

Senator SCHATZ and I add up to 22.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 125 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—49

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeben	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Graham	Portman	

NOT VOTING—1

Hirono

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Under previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Martin Joseph Walsh, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Labor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 823

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise in support of legislation developed by our colleague, Senator BROWN, and me to protect \$1.400 relief payments from being garnished by predatory private debt collectors.

We know that millions of American families are hanging on by a thread. They are counting on these payments to make rent and pay for groceries and medicines.

Now Senator BROWN and I want to include these protections in the Amer-

ican Rescue Plan. We wanted to include them, just like we had done in the December relief bill, but the problem was that Senate rules didn't allow Senator BROWN and me to include these protections in the American Rescue Plan, just like we had done earlier.

If the Senate doesn't pass this bill, predatory debt collectors will continue to seize relief payments for everything from credit cards to medical debt.

And as we talk about this right now, I would like to give an example of what this really means. If you have two parents who have lost their jobs, through no fault of their own, and they can't pay the rent because their relief check has been seized to cover a child's outstanding hospital bills—that is what is going to happen if you don't pass the legislation Senator BROWN and I are advocating.

So I think this one is cut and dry. The Senate will either stand today for the working families who desperately need this help, like that couple who are hurting, through no fault of their own, or the Senate is with private debt collectors reaching their hands into those families' pockets.

Now, these protections that we are talking about were included in the December package, with Republicans fully supporting it. Families' financial situations haven't changed so I hope that Republicans will allow for the passage of this measure offered by Senator BROWN and me. It is just common sense.

And I am going to yield now—the minority is aware—to Senator BROWN. He, too, will have short remarks, and then we will engage with our colleague on the other side.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from Oregon, and I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania too.

We passed the American Rescue Plan, as Senator WYDEN said, to get shots in people's arms, money in people's pockets, get kids back in schools, and people back in jobs. Stimulus checks are already going out the door in Hawaii, in Pennsylvania, in Oregon, and Ohio. More than 100 million checks are already in Americans' bank accounts. We promised in campaigns, we promised in January we would do this and we would do this quickly.

Five million Ohioans are going to get a check. We know predatory debt collectors are already lining up to try to take a cut of those checks. We know it costs more to be poor in this country. So often the debt collectors come after you. Just to cash your check, there often is a fee and all the bank fees that they have.

We passed the rescue plan to put money in people's pockets so they can pay bills and buy groceries and spend money in local businesses. They can buy a washer perhaps made by American workers in Clyde, OH, or new tires

for their cars made at Goodyear in Akron, OH. Maybe they are looking forward to throwing a small high school graduation party in their backyard—after they get their vaccines—with a cake and a barbecue from a local restaurant.

That is why we passed these checks, to support families, to support local economies, not to line the pockets of predatory private debt collectors. That is why I appreciate Senator WYDEN's work with us on this bill to protect Americans' stimulus checks from financial predators.

We know how aggressive private debt collectors are. They harass people. They prey on workers trying to make ends meet, and now they want to take this money before it even reaches Americans' bank accounts.

Last year, as Senator WYDEN said, we joined colleagues GRASSLEY, a Republican from Iowa, and SCOTT, a Republican from South Carolina, to pass bipartisan legislation to protect people's money.

It shouldn't be different this time. We are still in a public health crisis. Whether you voted for or against this American Recovery Act is immaterial. We have a choice. Whose side are you on? Are you going to protect workers and their families or are you going to side with debt collectors?

I yield my time back to Senator WYDEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 823 introduced earlier today. The bill would provide for protection of recovery rebates. I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, my friend, the Senator from Oregon, suggested that the Senate rules precluded this provision from being addressed in the recently passed bill.

It is actually a little bit more complicated than that. So let's remember how we got here.

Last year, Republicans and Democrats worked together, and we passed five bills, adding up to about \$4 trillion, authorizing another several trillion dollars of loans. It was an extraordinary reaction to an extraordinary moment, and Republicans and Democrats came together time and time again.

As the circumstances were changing, we passed new legislation to reflect that—passing a big bill, a trillion-dollar bill nearly, in December. But as soon as our Democratic colleagues had the ability, they decided they weren't interested in any bipartisan legislation

anymore. It was going to be strictly Democrats using the reconciliation process, and that is the only reason that this provision couldn't be addressed because it can't be dealt with under the reconciliation rules.

So now our Democratic colleagues perceive a problem with this legislation, and they would like the Republicans' consent to fix what might have been resolved with some kind of compromise had they pursued the path that we pursued when we were in control.

But let's talk about where we are and what we have done for individuals and families. The unprecedented financial support from the Federal Government has been really amazing. An average family of four has, by now, received stimulus checks of \$9,200 and child tax credit checks of \$6,000. That is \$15,200. By the way, that has gone to people who never lost a penny of income. And if they did lose their job, as in the hypothetical that the Senator from Oregon suggests, then the unemployment benefits, in more than half the cases, paid them more than they made working because of the legislation that we passed. We designed it so they would pay people more not to work than they would make working, in addition to these stimulus checks that they got.

So the result of that is, in the aggregate, personal savings have gone through the roof. It is up by over \$1.6 trillion. Total consumer credit is down. The fact is, we more than replaced lost income through the series of bills that were passed.

Now my colleagues want to come here and block a valid, legal claim from being honored with some of this money. And specifically, they want to block these stimulus checks from being subject to garnishment.

So what is a garnishment? That is just when money is withheld from someone because they owe something. They owe money that they haven't paid to someone else, and that someone else has gone to court, made the case, and it has been adjudicated that, yes, this is money that is owed.

So they want to forbid this windfall—which in many, many cases this is a windfall, let's be honest. They want to prevent it from being available to be used for the conventional way that we collect money that is owed. And whom might this affect?

Under this legislation, if it were to pass, it would forbid garnishment of the alimony payment that a needy former spouse relies on. That is a common expense for which garnishment applies. But in this case, the deadbeat former husband who is not paying his alimony payments, who forced his former wife to go to court to get a court order, he has been so far behind, now he gets this big check from the government, and she doesn't even get to catch up on the money that he owes her?

How about the deadbeat dad who is not paying his child support? That is another situation in which the mom,

trying to struggle to support those kids, had to go to court and get a court order that his future income would be garnished because he just doesn't pay. Well, he gets this check in the mail, compliments of the taxpayer, and he doesn't have to give her any of that? That is so terribly unfair.

And, you know, in addition to all these direct payments, we have also provided massive financial support in all kinds of ways to alleviate expenses like nutrition assistance, \$80 billion; housing assistance, \$65 billion; increase of Medicaid, \$170 billion; not to mention almost \$1 trillion in payroll support so that people could continue to work.

When you pay for all of these things and you still give people money on top of that, I don't think it is unreasonable to ask people to pay their bills, especially their overdue bills to their former wife or to support their kids.

Here is the other thing. At best, this is now a political statement because, as one of many colleagues just alluded to, these payments have already gone out the door—most of them have. The Treasury has already issued probably over \$250 billion in stimulus checks. And to the extent that a person was subject to garnishment, the garnishment happens automatically. So it has already happened.

So what does that mean if this bill passed? The legal chaos—I mean, first of all, it would actually allow the deadbeat dad I am referring to, to go back and claim that money back, to claw it back from the account that is meant to support his kids. How is that even possibly fair or reasonable?

This is a bad idea, and for these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, just briefly. I think the key kind of question—and the checks are still going out, and we want them to get out as quickly as possible, but the key issue here is the Republicans, back in December, wanted to help that couple that I was talking about, the person laid off, through no fault of their own. They wanted to help those folks to make sure their relief check wouldn't be seized to cover a child's outstanding hospital bills.

So what we heard are discussions about all kinds of, you know, other issues, but the fact is, in December, just a few weeks ago—just a few weeks ago—Republicans were supportive of the families Senator BROWN and I are seeking to help today. That is what the question is all about. Will the Senate today help the folks who are hurting that Senator BROWN and I have been talking about?

In December, Republicans said: You bet we are going to be there. Now it is a question, really, of whom the Senate is for. Senator BROWN and I are for those folks who are hurting, and they have been laid off through no fault of their own, and Republicans, unfortu-

nately, with checks still going out—still going out—have decided they are for the private debt collectors.

I think it really shows whose side you are on, and Senator BROWN and I and members of our caucus are on the side of the people who are hurting, through no fault of their own, and we especially care about them at this time when checks are still going out.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF MARTIN JOSEPH WALSH

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to support the nomination of Mayor Marty Walsh to serve as Secretary of Labor.

Across the country, working families are really desperate for help. Even before this pandemic, the deck was stacked against workers and especially against women, workers of color, and workers with disabilities, thanks to an unlivable Federal minimum wage and subminimum wage for tipped workers and workers with disabilities that do leave millions of workers struggling to make ends meet; a pay gap that makes getting by even harder for women, in particular, women of color; a lack of a national paid family, sick, and medical leave policy and quality, affordable childcare for working families; a failure to protect workers from pandemics and workplace accidents and harassment and discrimination and more; and a wave of job loss and economic uncertainty that is upending the lives of workers and retirees across our country.

This pandemic has laid bare the painful fact that while our economy might work for the biggest corporations and wealthiest individuals, it isn't working for working families. And all of these challenges—unsafe workplaces, lost jobs, low wages—are even worse for people of color due to longstanding inequities that are rooted in systemic racism and are widening due to this pandemic.

Our country cannot fully recover from this crisis unless we begin to change that by rebuilding a stronger, fairer economy. And that starts by making sure we have a Secretary of Labor who will actually champion workers and working families.

As a union leader, a State representative, and as a mayor, Mayor Marty Walsh has done just that. He has a clear track record as a collaborative leader who worked across coalitions with labor groups and the business community to build up Boston's middle class. Under his leadership, 135,000 new jobs have been created in Boston.