China in the twenty-first century, 10 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: March 16, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Julie A. Su, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, 10 a.m., SD–106.

March 17, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nominations of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Florida, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, and Rachel Leland Levine, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of Health and Human Services, and other pending calendar business, 9:30 a.m., SD–430.

March 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the COVID–19 response, focusing on an update from Federal officials, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: March 17, business meeting to consider S. 231, to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop guidance for firefighters and other emergency response personnel on best practices to protect them from exposure to PFAS and to limit and prevent the release of PFAS into the environment, S. 272, to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to require the budget justifications and appropriation requests of agencies be made publicly available, S. 583, to promote innovative acquisition techniques and procurement strategies, S. 517, to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, S. 671, to require the collection of voluntary feedback on services provided by agencies, S. 693, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the halt in pension payments for Members of Congress sentenced for certain offenses, S. 658, to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with cybersecurity consortia for training, S. 656, to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on projects that are over budget and behind schedule, S. 688, to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, S. 522, to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100 word plain language summary of the proposed rule, S. 111, to establish the Federal Clearinghouse on School Safety Best Practices, S. 664, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to review certain legislation in order to identify potential risks of duplication of and overlap with existing Federal programs, offices, and initiatives, S. 566, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 42 Main Street in Slatersville, Rhode Island, as the “Specialist Matthew R. Turcotte Post Office”, H.R. 208, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 West Main Street, Suite 102 in Tupelo, Mississippi, as the “Colonel Carlyle Smitty Harris Post Office”, and H.R. 264, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1101 Charlotte Street in Georgetown, South Carolina, as the “Joseph Hayne Rainey Memorial Post Office Building”, 9:30 a.m., SD–342.

March 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the SolarWinds supply chain attack, focusing on the Federal perspective, 10:15 a.m., SD–342/WEBEX.

Committee on the Judiciary: March 17, to hold hearings to examine the Equality Act, focusing on LGBTQ rights, 10 a.m., SD–226.

March 18, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 632, to amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors, S. 169, to amend title 17, United States Code, to require the Register of Copyrights to waive fees for filing an application for registration of a copyright claim in certain circumstances, and the nominations of Lisa O. Monaco, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Attorney General, and Vanita Gupta, of Virginia, to be Associate Attorney General, both of the Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: March 17, to hold hearings to examine the Paycheck Protection Program, focusing on performance, impact, and next steps, 2:30 p.m., SR–301.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: March 18, to resume joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of veterans services organizations, 10 a.m., WEBEX.

Select Committee on Intelligence: March 16, closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

Special Committee on Aging: March 18, to hold hearings to examine COVID–19 one year later, focusing on addressing health care needs for at-risk Americans, 9:30 a.m., VTC.

House Committees

Committee on Appropriations, March 17, Subcommittee on Defense, hearing entitled “Climate Change, National Security, and the Arctic”, 9 a.m., Webex.


March 17, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Domestic Manufacturing for a Clean Energy Future”, 1 p.m., Webex.
March 18, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, budget hearing on the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights, 10 a.m., Webex.

March 18, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Efforts to Address Marine Plastic Pollution Through Recycling”, 11 a.m., Webex.


Committee on Armed Services, March 18, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, hearing entitled “Unmanned Systems of the Department of the Navy”, 11 a.m., 2118 Rayburn and Webex.

March 19, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled “Investing in an Organic Industrial Base to Support Service Modernization Plans”, 11 a.m., 2118 Rayburn and Webex.


Committee on Education and Labor, March 17, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment, hearing entitled “Rising to the Challenge: The Future of Higher Education Post COVID–19”, 1 p.m., Zoom.

March 18, Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services, and Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, joint hearing entitled “Fighting for Fairness: Examining Legislation to Confront Workplace Discrimination”, 10:15 a.m., Zoom.


Committee on Financial Services, March 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Game Stopped? Who Wins and Loses When Short Sellers, Social Media, and Retail Investors Collide, Part II”, 10 a.m., Webex.

March 18, Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion, hearing entitled “By the Numbers, How Diversity Data Can Measure Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion”, 10 a.m., Webex.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 17, Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment, and Cyber, hearing entitled “Women Leading the Way: The Democratic Movement in Belarus”, 9:30 a.m., Webex.


March 18, Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism, hearing entitled “Assessing the Human Rights Situation in Saudi Arabia”, 10 a.m., Webex.


March 19, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation, hearing entitled “America’s Way Forward in the Indo-Pacific”, 10 a.m., Webex.


Committee on the Judiciary, March 18, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties, hearing entitled “Discrimination and Violence Against Asian Americans”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn and Webex.

March 18, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law, hearing entitled “Reviving Competition, Part 3: Strengthening the Laws to Address Monopoly Power”, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn and Webex.


Committee on Oversight and Reform, March 17, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, hearing entitled “From Rescue to Recovery: Building a Thriving and Inclusive Post-Pandemic Economy”, 11 a.m., Webex.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, March 17, Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight, hearing entitled ‘‘Brain Drain: Rebuilding the Federal Scientific Workforce’’, 10 a.m., Webex.

March 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Lessons Learned from the Texas Blackouts: Research Needs for a Secure and Resilient Grid”, 10 a.m., Webex.

Committee on Small Business, March 18, Subcommittee on Underserved, Agricultural, and Rural Business Development, hearing entitled “The Role of Community Navigators in Reaching Underserved Businesses”, 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn and Webex.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, March 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled “The Business Case for Climate Solutions”, 11 a.m., 2167 Rayburn and Webex.

Resilience and Mitigation”, 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn and Webex.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, March 18, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Beyond Deborah Sampson: Improving Healthcare for America’s Women Veterans in the 117th Congress”, 2:30 p.m., Zoom.

Committee on Ways and Means, March 18, Subcommittee on Oversight, hearing entitled “Hearing with the IRS Commissioner on the 2021 Filing Season”, 2 p.m., 1100 Longworth and Webex.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, March 17, Full Committee, organizational meeting, 1 p.m., HVC–304 Hearing Room. This meeting is closed.

Joint Meetings

Joint Hearing: March 18, Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, to resume joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of veterans services organizations, 10 a.m., WEBEX.
Next Meeting of the SENATE  
10 a.m., Tuesday, March 16  

Senate Chamber  
Program for Tuesday: Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, with a vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 12 noon.

Also, Senate expects to vote on confirmation of the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, to be followed by a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador.

(Senate will recess following the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
12 p.m., Tuesday, March 16  

House Chamber  
Program for Tuesday: Consideration of measures under suspension of the Rules.