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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who commands the morning to appear, we honor Your Holy Name.

Lord, guide our lawmakers to find delight in Your guidance. May Your wisdom provide them with food for reflection, morning, noon, and night. Renew their strength, as they seek for ways to reduce the violence in our land.

Lord, provide them with uncommon wisdom to bring greater respect for the preciousness of each person made in Your image. Give us all a greater reverence for the sanctity of every life.

Lord, provide us all with the power to be productive for You in every season of life, as You cause our plans to flourish.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 23, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.J. RES. 17

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, I understand that there is a joint resolution at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the joint resolution by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 17) removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the joint resolution on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the joint resolution will be placed on the calendar.

COLORADO SHOOTINGS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, this morning the Nation grieves with the people of Boulder, CO, the site of another horrific mass shooting last night. A depraved gunman opened fire inside a local supermarket, killing 10 people, including a police officer. Many more are injured.

Our hearts go out to the people of Boulder and the families of those Americans who have lost their lives so unexpectedly.

Our thanks again go out to the brave first responders.

People kiss someone goodbye for the morning and send somebody off to school and they are never seen again—never seen again. It is just awful. And it has been less than 8 weeks since eight people were killed in another series of shootings in Georgia. We cannot seem to finish grieving one tragedy before another takes place.

It is a reminder that we must confront a devastating truth in the United States: An unrelenting epidemic of gun violence steals innocent lives with alarming regularity. Even amidst the pandemic, gun violence has not receded. In fact, confoundedly, it has grown even worse, and 2020 was one of the deadliest years for gun violence in two decades—a reminder that most gun violence doesn't even make headlines but nonetheless causes immeasurable devastation to communities from one end of our country to the other.

So we have a lot of work to do. I have already committed to bringing universal background checks legislation to the floor of the Senate. There is a hearing today in the Senate Judiciary Committee under Chairman DURBIN's leadership to examine several commonsense proposals to reduce gun violence.

Two summers ago, the Republican leader—then the majority leader—promised there would be a debate in the Senate on gun violence, but it never happened. It never happened.

This Senate will be different. The Senate is going to debate and address

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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the epidemic of gun violence in this country.

Today, our hearts are with the people of Colorado and with everyone whose lives have been touched by gun violence.

VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIAN AMERICANS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, as I mentioned, the shooting in Colorado comes only a week after another tragedy in the communities outside Atlanta, GA, where eight people were killed in a string of shootings, six of whom were women of Asian descent.

It is important to place the Atlanta area shootings in context. Over the past year, there has been a rising tide of violence against Asian Americans driven by fear, misinformation, and age-old prejudices against the Asian-American community, from shouted insults and racial slurs to outright assault.

A 61-year-old Filipino American was slashed in the face by a box cutter on the New York subway. An 84-year-old Thai American in San Francisco was shoved so violently it led to his death. And now this attack in Georgia.

Every day, Asian Americans walk down the streets looking over their shoulders, wondering if they will be assaulted or even worse—even worse.

The poison of racism has always existed in America, but over the past 4 years it seems to have found new life. There is no question that the former President Donald Trump, through word and deed, fanned the flames of racial bias in our country. It is not a coincidence that it is worse now than it has been before. Donald Trump fanned those flames—fanned those flames, often with glee.

With respect to the Asian-American community, specifically, the former President encouraged rhetoric that blamed the Chinese people for the coronavirus—an absolutely despicable notion that has led to all sorts of verbal and physical assaults on Asian Americans. You could see him with his chin strutted out when he called it the virus that he named it—you know what—the China virus. So despicable. And he did it with almost a joy.

Here in America, we all know that an attack against any one group is an attack against all of us. So it is up to all of us now to stand up and speak out in support of the Asian-American community in America.

Over the weekend, I joined several vigils to stand with Americans of all ages, races, and faiths to support the Asian-American community. There was a large turnout, and our Asian brothers and sisters were so relieved that so many of us from the elected community were there. We should all be doing that in every part of the country.

Here on the floor of the Senate this morning, I started the process to make two pieces of legislation available for action by the full Senate.

First is a bill led by my friend Senator HIRONO of Hawaii, very similar to the same bill introduced by our New York Congress Member, GRACE MENG, of Queens. This legislation by Senator HIRONO will address COVID-related hate crimes against Asian Americans head-on. It would assign a point person at the Department of Justice to expedite the review of COVID–19-related hate crimes, provide support for State and local law enforcement agencies to respond to hate crimes, and work on solutions to the problem of racially discriminatory language that has been used to describe the pandemic.

Second is a bill led by my friend Senator DURBIN to counter the threat of domestic terrorism and violent White supremacy. This is a bill that passed the House of Representatives last year on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis. As far as legislation goes, it is as much of a no-brainer as it comes.

Every one of us—every one of us—has an obligation to speak out against these hate crimes. One of the best antidotes—there are many—but one of the best antidotes when hate occurs is to answer it forcefully, strongly, and repeatedly so that no one thinks it is acceptable, and those who perpetrate it are shunned and then, if they have broken the law, punished.

Every one of us must do this. We must speak out. Here in the Senate, we have more than a responsibility to just speak out; we must take action. I hope we will have universal support for these pieces of legislation that I mentioned.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, while House Democrats try to overturn a certified election result from last November, some Senate Democrats are agitating to break Senate rules to ram through a partisan rewrite of all 50 States' election laws—all 50 States' election laws.

The 60-vote threshold is the reason huge pillars of domestic policy don't oscillate back and forth every time a different party wins the majority. So let's think of something like the Mexico City policy, the executive branch policy about funding overseas abortions. It has flipped back and forth every single time the White House has changed parties since the 1980s. Republican Presidents issue the memo; the Democratic Presidents retract it.

The legislative filibuster is what keeps the entirety of Federal law from working that way. For a long time, Senators on both sides have recognized the Senate and the country are better off with some actual stability. Both sides have understood there are no permanent majorities in American politics, so a system that gives both sides a voice benefits, actually, everyone in the long term.

That is what 33 of our Democratic colleagues said just a few years ago, when they all signed a joint letter insisting that rules protecting debate on legislation be preserved.

That is what President Biden believed consistently throughout his long Senate tenure. About 15 years ago, then-Senator Biden said killing the filibuster would be, ''an example of the arrogance of power.'' That was President Biden. He restated his long-held position during the campaign just last year.

Here is what my colleague the Democratic leader said in 2017. Senator SCHUMER said:

> The legislative filibuster . . . is the most important distinction between the Senate and the House. . . . [L]et's find a way to further protect the 60-vote rule for legislation.

That was the Democratic leader in 2017.

And Democrats didn't just spend the last 4 years supporting the filibuster; they spent 4 years using it. Senate Democrats used the filibuster to kill Senator TIM SCOTT's police reform bill in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

We could have had Federal legislation on the books since last summer, putting more body cameras on police officers, requiring fuller incident reporting to the FBI, and finally making lynching a Federal crime, among other things. Democrats stopped it. They stopped it using the filibuster.

A few months before, they used the filibuster to briefly turn the bipartisan sprint toward the CARES Act into a partisan standoff. The press marveled that Senate Democrats had the gall to block relief—a tactic that helped tank the markets—in order to demand further changes.

Back in early 2018, Senate Democrats used the filibuster to block government funding and force a brief government shutdown over, of all things, immigration. One of the Democratic leader's first major acts as the leader of his conference was to wield the filibuster to shut down the entire Federal Government.

So, look, the Democratic side just spent 4 years defending and, of course, happily using the same Senate rule that many of our colleagues now attack. So this reversal is not about principle. It has nothing whatsoever to do with principle. It is just raw power—raw power.

Three years ago, the assistant Democratic leader was asked about the Senate majority going ''nuclear'' and killing the legislative filibuster. Here's what Senator DURBIN had to say:

I can tell you that would be the end of the Senate as it was originally devised and created going back to our Founding Fathers.

That was Senator DURBIN in 2018, just a few years ago. Now he argues the opposite.

Now I understand our colleague has rotated through several different explanations for his reversal in just the last few days.

First, our colleague from Illinois indicated he changed his mind—changed his mind—because Republicans, and I specifically, had used the filibuster so much in the intervening years. But, Mr. President, Republicans were in the majority the whole time. We were in the majority the whole time. It was the Democrats who used the filibuster in the minority in 2018, 2019, and 2020—not Republicans. That argument makes no sense whatsoever.

A few days later, there was a new made-up rationale: It is just that the Senate hasn't been getting anything done, so the institution needs an overhaul. Except we have just had a uniquely terrible year to make that argument.

Last year was not a good year to make that argument. We passed five—five—bipartisan COVID bills with big bipartisan majorities that spent the most money in American history and helped save the country. Don't see any obstruction in that. We passed a historic bipartisan bill for national parks and public lands. Didn't see any outrageous use of the filibuster on that.

So there is fake history swirling all around the discussion—fake history.

About a year ago, former President Obama launched a new, coordinated, and very obvious campaign to get liberals repeating the claim that the Senate rules are somehow a relic of racism and bigotry. That came just a month after Democrats had used the filibuster to kill Senator TIM SCOTT's police reform and anti-lynching bill.

So these talking points are an effort to use the terrible history of racism to justify a partisan power grab in the present. It is not unlike what we saw last summer, when some protest mobs ended up defacing statues of people who actually crusaded for justice—like Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and the abolitionist Matthias Baldwin—mistakenly damaging good institutions because of our troubled past.

Multiple fact checkers have torn into this simplistic notion that the rules of the Senate are rooted in racism: ''Historians told PolitiFact that the filibuster did not emerge from debates over slavery or segregation.'' One scholar's account was that ''the very first Senate filibuster was over a bridge across the Potomac River.''

The very first filibuster was over a bridge over the Potomac River.

The junior Senator from Massachusetts just got three Pinocchios from the Washington Post for these arguments.

Their look—the Washington Post's look—at history found ''the first recorded filibusters in the Senate concerned issues such as where to locate Congress, what to do about Andrew Jackson's censure over withdrawn federal deposits, who would be appointed to a publication called the Congressional Globe and whether to create a national bank''—nothing to do with racism.

But I am curious. If my Democratic colleagues really believe what they are saying, did they themselves use a racist tool against Senator SCOTT's police reform bill just last year?

Did they use a racist relic when they delayed the CARES Act or blocked legislation to protect unborn babies who can feel pain?

Were Senators SCHUMER and DURBIN and their 33 colleagues who signed that letter all endorsing a racist relic?

Or is our colleagues' story that the filibuster was not an offensive relic as recently as last summer but magically—imagine this—just magically, within a year, magically became an offensive relic the instant the Democrats came to power? All of a sudden, it is an offensive, racist relic when the Democrats came to power. Jaw-dropping hypocrisy. These backflips insult the intelligence of the American people.

The far left is desperate to change the subject to the 1960s because they want people to forget how Senate Democrats behaved just last year. This is not about the 1960s. It is not a racist relic.

Look, if some of my Democratic colleagues want to keep lobbying two of their colleagues to go back on their word, they should at least have the courage to be honest.

The far left wants Democrats to break the Senate rules for no other reason—no other reason—than they want more power. They want more power. The same people who are trying to overturn a certified election result over at the House want to break Senate rules so they can override the election laws of all 50 States from right here in Washington. It is that simple. And it is not going to be hidden by a coordinated campaign to change the subject.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read nomination of Shalanda D. Young, of Louisiana, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, talk continues to swirl about eliminating the legislative filibuster here in the U.S. Senate. The Democratic leader has threatened that if Republicans don't vote the way he wants them to vote on legislation, eliminating the filibuster will be on the table.

In an interview where he issued his threat, the Democratic leader made it very clear that he is not inviting Republicans to work with Democrats on legislation. This isn't an invitation for both parties to sit down at the table and arrive at an agreement that both parties can support. No. This is an invitation for Republicans to support exactly what Democrats want or face the consequences.

It is ironic that the Democratic leader would be taking that position today because this is what he was saying back in 2017 about the legislative filibuster. This is the Democratic leader saying the ''legislative filibuster'' is ''the most important distinction between the Senate and the House. Let's find a way to further protect the 60-vote rule for legislation.''

So the Democratic leader was very supportive of this back in 2017, when they were using it extensively to try and stop or slow Republican legislation.

The assistant Democratic leader, the Democratic whip, Senator DURBIN from Illinois, said this in January 2018:

I can tell you that would be the end of the Senate as it was originally devised and created going back to our Founding Fathers.

''[G]oing back to our Founding Fathers,'' referencing the legislative filibuster and how important it was historically here in the U.S. Senate.

Well, about that same time, 2017, 61 Senators out of 100 here in the U.S. Senate—61 out of 100 Senators—signed a letter in which they supported retention of the legislative filibuster. In fact, it goes on to say:

We are writing to urge you—

And this is to the Senate leaders at the time, Senators MCCONNELL and SCHUMER—

to support our efforts to preserve existing rules, practices, and traditions as they pertain to the right of Members to engage in extended debate on legislation before the United States Senate. Senators have expressed a variety of opinions about the appropriateness of limiting debate when we are

considering judicial and executive branch nominations. Regardless of our past disagreements on that issue, we are united in our determination to preserve the ability of Members to engage in extended debate when bills are on the Senate floor.

Sixty-one Senators, including over 30 Democrats, on record as recently as 2017 in support of the legislative filibuster—over 30 Democratic Senators, including the Democratic leader and the Democratic whip.

Well, what has changed? Because now they have done an abrupt reversal, a complete 180. I mean, they are spinning around so fast, it makes your eyes glaze over. What an incredible versatility of conviction they have demonstrated on this issue.

And you think about the reason for it. What are they arguing? Well, they are saying the Republicans have been misusing the filibuster. That is a little bit ironic, given the fact that Republicans have been in the majority for the past 6 years. Republicans took the majority in January of 2015 and held it until January of 2021.

So the past 6 years it has been the Democrats who were in the minority. They would be the ones exercising the legislative filibuster, and they used it extensively. They used it extensively last year to block legislation, repeatedly, over and over and over again.

And Republicans, at the time, were under a lot of pressure to get rid of the legislative filibuster, including by the President of the United States, over and over and over, saying Republicans need to get rid of the legislative filibuster.

Republicans, being consistent in their position—the 61 Senators, Republicans who signed this letter, including me, have been consistent in our position, even when we were in the majority, even when the Democrats were using the filibuster to block legislation that we were trying to advance, that we needed to maintain the filibuster because it was important to the institution of the Senate, and it required bipartisan cooperation. It required a level of comity to get legislation passed, and it made sure that the minority was represented in legislative solutions that were produced by the U.S. Senate. We have been consistent in that position, even when it meant taking on our administration, our President—over, over, and over again.

So the Democrats' argument now is that we have to get rid of the legislative filibuster because Republicans have been misusing it. How was that even possible? We were in the majority. The legislative filibuster is a tool used by the minority. It was used by the Democrats over and over and over again the past 6 years, but their argument now is that the Senate is not functioning, the Senate is not producing legislation? Really?

Last year, Republicans were in the majority. We passed out of the Senate five coronavirus relief bills with huge bipartisan majorities—huge bipartisan majorities—responding to the greatest crisis facing this country, both health crisis and economic crisis.

We responded to it in a bipartisan way, honoring the rules and the traditions of the Senate, which were created by the Founders to make the Senate a place unique in all the world, where the rights of the minority are honored, which required cooperation and working together to get results.

And we produced results, in spite of the fact that Democrats consistently filibustered legislation. Now, there were certain pieces of legislation we didn't get passed. We didn't pass policing reform. Senator TIM SCOTT offered a piece of legislation that included all kinds of provisions that would have addressed that important issue for our country, and the Democrats filibustered it, over and over and over again. So we didn't get the 60 votes to get policing reform across the finish line.

But it is incredibly ironic. I mean, hypocrisy is not something that is unknown in politics, but hypocrisy on this level is unprecedented. The Democratic leader, the Democratic whip, and over 30 Democratic Senators have said as recently as 2 years ago, 3 years ago, that we need to preserve the legislative filibuster because it is true to the tradition of the Senate and what the Founders intended in terms of the role that the Senate was supposed to play in our democracy.

And here we are, 2 or 3 years later, not because the Republicans had been misusing the filibuster, because the Republicans have been in the majority. We have been fending off the use of the filibuster by Democrats. They had no problems with the filibuster when they were using it as a tool at their disposal to block Republican initiatives.

The first CARES bill they filibustered multiple times, and it forced us to sit down with them and forge a compromise that, in the end, got 96 out of 100 votes in the U.S. Senate. But now the shoe is on the other foot. They are in the majority, and they have got all these things they want to get done, all this pent-up agenda.

I would argue that what is happening here is all the outside groups, all the leftwing groups that have all these things they want to get done, all of a sudden have concluded that notwithstanding their use of the filibuster to block Republicans from accomplishing their agenda for the past 6 years, now that the shoe is on the other foot, we are in the majority and we have got power, we are going to do away with over 200 years of history—200 years of history that was put in place by the Founders to require the U.S. Senate to be different than the House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives does everything by simple majority. They have a Rules Committee. I served for three terms there. They have a Rules Committee that prescribes, basically, what legislation can come to the floor, what amendments are made in order, how much time is allowed for debate on each amendment. Everything is very structured. It is very organized. It is all done by democratic rule—majority rule, simple majority rule.

The Senate was created to operate differently by the Founders. And here we are having a debate about whether we are going to honor that tradition, that heritage, that legacy, that vision the Founders had when it came to how the U.S. Senate should operate.

Earlier this month, one Democratic Senator suggested that we should get rid of the filibuster because it is ''undemocratic.'' Undemocratic. In other words, it prevents the majority from doing everything it wants to do. But, as I said on the floor last week, letting the majority do everything it wants to is not what the Founders had in mind. The Founders recognized it wasn't just Kings who could be tyrants; they knew majorities could be tyrants, too, and that a majority, if unchecked, could trample the rights of the minority. So the Founders combined majority rule with both representation and constitutional protection for the minority. They established safeguards—checks and balances—throughout our government to keep the government in check and ensure that the rights of the minority were protected, and one of those safeguards was the Senate.

In the House of Representatives, as I said, majority rule is emphasized, and the Founders could have left it at that. They could have stuck with a single legislative body, but they didn't. Why? Because they were worried about the possibility of tyrannical majorities in the House endangering the rights of the minority.

The author of Federalist No. 62 notes:

> A senate, as a second branch of the legislative assembly, distinct from, and dividing the power with, a first, must be in all cases a salutary check on the government. It doubles the security to the people, by requiring the concurrence of two distinct bodies in schemes of usurpation or perfidy. . . . Secondly. The necessity of a senate is not less indicated by the propensity of all single and numerous assemblies to yield to the impulse of sudden and violent passions, and to be seduced by factious leaders into intemperate and pernicious resolutions.

That is from Federalist No. 62.

So the Founders created the Senate as a check on the House of Representatives. They made the Senate smaller and Senators' terms of office longer, with the intention of creating a more stable, more thoughtful, and more deliberative legislative body to check ill-considered or intemperate legislation and attempts to curtail minority rights.

As time has gone on, the legislative filibuster has become perhaps the key way the Senate protects minority rights. The filibuster ensures that the minority party has a voice in the Senate. It forces compromise. It forces bipartisanship.

Even in the now rare case when a majority party has a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate, the filibuster still

forces the majority party to take into account the views of its more moderate or middle-of-the-road Members, thus ensuring that more Americans are represented in legislation.

People tend to focus on the fact that the filibuster protects the country from any one party's most extreme legislation, but the truth is—the truth is—the filibuster is probably the biggest reason that any bill in the Senate is ever bipartisan. Routine spending bills, farm bills, Defense authorization bills—the main reason many of these bills are ever bipartisan, outside of divided government, is because the filibuster forces the parties to compromise. Don't believe me? Just look at how the House has handled these bills in recent years.

Democrats were eager to take advantage of the filibuster's protection for minority rights when they were in the minority, but now that they are in the majority, they don't want anything standing in their way. They don't want to have compromise. They don't want to have to consider the Americans who didn't vote for a Democratic agenda. They want to do whatever they want, whenever they want it.

Democrats' disregard for minority rights would be troubling even if they had a substantial majority in the Senate. The voice of the minority deserves to be heard even when the minority is substantially outnumbered. But it is particularly outrageous that Democrats are so determined to sweep away protections from minority rights when they barely—barely—have a majority in the Senate and certainly don't have a mandate. In fact, Democrats don't have a real majority at all; only a technical one. The Senate is divided 50 to 50. The only reason Democrats have a deciding vote in the Senate is because the Vice President is a Democrat. In the House, Democrats' majority narrowed substantially in the November election.

Now, as for the Presidency, while certainly a Democrat won the election, it is worth noting that the only candidate who could win the Democratic primary was a man historically regarded as a moderate. Even among Democrats, Democrats' far-left liberal candidates did not fare so well.

If there was any mandate in the election, it was a mandate for moderation. It was a mandate for compromise, for pulling the country together. But Democrats are running away from unity and bipartisanship as fast as they can. They are determined to leverage their weak victory into the implementation of a partisan, far-left agenda.

There are two bills that have driven the conversation around eliminating the filibuster in recent weeks. They are H.R. 1, an election bill, and H.R. 5, the so-called Equality Act.

The first bill is a truly outrageous power grab, an attempt to federalize election law and eliminate protections for election integrity. Democrats have discarded years of important bipartisan work on election security and integrity in order to permanently boost Democrats' chances of winning majorities. The second, the so-called Equality Act, is an unprecedented attack on the First Amendment that would substantially restrict the rights of Americans to live by their faith. These are the bills that Democrats think should be shoved through by the narrowest of majorities.

There have been suggestions that eliminating the filibuster is the cure for partisanship and gridlock in the Senate. Well, it might be the cure for gridlock in the sense that the majority could steamroll through whatever it wanted, whenever it wanted, but you don't cure partisanship by making it easier for the majority to be partisan.

Eliminating the filibuster isn't going to eliminate partisanship; it is going to heighten it. Take away the filibuster, and the majority party has zero reason—zero—to take into account the views of the minority. What eliminating the filibuster will do is ensure that one party has no voice at all in the U.S. Senate, no matter how many Americans that party represents.

A couple of weeks ago, we got a preview of what life would look like in a filibuster-less Senate when Democrats passed their so-called COVID bill under the simple-majority rules of reconciliation. There wasn't a lot of gridlock since reconciliation allowed Senate Democrats to force their bill through, but there was plenty of partisanship. Democrats made it very clear that while Republicans were welcome to vote for their bill, Republican ideas were not welcome at the table.

Democrats knew that they didn't need Republicans to pass their legislation, which empowered them to completely reject Republican input in drafting the bill and to load the bill with Democratic priorities, from a bailout for union pensions, to a State slush fund heavily weighted in favor of blue States, to the omission of longstanding Federal restrictions on using taxpayer dollars to pay for abortions. It was quite a contrast to the five bipartisan COVID bills passed under the filibuster rule in a Republican-led Senate, which were focused on fighting the virus rather than shoving through partisan priorities.

While their recent narrow majority has seemingly erased all memory of their minority status over the last few years, I encourage my Democratic colleagues to remember just how much they valued the legislative filibuster during their time in the minority and how bitterly they regretted eliminating the judicial filibuster once President Trump became the beneficiary.

While Democrats might like to think that their time in power will last forever, it is a truth of American politics that sooner or later, no matter how powerful your majority, you end up in the minority again. I encourage my colleagues to think about that time when they will be in the minority again and to ask themselves whether they really want to eliminate their voices and the voices of their constituents in future policy battles.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The Senator from Alabama.

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE ACT

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, last week, I spoke about a deeply flawed and misguided piece of legislation passed by the House—House bill H.R. 1 and now Senate bill, S. 1.

Today, I am going to talk about yet another bill from our colleagues in the House that would be terrible for my State of Alabama and for our country. It is called the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, better known as the PRO Act.

Like H.R. 1, the PRO Act represents a massive power grab by the Democrats here in Washington, DC, to override the will of the voters and State legislatures in a majority of the States in this country. Democrats want to force their ideas on States that refuse to adopt their progressive failed policies. Federal power grabs like these are unconstitutional and go against our entire system of government.

The PRO Act would overrule the right-to-work laws across the country and force tens of millions of employees to join a union. Currently, 27 States have right-to-work laws on their books, including Alabama. More States could join us in the future. Right-to-work laws give workers freedom, and more importantly, they give them the freedom to choose whether to unionize or not.

Alabama's right-to-work law has been a huge benefit for our State and for the people, helping to attract many businesses to our State. Take car manufacturing, for example. Beginning with Mercedes, in 1993, automakers like Toyota, Hyundai, and Honda all have large presences in Alabama. Their investment in our State has created a growing automotive supplier network, supporting roughly 150 companies in our State. Altogether, we have around 40,000 Alabamians employed in the automotive sector alone. Those jobs go on to support thousands more family members, all thanks to Alabama's right-to-work law.

The PRO Act would upend the economic growth we have seen in Alabama and in many States across the country. By forcing unionization on American workers, many industries would grind to a halt, and employers' costs would skyrocket, which could lead to a loss of many, many jobs. According to the State Policy Network, the PRO Act would destroy 57 million American workers who call themselves freelancers, in addition to the millions of salaried workers who would lose their right-to-work protections.

Unions, to some degree, have helped build our great country, but we need to give workers the ability to choose, not force them to be in a union. Right-to-

work laws give workers a choice. Choice creates competition, and competition breeds success. Forced unionization creates a monopoly, which only leads to stagnation.

President Biden says he believes that ''every worker should have a free and fair choice to join a union,'' but the PRO Act would tip the scales towards unionized labor even further. Among other things, the bill requires that workers' personal contact information be sent to unions; removes vote by secret ballot, subjecting them to union harassment; and limits the information workers may receive during a union-organizing campaign. That doesn't sound free and fair to me; it sounds like they want to ensure a favorable outcome for the union bosses and give them the ability to punish workers who don't go along with them.

On a related note, I want to briefly mention the upcoming unionization vote for nearly 6,000 workers at Amazon's facility in Bessemer, AL, just outside of Birmingham. There has been a lot of attention paid to this lately. We have had Hollywood actors, celebrities, Members of Congress, and even President Biden trying to help tip the scales toward the union's favorable outcome. Let me be clear. These hard-working Alabamians don't need Hollywood elites or Federal Government officials telling them what to do. We should all trust they will make the decision they think is right for them and their families. And that is what right-to-work is all about—the right to choose. This is still a free country, after all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the crisis that is affecting our country right now, and it is the crisis at our southern border. Later this week, I will travel to Texas to inspect the situation firsthand.

My Republican colleagues and I will first say thank you to our law enforcement officers who are there on the frontlines. Their work is always important, and it is especially important at this time.

The President said on Sunday that he hopes to visit the border. He said he hopes to visit the border ''at some point.'' Well, with all due respect, the American people don't have time to wait. I invite the President to join us this Friday. Come with us. See the situation. Witness it firsthand.

Here are the facts. In the month of February, Federal agents apprehended more than 100,000 illegal immigrants crossing our southern border. That is more than double the number from last February. So in just 28 days—28 days of February—over 100,000 illegal immigrants crossed our border.

You know, illegal immigration numbers usually go down in the winter. It rises in the spring and peaks in the summer. We have every reason to expect that this is only going to get much worse in the months ahead. Even the Biden administration admits it. They admit that we are on pace this year to have more illegal immigrants than any year over the last 2 decades.

Why is this happening? Well, if you ask the migrants, they will tell you the answer. His name is Joe Biden. There are photographs of migrants near Tijuana wearing shirts that say: ''BIDEN PLEASE LET US IN!''

They even use the Biden logo—his campaign logo—on their shirts.

So when did the surge of illegal immigrants start? Well, just after President Biden took office on January 20. Before the month was over, President Biden had already issued over seven Executive actions on immigration alone.

As I detailed on the floor a couple of weeks ago, President Biden has unveiled the most leftwing immigration agenda in the history of our Nation. During the campaign last year, President Biden promised lavish taxpayer benefits for illegal immigrants. So did Vice President HARRIS.

When the moderators at the Democratic debates asked who supported free healthcare for illegal immigrants, President Biden raised his hand. Vice President HARRIS also endorsed free healthcare for illegal immigrants. President Biden promised not just amnesty but American citizenship for illegal immigrants, and 26 Democrat Senators have already signed onto the bill that he has proposed.

President Biden said in February that he will even give the coronavirus vaccine to illegal immigrants. You come here illegally; you get a free vaccine against coronavirus and free healthcare. No wonder illegal immigrants are rushing to our borders.

But we all remember what happened 4 years ago after President Trump was elected. Before he even issued most of his immigration policies, illegal immigration plummeted. It went down by 40 percent the first 4 months of his Presidency. It was called ''The Trump Effect.'' It happened even before his policies went into effect. It was because he sent a clear message to the world. He said: Don't come here illegally or we will send you right back home. That message was heard around the world.

Now we are getting very different messages from this Biden White House. As a result, we have ''The Biden Effect,'' which is the exact opposite of what ''The Trump Effect'' did. We are having historic increases in illegal immigration. They are promising free healthcare, free education, free vaccines, offering amnesty, and even citizenship for illegal immigrants.

Democrats just passed a bill that lets illegal immigrants get $1,400 checks. Senator COTTON and I tried to stop it. Every Democrat in the U.S. Senate voted against our amendment. They voted to give hard-earned taxpayer dollars to people who aren't even in the country legally.

The White House says publically that we will not expel any illegal immigrants under the age of 18. That is what they have said publicly. The White House Press Secretary even mocked that idea. As a result, massive numbers of teens and children are crossing the border.

Secretary Mayorkas has told the whole world that if you are under 18, you get a free pass. He went on television last week and said: ''We will not expel your child. . . . We will care for that child and unite that child with a responsible parent.

In that same interview, he said: ''I hope [children] will not undertake that perilous journey'' to our border.

But as long as liberal policies are in place, it is a guarantee. They will undertake the perilous journey. They will risk traveling at the hands of smugglers, cartels, and human traffickers to get here.

Now we have a system that is overwhelmed. Our border agents can't keep up. Immigration and Customs Enforcement just spent $86 million to rent hotel rooms—hotel rooms for families who illegally crossed the border; $86 million for hotel rooms for over 1,000 families.

It has been reported that more than 100 illegal immigrants who tested positive for the coronavirus have been released into Texas. They were told to quarantine after they traveled through the country to their preferred destination in the United States. We don't know where they are now or how many people they infected along the way. It could be in Texas. It could be anywhere. It is very concerning to people all across the country, and yet the White House is still in denial.

In fact, last week, the White House Press Secretary had to correct herself. She accidentally used the word ''crisis'' when talking about the border. A reporter asked her if that meant the White House was finally acknowledging that it was a crisis. She said no. She said it was just a ''challenge.''

Joe Biden promised us he would always tell us the truth. Yet the Biden White House is trying to mislead the American people about one of the most important issues that is facing our country today. It is not working. The American public knows this is a crisis. Democrats may think that this is some political game. In reality, this is a humanitarian crisis. Thousands of children are being harmed because of this.

Liberals talk a lot about how much compassion and empathy they feel. The truth is, the policies that they have don't lead to compassionate outcomes. They lead to some very cruel outcomes. As Secretary Mayorkas admits, the journey north from Central America is a ''perilous'' one. It is not safe for children. Large numbers of children who make the journey are trafficked, sexually assaulted, or recruited by gangs. If this year is like previous years, thousands and thousands of children are going to be harmed because

they make the journey north. There is nothing compassionate about the open border policy of this administration.

It didn't have to happen. It should not have happened, and the blame rests squarely with President Biden and the open-border Democrats. In less than 2 months, President Biden has already shown himself the most open-borders President in our history as a Nation. It is no surprise that the whole world has noticed.

This crisis will not fix itself. We need to take action. Republicans have a series of commonsense solutions to improve this situation immediately. They include enforcing the law, securing the border, and restoring the policy called ''Remain in Mexico.'' Without these, the Biden border crisis is going to continue to undermine our Nation's safety and its security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I and then, after me, Senators LEAHY and PETERS be allowed to complete our remarks in their entirety before the scheduled vote.

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

FILIBUSTER

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, the debate about the legislative filibuster is not a debate about S. 1 or S. 101 or S. 901. No, this is a debate about nothing less than the nature and durability of American self-government. Quite apart from the wrestling over which particular bill was filibustered 8 years ago or 4 years ago or 2 years ago or tomorrow, the decision about whether or not to eliminate the filibuster is the Senate's most important policy debate in decades.

Eliminating the filibuster would obviously have all kinds of policy consequences, from tax rates and labor law to energy and infrastructure. But that is not why the debate is so important. This isn't fundamentally a debate about this or that policy.

The debate about the filibuster is deeper than that because it is a debate about how and whether we debate at all. This matters a whole lot in a country this big, in a continental nation, because it is right at the heart of how peaceable self-government works at all. If we just blow that up, if we act as if it is just a matter of time before the filibuster goes away and all we really have is red-versus-blue jerseys anyway, if we just end the Senate's rules as they have existed for 240 years, we will dramatically alter not just this institution but our entire form of self-government, and in the process we will dramatically escalate the fevered pitch of America's recent arguing.

We shouldn't ignore the deep and long-term significance of what setting the Senate's rules on fire would mean simply because terms like ''supermajority requirement'' don't fit really neatly into our modern, made-for-cable-TV, soap-opera variety of politics as entertainment, politics as sport, even politics as religion. ''Supermajority requirements'' are a whole bunch of syllables, and it just doesn't make for great sound bites.

But make no mistake. If we set the Senate's rules on fire, we are going to cause dramatic, horrible consequences in American civic life.

Almost every single Member of the newly minted Democratic majority in the Senate has resolved in recent weeks that the legislative filibuster needs to be abolished, or, in their most recent focus group term, to be ''reformed'' out of existence.

This move would be directly contrary to over two centuries of tradition in this country and in this body. It would be directly contrary to the Founders' explicit purposes for why this institution was created at all, and it would be directly contrary to the words of dozens and dozens of the majority Senators—their words just in the last 48 months.

This is no mere procedural change. If they go through with this, an already sick Senate would be committing institutional suicide. There really is no reason to be a U.S. Senator if the Senate doesn't exist to foster real debate that is bigger than simple majority power.

This nuclear trigger would all but destroy the principle of consensus-building that the Senate demands and, thereby, all but ensure that minority rights in this country would become subject to more and more fickle, more and more power hungry, and, inevitably, more and more abusive simple majorities.

America is built on a number of seemingly small, but actually quite grand, ideas. One of the very best of those ideas, one that is just elegantly simple—so simple that we regularly don't pause to reflect on it together and to teach it to our kids—is the simple idea that whenever possible, groups of different people should be allowed to make different rules for themselves. This is what our system of federalism is about. This is why we divide power both vertically and horizontally between legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and then also across the 50 States and versus the Federal Government.

It is not actually an extravagant thought. Children on a playground kind of instinctively understand that if you can't get one giant game of kickball together, it is OK to let the playground divide up into a few different games of kickball and dodgeball. It is a grand American tradition that when we don't have to agree, we don't have to agree about everything. It is OK to allow some diversity. It is OK for not all workplace regulations to be exactly the same everywhere in the country.

As it happens, America is a really big country, a continental nation, and we regularly don't agree. Californians don't always agree with Nebraskans. Virginians don't always agree with New Yorkers. People in regularly sunny Miami don't always see the world exactly the same as folks in regularly wintry Boston do. Ohio State fans don't have to wear the blue and gold of Michigan.

It is a big country full of disagreements, and so our principle is, regularly, that wherever we can protect and respect differences, we should. We don't force folks to wear the jerseys of the teams they don't support. There is no reason to.

I feel like there is some joke I should make about Oral Roberts versus Harbaugh—I know relative competitions against Ohio State—but prudence recommends skipping that.

There are also circumstances, obviously, where we need to make big wide-ranging monopolistic government decisions. There are times when we have to have one-size-fits-all rules, but those one-size-fits-all obligations are not for everything. Even in those moments when they are required, we still want to work hard to protect the rights of minorities and dissenters.

So how do we respect their rights and abilities to make rules for varying communities across a nation of 330 million people from shore to shore? How do we allow as many people as possible to make divergent rules as they see fit? One of the ways we have done that traditionally in the Senate is we have always made sure, here, where we come from all across the country—east to west, north to south—that we would be required to pass legislation not by 50 plus 1 but by 50 plus 10.

What that means is that, most all of the time, even if you are in the majority, you can't just do everything you want. You can't just pass one, big, compulsory law immediately without lots of debate, because you rarely have 50 plus 10. You have to bring some people from across the aisle over to your side. If you are in the majority, it means that you have to learn the habit of sitting down with Members of the minority. You have to talk to them. As importantly, you have to listen to them.

When this process of compromise works and a bill is passed, you are then guaranteed that the new law has the stamp of approval of at least some representatives of the minority on that issue, and it means that they will become your allies against quickly undoing that law next year. They will become your allies because the process of compromise has led you to listen to each other and say: Instead of doing the 51-percent thing, what harder work might be required to get to the 60-percent thing?

If the process of compromise breaks down, that is a pretty important signal as well. When you are forced to make rules that are binding on diverse groups of people, it is in everyone's interest that you get as much buy-in as possible. That makes it more likely that the new rule will be respected and followed beyond just this 2-year Congress. Yet, if you shove a rule change

through with a bare-knuckle majority, you ensure that 49 percent of the country is going to resent not just the rule but you. Pass laws today with a 50-plus-1 majority, and watch them be repealed tomorrow with a 50-plus-1 majority. Our Nation would just pinball from one policy agenda to another. It makes politics too central in the lives of the American people to allow a fickle 51-and-49-percent majority to change the whole direction of the Nation. Each election would become more do or die, more Flight 93ish than the last one. Each campaign would descend further and further into tribal ugliness.

In a big and diverse country, the Senate exists to force lawmakers to build a healthy consensus before we try to make sweeping national, legal changes. The Senate exists precisely to force this kind of consensus-building. That is really why this institution exists. It is how we guarantee that we do not have laws on the books that are respected by half of the country and resented and hated or ignored by the other half of the country. The Senate's supermajority requirement has helped to ensure that big changes are not impulsive and narrow and instant but, rather, deliberate and broadly accepted.

But there is an alarming trend in our time. Let's be clear: It is in both parties. It is not just the Democrats, who are now in the majority, who are interested in this kind of new, more instant, more urgent, more winner-take-all kind of politics. There is a new trend toward a bare-knuckles belief that this is the only kind of politics that works, that it is the only kind of way you can go forward.

So my colleagues—again, in both parties—have decided that if you have the power, you should wield it, and you should wield all of it with no constraint. They might use this or that particular bill as a stalking horse for the attempted power grab, but let's be clear: Any particular bill is beside the point; it is about the new ''ends justify the means'' principle, which is the principle that there are no principles except that of flexing your power as vigorously and as brutally and as instantly as you can for as long as you can cling to power.

Some of the Republicans who have already spoken on the floor this last week have warned the Democrats that they might very soon rue the day they made this decision. There is an age-old self-delusion in power that says: If you are in the majority, you will never have to be in the minority again, so why would you want to respect any rules that have traditionally protected minorities? You will always be driving the bulldozer and never be in its path.

This debate isn't about policy. It isn't about any specific bill. You can listen to the activists on the outside who are advocating for it. They have been transparent about their purposes for the better part of a year that they would use whatever bill they think most politically opportune at the moment to try to end the filibuster. Books published on this topic in the last 60 days haven't come about in the last 60 days.

We should remember that if this happens, if a simple majoritarianism—a mere raw exercise of power—becomes what this body is about, we will have taken a step down a path toward the exercise of naked power that will be absolutely permanent. It cannot and will not ever be undone. Once the supermajority rules, once the filibuster is gone, it will be gone forever because no one—it is self-evident to make this argument—is ever going to voluntarily surrender power when the other party has just used a simple-majority power against them. No one will ever restore supermajority requirements when they have a simple majority and a simple majority has just become the rule against them.

If you want to see American politics become more brutal, if you want to see American politics become more crude, if you want to see American politics become more demagogic, then stripping away the mechanisms that have forced us to work together would be the perfect recipe for bringing about this dystopian reality. If you want to see a politics that favors more candidates running for office with claims that they will be strongmen and tyrants, then make politics nothing more than a contest of wills between people who spend their campaigns promising to spend the next 2 or 4 years simply making the other side pay. If you want to see the rights and interests of minority groups scorned, dismissed, and trampled, then establish a legislative process where minority voices don't need to be heard at all. That is what would happen if we end the supermajority requirements that have always dominated the Senate from its first day. If you want lame, meme politics that aims only to ''own the libs'' or ''drink conservative tears,'' this is how you bring that crap show about. You would set the Senate on fire.

All of you know this, though. Many of you have spoken in private about this being a rash move. Many of you have spoken in public about having been opposed to this before.

I think of my friend BRIAN SCHATZ—and I am going to name him precisely because he is a real friend, not a Washington friend, where you claim someone is your friend right before you try to rip his face off. I actually like the guy a lot. I like working with the guy, and I would like to keep working with the guy. But it turns out, if you make the Senate into the House of Representatives, there is going to be almost no working together across the aisle because there will no longer be any incentive for it. All the politics that matter will happen during the private caucus lunches where 51 percent will try to keep their 51 percent to do whatever they want.

The Senate is, obviously, not the greatest deliberative body in the world, but it still has a chance to recover. Set it on fire by ending supermajority requirements, and no one should ever utter the phrase ''great deliberative body'' again because there will be no more deliberation in this body again.

BRIAN recently said that the filibuster is ''stupid and paralyzing.'' He also said: ''It is time to trash the Jim Crow filibuster.'' Yet, just 4 years ago, when Donald Trump was elected and the House Republicans were itching to have the Senate eliminate the filibuster because the Republicans controlled the House, the Senate, and the White House, Senator SCHATZ and a bunch of his colleagues actually penned a public letter that defended the filibuster and all of its ''existing rules, practices, and traditions'' precisely because it advanced the deliberative purposes of the Senate. I don't remember Senator SCHATZ then calling it the ''Jim Crow filibuster'' when he wrote that letter or when he was blocking TIM SCOTT's police reform legislation last year by pointing to the Senate's supermajority requirement rules. I don't remember Senator SCHATZ calling it ''stupid'' when he filibustered COVID relief in September and again in October under the Senate's current rules.

Look, I want to be clear. I am not picking on BRIAN; I am naming him precisely because I like him, and afterward, we can argue about this. With other people I have maybe less of a relationship with, it would be less useful to cite them than the people with whom I actually have a lot of comity and good will. I do want to keep working with BRIAN, but in a simple majoritarian body, there won't be bipartisan cooperation anymore. There isn't much right now, but there is still a chance for the reform of this institution. Ending the filibuster is to end this institution.

To be clear, this isn't about Senator SCHATZ. I could give an hours'-and-hours'-long speech and go through all the flip-floppers in this Chamber who had one position 48 months ago and now have a completely different position. I don't need to name all of them. We should just ask, what changed? We know what changed. The only thing that has changed in the last 2 years is who is in power.

When the Democrats were in the minority, you were fierce defenders of this indispensable Senate prerogative. That was the language that was used. The filibuster was standing between America and fascism, we heard. But now, when you have the slimmest majority—actually, it is just 50–50, and you need the VP's motorcade to break a tie—the filibuster is standing between you and some of your legislative goals; therefore, it needs to be tossed out. When you were using the filibuster to halt Senator SCOTT's police reform bill, the filibuster was an essential American institution that forced compromise. Now that it can be occasionally used to resist a 51–50 straight

majoritarian exercise of power, it is supposedly exclusively a relic of slavery and a tool of Jim Crow. It is nonsense, and the people saying it know that it is nonsense. You used the same rule last year, and you were not racist when you used it last year.

This is B.S. that has been focus-grouped, and particular bills are being used as the excuses to grab power that won't just be for this bill; it will be forever. It will be the end of the Senate.

Was the filibuster really a tool of Jim Crow when it was used against TIM SCOTT last year? I don't think so, and I don't think any of you think so. If somebody wants to come to the floor and repent of their racism for having used the filibuster last year, please do, but that isn't what was happening, so stop with the nonsense rhetoric that is just for an MSNBC sound bite tonight.

It is sad to watch so many of my colleagues who know better be bullied into this position of shortsightedness, and they do know better, because many of you say it in private, and you are being bullied by the fringes of your party. But part of the responsibility of being a U.S. Senator is standing up to the extreme fringes of your party. Part of the responsibility of being a U.S. Senator is to say: I know that people are angry. I know that people are yelling. I know that there are hotheads. But one of the jobs of a Senator and surely the job of this body is to try to find a way to allow cooler heads to prevail.

We already have an institution that is instantly responsive to majorities—you only have to walk 200 yards to see it—and there is nobody who serves in this body who wishes they served in that body. We know what it looks like to have a simple majoritarian body, and the House was designed to do that. It is a good thing. The House was designed to reflect the energy of the people. When the people are hotheaded and they want something done fast and they want their majority to act, they call on the House and get a hearing, but the Senate's job, the Senate's purpose, is different.

The House is actually allowed to act with a hothead precisely because the Senate exists to cool those passions. The Senate exists to act with a cool head. Our job is not to cater to sudden and instant majorities and to changes in the wind; the Senate's job is to enlarge and refine the House's judgments and to try to build a consensus that can last so that the majority's will can be advanced while the minority's rights are also protected.

The bullies who want to permanently upend the way our legislature works don't understand that their short-term gain of this or that bill will come at a long-term cost of the entire structure of the rights and interests of our constitutional balance.

It doesn't take a lot of courage to go with the current of a mob, but a lot of Senators who quietly want to resist this change—and there are many on that side of the aisle who want to resist this change—are worried that going against the tide means watching dollars and votes flow away. It means getting screamed at in restaurants. It means that your self-interest is to avoid the short-term pain and ride the short-term wave.

Let me tell you, this feels pretty familiar. When I ran for this seat in 2014—it was the first time I had ever run for anything in my life—one of the fundamental reasons I ran, in my having never sought any office of any kind, was that I thought the Senate had a chance to still be restored to its deliberative place in American life.

We are living through a digital revolution that is disrupting the future of work, the future of war, the nature of local community, the neuron, synapse, and frontal lobe formations of our teens. The digital revolution is transforming American life everywhere, and this institution has a chance to help shape some of that for good instead of to just allow the tide to flow at full speed and consume this institution as well.

So I said, I pledged—and when I said it to a largely red State in 2014, most people apparently didn't think I meant it—that I wasn't running just because I disagreed with a lot of President Obama's policies but because I would defend the constitutional system of limited government and a Senate that exists for a deliberative process even if someone in my own party came to power and urged instant, radical changes that disrespected large portions of America.

I literally made the centerpiece of why I was running that I would resist someone in my own party who tried to do majoritarian, instant stuff. And I can tell you, I can introduce you to a whole bunch of Republicans on the ground in Nebraska who are really mad that, when I said that, I didn't precisely say it 17 different ways, where I named every person that they might later want to have all of that instant power.

After the 2016 election, people started looking back at what I said the whole 2014 campaign and got more uncomfortable with what they voted for. So nobody has to tell me how unpleasant it is to stand up and say things that are unpopular in your own party.

Over the course of the last 5 years, I have been smeared and censured many times. I have been cussed out by lots of people who once supported me and called me a friend. None of that was particularly fun, but so what?

The oath I took and the duty I swore was related to the point of being a U.S. Senator, which is that if you are not willing to stand up to your own side every now and again, there is really no point in having this job. And the thing is, a lot of you know that.

I am not going to say it is the consensus position on your side of the aisle, but there are a whole bunch of people going along publicly with the rhetoric of ending the filibuster and ending supermajority requirements, even as, at the exact same time, you tell me how much you regret the summer of 2013 decision to allow Harry Reid to end a much smaller Senate tradition about supermajority confirmations.

Supermajoritarian confirmations are a small item compared to the change that is being considered here. Harry Reid's take-no-prisoners strategy of 2013 was something that was moved unanimously by the then-majority party, and many, many, many of you have talked to me in private about how much you regret it. Please consider the costs because this would be a much larger change.

Whenever anyone, Republican or Democrat, has threatened to blow up the Senate supermajority requirements, they always have to tell themselves three lies. The first lie is that might makes right. The second lie is that the other side politically is your enemy, and they must simply be beaten down; they can never possibly be persuaded. And the third lie is that the Federal Government is the only government we have. None of these things is true.

I resisted a President, nominally of my own party, when he beat me up, both in private and in public, for defending the filibuster when my party was in the majority.

Republican Senate leaders stood up to him as well, despite lots of ridicule from House Republicans. A lot of people in the House Republican caucus wanted much faster politics, but their passions were a poor guide to long-term wisdom for a nation this big and diverse. It is better for America's hardest debates to be decided in a deliberative Senate rather than in the thunderdome.

Republicans in the majority held firm against blowing up this central structural pillar of this institution, even when it would have benefited us politically. In other words, we faced the same choice then that you face now, and we decided that it was better to choose long-term stability over short-term legislative victories. It was the right choice for a nation this big and this diverse.

A lot of Republicans think that decision was naive. Their argument was the other side hates us. They will definitely use all power against us whenever they can. And I know that many Democratic strategists on the outside, many people raising money, small-dollar fundraising online, they are making the exact same argument, but this isn't war, and we are not supposed to be permanent enemies.

We want a politics of debate and of verbal jousting rather than of physical violence. And one of the most urgent political tasks we face today is to demonstrate that it is possible for people who deeply disagree and who are polarized in our division—we can still work together for the common good.

We urgently need to protect and strengthen, not weaken and destroy, the norms that force us to come together and cooperate.

But we don't need to be naive. We don't need to believe that that means we would always sing ''Kumbaya.'' We obviously don't in this body, but that doesn't mean we are free to be naive in the other direction as well.

For every step we take that further divides, further infuriates, and further inflames half the country, it makes it far likelier that we will set a fire that we cannot put out.

The American Founders understood the problem that we are facing. They were not naive about how politics worked and what it took, what kind of labor and sweat and relational handwringing and bread-breaking it takes to be able to work together amicably. They were working from a personal experience of repression, tyranny, and violence. And so they set out some basic principles of federalism, localism, and consensus building, of supporting majorities but without sacrificing minorities. And so they established a framework in which these principles could be balanced in a way that is responsive to changing conditions and needs.

The Founders' concerns are still our concerns, but guess what. They built the Senate for this exact moment. We are constantly tussling over how to make sure that every voice is heard and every person has a place. We live in a divided time. We live in a divided nation. But they lived in a divided time and in a divided nation, and so they created the Senate to be a place that could deescalate red-hot anger, to take a deep breath rather than just assuming that a runaway majority of 50 percent plus 1 should advance whatever it wanted.

Friends, colleagues, you know after the summer of 2013, the dominoes were worse than you had expected, and many of you—I don't know if it is most, but many of you have talked about how much you regret the summer of 2013 decision. This decision is 100 times larger.

Friends, please consider whether or not it is prudent to set the Senate on fire. It is the only deliberative structure we have in our government, and at a time when institutions are being consumed, let us not consume another.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

NOMINATION OF SHALANDA D. YOUNG

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise in support of Shalanda Young's nomination to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Ms. Young is a proven leader, a dedicated public servant with the experience and the expertise needed to tackle the challenges facing OMB and our Nation.

Not only does Ms. Young bring a deep knowledge of the budget process and government operations, but she has a long track record of working successfully across the aisle.

During her 14 years as a senior staff member on the House Appropriations Committee, she worked tirelessly to find a bipartisan path forward on many critical issues.

She played a key role in ending past government shutdowns and in negotiating last year's bipartisan coronavirus relief legislation.

Since President Biden announced Ms. Young's nomination, Members and staff, both Democrats and Republicans, have enthusiastically praised her ability to work with both sides and get results for the American people. This is exactly the type of leadership OMB needs to successfully steer the country through the current public health and economic crisis.

The passage of the American Rescue Plan earlier this week was a historic achievement. But much of the work to fully implement this landmark bill still lies ahead, from getting money into the pockets of workers and families to ensuring schools open swiftly and safely and making meaningful investments in small businesses and local governments.

I have no doubt Ms. Young is prepared to take on the challenging work of ensuring relief is delivered swiftly and effectively and that families, businesses, and communities across our country have the support they need to fully recover from this pandemic.

I know that in order to move past this current crisis, we must work together. We all want to end the pandemic and reinvigorate our economy, but there are intense disagreements over how we achieve those shared goals.

Ms. Young has demonstrated the ability to work hard, to find common ground during times of crisis and in the face of a deeply divided political climate, experience that makes her uniquely qualified to serve at OMB at this very moment.

Having spent most of her career working in Congress, Ms. Young will also bring a profound respect for the role of the legislative branch. She understands the importance of Congress's oversight role and has firmly pledged to work with Congress in a cooperative and a transparent manner.

Ms. Young also fully understands that laws enacted by Congress are the law of the land, and they remain the law of the land regardless of her own personal views.

You know, I know that some of my Republican colleagues have expressed concerns about Ms. Young's personal views. However, I hope they recognize that she has repeatedly committed to following the laws put forth by Congress, including laws that she may personally disagree with.

There is no doubt that Ms. Young is exceptionally qualified for this role. OMB urgently needs qualified, Senate-confirmed leaders, not only to address the current public health and economic crisis but also to strengthen Federal cybersecurity, review regulations, and modernize the Federal workforce.

In short, OMB works to ensure that every part of government is working effectively for the American people. Her budget expertise, extensive record of bipartisan engagement, and deep-rooted understanding and respect for Congress are exactly what is needed to meet the challenges that we face now and the challenges that lie ahead.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the confirmation of Shalanda Young as Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

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. 32, Shalanda D. Young, of Louisiana, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Charles E. Schumer, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher A. Coons, Jon Tester, Gary C. Peters, Brian Schatz, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Jon Ossoff, Joe Manchin III, Thomas R. Carper, Debbie Stabenow, Martin Heinrich, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Jeanne Shaheen, Mark R. Warner, Kyrsten Sinema.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Shalanda D. Young, of Louisiana, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 128 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Baldwin	Hassan	Padilla
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blunt	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Hoeven	Sanders
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Burr	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kelly	Shaheen
Cardin	Kennedy	Shelby
Carper	King	Sinema
Casey	Klobuchar	Smith
Cassidy	Leahy	Stabenow
Collins	Luján	Sullivan
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Cramer	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Murkowski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Graham	Ossoff	

NAYS—38

Barrasso	Crapo	Hawley
Blackburn	Cruz	Inhofe
Boozman	Daines	Johnson
Braun	Ernst	Lankford
Capito	Fischer	Lee
Cornyn	Grassley	Lummis
Cotton	Hagerty	Marshall

McConnell	Rounds	Tillis
Moran	Rubio	Toomey
Paul	Sasse	Tuberville
Portman	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Risch	Scott (SC)	Young
Romney	Thune	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). On this vote, the yeas are 62, the nays are 38.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for not more than 5 minutes regarding Shalanda Young.

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

NOMINATION OF SHALANDA D. YOUNG

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to be here on the Senate floor to offer my strong support for Shalanda Young to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, as I have spoken about her earlier before the committee.

She has worked on the House Appropriations Committee for nearly 14 years. She has been the House Appropriations staff director since 2017.

It is from my position on the Appropriations Committee that I got to know her very well. I can tell you, without any reservation, there is no one better suited for this position. Her deep understanding of, really, the often arcane Federal budget process, her years of experience on the Appropriations Committee, her tenacity, and her dedication to public service will serve the Agency and the American people.

I think after we had the last closedown of the government—I believe the longest in history—we ended up, finally, with four of us meeting for several weeks in my office here in the Capitol. When we forged the agreement to reopen, Senator SHELBY and myself, Congresswomen Lowey and GRANGER from the House—we were chair and vice chair of our respective committees—but, most importantly, Shalanda Young was there for the House, as was Chuck Kieffer, and she had an opportunity to work for the Senate. Her knowledge of the intricacies of that and her ability to help us reach agreement were absolutely essential.

Ms. Young began her career in public service in 2001 at the National Institutes of Health. She first came to work on Capitol Hill as a detailee for the House Appropriations Committee in 2005. She came back as a professional staff member in 2007. She worked her way up in the committee over the years. She helped develop a budget for and conducted oversight of key Agencies. That has given her a critical insight into the operation of some of our Nation's most important Agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the General Services Administration. She even served as a staff director for the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, which covers the budget for Congress.

Ms. Young became staff director of the House Appropriations Committee in 2017, coincidentally the same year I became vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee. But she has helped the House navigate some of the most difficult issues before the Chamber. As I said, she was a critical player in helping to end the longest Federal shutdown in history in 2019, and she was instrumental in crafting 2020 bipartisan COVID relief bills.

She has a reputation as a tough but fair negotiator. That is high praise on Capitol Hill because she gets it from both Republicans and Democrats. I can attest to the truth of these statements. I have seen these skills firsthand.

I have already said that the Office of Management and Budget is one of the most powerful government Agencies that most Americans have never heard of. That is true. It wields incredible influence on not just the Federal budget but over policies that affect people's lives.

We need people like Shalanda Young to help steer the Agency in these important decisions. That is why I voted yes on the recent motion, and that is why I want to see her in that position as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

NOMINATION OF SHALANDA D. YOUNG

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, during committee review of Ms. Young's nomination to be the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, important questions were raised about whether she would uphold and enforce the restrictions of the Hyde amendment if confirmed. I found her initial response to a question put to her on the subject troubling as it suggested she may seek to use her position to undermine Hyde. However, after speaking with Ms. Young and pressing her on the issue, I am satisfied that she will follow the law as written by Congress without regard to her own personal views. She has assured me that she has no intention to revise rules or regulations concerning Hyde and understands it is not her place to change law. I therefore have decided to vote in favor of her nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute.

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

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I rise in support of confirming Shalanda Young as the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The OMB urgently needs Senate-confirmed leaders, and Ms. Young is exceptionally qualified for this role. Her budget experience and extensive record of bipartisan results are what the OMB needs to guide our Nation through the current pandemic and through the current economic crisis.

During her 14 years as a senior staff member for the House Appropriations Committee, Ms. Young developed a deep understanding of the budget process and government operations, and she has been instrumental in negotiating bipartisan agreements on many critical issues.

She is a proven leader who is ready to get to work at the OMB, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting her confirmation.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON YOUNG NOMINATION

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

All postcloture time is expired.

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

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 63, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 129 Ex.]

YEAS—63

Baldwin	Grassley	Ossoff
Bennet	Hassan	Padilla
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Peters
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Rosen
Brown	Hoeven	Sanders
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	Kelly	Shaheen
Carper	Kennedy	Shelby
Casey	King	Sinema
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Luján	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cramer	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Feinstein	Murkowski	Warren
Gillibrand	Murphy	Whitehouse
Graham	Murray	Wyden

NAYS—37

Barrasso	Hawley	Rounds
Blackburn	Inhofe	Rubio
Boozman	Johnson	Sasse
Braun	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Capito	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lummis	Thune
Cotton	Marshall	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Toomey
Cruz	Moran	Tuberville
Daines	Paul	Wicker
Ernst	Portman	Young
Fischer	Risch	
Hagerty	Romney	

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

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. 39, Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Florida, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service for a term of four years.

Charles E. Schumer, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jon Tester, Richard Blumenthal, Michael F. Bennet, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Jeanne Shaheen, Debbie Stabenow, Thomas R. Carper, Margaret Wood Hassan, Elizabeth Warren, Patty Murray, Alex Padilla, Tina Smith, Tim Kaine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Florida, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service for a term of four years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 130 Ex.]

YEAS—57

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

NAYS—43

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Florida, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service for a term of four years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Young nomination, 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.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, today I am proud to join a number of my colleagues to highlight the importance of S. 1, the For the People Act.

The ballot box is the pulsating heart of our government of, by, and for the people.

President Lyndon B. Johnson said:

The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice.

Think about that—''the most powerful instrument ever devised for breaking down injustice.''

It is Robert Kennedy who observed that ''each citizen's right to vote is fundamental to all the other rights of citizenship.''

You know, the opportunity to cast a ballot is not just an opportunity. It is not simply a responsibility. But it is a right—the right—the right that embodies all it means to a republic in which the power flows from the people.

Our Nation, however imperfect in the beginning, has worked toward this vision of citizens through the ballot box, driving the vision of our Nation, for over 200 years, overcoming barrier after barrier. We overcame some of the barriers of race with the 14th and 15th Amendments. We overcame the barriers of gender with the 19th Amendment. We overcame barriers that had denied Native Americans the right to vote with the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. We overcame the barriers of Jim Crow with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But now, as we stand in this Chamber, the central right of each citizen's opportunity to participate in the election through the ballot box is again under attack.

Right now as we speak, there are 253 bills in 43 States assaulting the right to vote. These efforts are designed to make it harder for students to vote, for low-income Americans to vote, for Native Americans to vote, for seniors to vote, and most insidiously, for Black and Brown Americans to vote. And I say ''most insidiously'' because blocking access to the ballot has been a massive form of systemic racism throughout our history for Black Americans.

But all of us in this Chamber have taken an oath to the Constitution. All of us have a responsibility to defend the ballot box. It is our responsibility to knock down the barriers that others would put up to prevent citizens from having the opportunity to participate in our elections. That is exactly what S. 1, For the People, does in the face of the greatest attack on voting rights in this Nation since Jim Crow.

This legislation puts the power back where it belongs—in the hands of the people.

This bill said that if you believe in the vision of our democratic Republic, then you believe in voter empowerment, not voter intimidation, not voter obstruction, not voter suppression.

This bill says that the people should choose their politicians, not the other way around. Gerrymandering attacks the very notion of equal representation that is so important in the social contract of the citizens with their government. So this bill says we will have an independent commission in each State to draw the boundaries of the districts so that we put an end to partisan gerrymandering.

This bill says that government of, by, and for the people means you can't have a stadium sound system turned up to full volume, drowning out the voice of the people. And what is that stadium sound system? It is the dark money, hundreds of millions of dollars of unidentified funds racing and coursing through our elections across this country, doing attack ads, with citizens having no idea where that funding is coming from. That is simply wrong.

This bill says that public servants should work in the public interest, not to line their own pockets, not to serve simply the wealthy or the powerful or the privileged.

These points are straightforward. We have been fighting to improve and guarantee the vision of government of, by, and for the people over our entire history. Now, to protect our system of voting, the foundation of our Republic, we have to get this bill over the finish line. We have an extraordinary team working to make that happen, Senators with sturdy, clear ideals and excellent ideas and grit and determination coming together to save our Republic: Senator KLOBUCHAR, who will be speaking next—author of several of the key provisions of this bill, including bipartisan provisions—who tomorrow will be chairing the first-ever Senate hearing on this landmark legislation; Senator PADILLA, who knows exactly what it is like to be a secretary of state and has been an amazing champion for voter empowerment in his home State; Senator VAN HOLLEN, who led the EMPOWER Act and the Restoring Integrity to America's Elections Act; Senator WHITEHOUSE, who authored the DISCLOSE Act portion of the bill and is a tremendous leader on campaign finance reform.

Today, our Nation is at a crossroads. Are we going to be a nation for ''we the people,'' or are we going to be a nation for ''we the powerful''?

We must pass the For the People Act to save our democracy. As our leader said last week, ''Failure is not an option.'' So let's get it done, and let's ensure, as Abraham Lincoln declared, that ''government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.''

I yield to Senator KLOBUCHAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor today to join my colleague, Senator MERKLEY, and so many others in speaking in support of the critical democracy reforms in the For the People Act—legislation that I am honored to lead with Senator MERKLEY and Majority Leader SCHUMER, Representative SARBANES, in the House, which passed this bill very recently through their entire Chamber.

This bill will, in short, make it easier to vote, not harder to vote, as, sadly, some of our colleagues have proposed over the years. But it will make it easier to vote, end the dominance of big money in politics and ensure that public officials work for the public interest. And it includes provisions, as Senator MERKLEY noted, from 15 bills that I lead to strengthen our democracy.

I appreciate my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have contributed to the ideas in this bill. It represents the combined work of so many people in this Chamber who are dedicated to improving our democracy.

Nine bipartisan bills are part of the For the People Act—bills like the Honest Ads Act, which I originally introduced with Senator McCain, of the great State of Arizona, the Presiding Officer's home State, and now lead with Senator GRAHAM and Senator WARNER.

What does that bill do? Well, it improves disclosure requirements for online ads, disclosure requirements that aren't in law. It is not right. And that is why this is just one of the many provisions with bipartisan support, the election security reforms that so many of us worked on, including Senator LANKFORD and Senator BURR. Those are in this bill.

These are reforms that have broad support among the American people. According to a Pew Research Center poll, 65 percent of respondents said the option to vote early, in this bill, or absentee, in this bill, should be available to any voter. And a poll from the Campaign Legal Center found that 83 percent of likely voters support public disclosure of contributions to organizations involved in elections. Of course, they do. People want to know who is paying for these ads they see on TV. They want to know where the money is from, and then they can follow the money.

Many of the provisions in the bill have already been adopted across the country in red, blue, and purple States. And Republican and Democratic election officials and Governors have supported them.

As the chair of the Senate Rules Committee, the committee with jurisdiction over Federal elections and campaign finance law and the committee to which this bill has been referred, I believe we must get this done. Tomorrow, as noted by Senator MERKLEY, we will be holding a hearing on the bill. I am pleased that every single Democratic Member of this committee is a cosponsor of the bill. I intend to move quickly to a markup to send the bill to the Senate floor for a vote.

The For the People Act is critically important. It is important because it would improve our democracy by protecting voting rights, getting dark money out of our elections, and putting in place anti-corruption reforms. It is important because every one of the things that we want to get done, from rebuilding our economy to fixing our immigration system, to investing in infrastructure, to tackling the climate crisis, to reforming our criminal justice system, they all depend on a democracy that works for the people.

Last November, in the middle of an unprecedented pandemic, nearly 160 million Americans voted, more people than ever before in the history of America. Think about that—in the middle of a pandemic. And we know we saw the pictures on TV. We saw the people at the very beginning before we knew what safety protocols should be in place, when things were getting messed around—those people in Wisconsin in garbage bags, in garbage bags in the rain, standing in line to vote.

Why did so many people vote in the middle of a pandemic, both sides of the aisle—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—why did they vote? Well, they were interested in the election; we know that. But it was more than that. In part, they voted because they had more access to voting because of the changes that were made in the States. Vote-by-mail was available and easier for so many more people to do than ever before.

We think about those people who suddenly had new means to vote in States where they suddenly didn't have to get a notary public or two signatures or this or that just to exercise their right to vote. They voted, and they voted in droves.

Even though the overwhelming majority of Americans have made it clear they want to see policies that continue to make it easier to vote, sadly, there are those on the other side of the aisle who have been doubling down to find ways to make it harder to vote. As Senator MERKLEY noted, over 250 bills were introduced in States across the country, including my home State of Minnesota, that had the highest voter turnout once again in the country. People are trying to make it harder to vote, including in Arizona where they had such a record turnout, including in Georgia. Why? As Senator WARNOCK said so beautifully and succinctly in his maiden Senate floor speech just last week: ''Some people don't want some people to vote.'' Well, that is not how this country was founded. That is not what our Constitution says.

We cannot just sit back and let our democracy be undermined. As I said from the inaugural stage on that beautiful blue-sky day at the very place where you could still see the spray paint at the bottom of the columns and makeshift windows that we had in place after the January 6 attack:

> This is the day our democracy picks itself up, brushes off the dust, and does what America always does: goes forward as a nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

For decades, there have been those who have been trying to chip away at the fundamental right to vote. We can't just keep taking it. We have to ensure that right to vote.

What is this about? One, making it easier to vote. That is exactly what For the People does. It includes provisions that I have championed and so many others have, like automatic voting registration, ending purges of voting rolls, ending redistricting commissions, requiring all States to allow same-day voting registration, and voting by mail.

These are commonsense policies that were already in place in many States in the 2020 general election. Forty-five States didn't require an excuse to vote by mail. This will ensure that in every State, you don't need to make an excuse. Twenty-one States have same-day registration, including States like Idaho, Wyoming, and Iowa. Forty-three States have early voting. Just last month, Kentucky's Republican secretary of state praised a State bill that would make early in-person voting permanent.

Certainly, we need to ban purges of voting rolls. As my friend Stacey Abrams said: If you don't go to a meeting every year, you don't lose your right to assemble under the Constitution. If you don't go to church or synagogue or mosque or temple, you don't lose your right to worship. So if you haven't voted for a few elections and you decide you want to vote because you care about a candidate or an issue, you should not lose your right to vote. But in too many places, that is not the case.

Twenty States already have automatic voter registration laws, including West Virginia, Alaska, and Georgia. This bill simply says they all should.

The second major reform we need is to get the big money out of politics. The For the People Act helps bring transparency to campaign spending so that voters are informed about who is funding candidates and who is paying for the ads.

It also tightens regulations on super PACs and restructures the Federal Election Commission to make it more

effective and less prone to partisan gridlock.

The third major reform in the For the People Act is restoring trust in our government. Democracy isn't just about what happens on election day; it is also about making sure that our elected officials are accountable once they take office.

The For the People Act ensures that Members of Congress and other Federal officials are truly working for the people. It expands conflict of interest laws, prohibits Members of Congress from serving on the boards of for-profit entities, and codifies ethics rules for the executive branch.

Most importantly, why does the highest Court in the land not have any ethic rules for the Supreme Court when every other Federal court in the Nation does? This bill answers that question.

Three simple ideas: Making voting easier, getting big money out of politics, and strengthening ethics rules.

The year 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, and a century after that ratification, we elected our first African American, first Asian American, and first woman Vice President in Vice President KAMALA HARRIS. As we celebrate these firsts, we are reminded that throughout our country's history, the right to vote has been hard-fought and hard-won.

As Congressman John Lewis, whom we sadly lost, once said:

> Your vote is precious, almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have to create a more perfect union.

When we reflect on the sacrifices and strides that have been made for the right to vote, one thing is very clear: The fight isn't over. The best way we can honor the countless Americans who have risked and, in some cases, given their lives—given their lives to protect our freedoms overseas, given their lives to protect our democracy here at home—the best way is to make sure that democracy continues unfettered and that everyone has the right to vote because we know, as Senator WARNOCK reminded us, that there are some people who are trying to make it hard for some people to vote. That is not how America works.

The For the People Act is all about making sure America works for everyone.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I see we are joined by two Senators who are going to be speaking, Senator PADILLA—three Senators—from California, as well as Senator WHITEHOUSE from Rhode Island and Senator VAN HOLLEN from Maryland.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to speak today on the For the People Act.

But before I do, I want to take a moment to honor the lives of those tragically lost in Colorado yesterday by yet another senseless mass shooting in our country. My heart breaks for their families, but the sobering and harsh reality is that in many parts of the United States, it is easier to buy a gun than it is to cast a ballot. In 25 States, voters must be registered and have specific forms of identification in order to cast a ballot, but those same States allow people to buy rifles without permits and require no bond checks for some sales. Think about that. It seems to me that we have our priorities entirely backward when it comes to making it easier to buy a weapon than we do to cast a ballot.

As we work to rebuild our economy for all people, we must acknowledge that to build an inclusive economy, we need an inclusive democracy. Just as the pandemic has put a spotlight on the inequities in our economy and our healthcare systems, so, too, has the pandemic put a spotlight on the inequities in access to the ballot. The 2020 election, held in the midst of the COVID–19 pandemic, demonstrated once again that we have made it easier for some citizens to vote than others. This is not an accident.

Depending on where a voter lives, they may or may not have the ability to register to vote online; they may or may not be able to participate in same-day registration; they may or may not be able to vote early or vote by mail. All this varies State by State. This patchwork has a direct and dramatic effect on whose voices are heard in our democracy, and, too often, it is working-class communities, communities of color, young people whose voices are silenced.

For voters whose work schedule does not allow them to wait in line to vote, the denial of vote-by-mail or early voting denies the opportunity to vote altogether.

For voters who do not have that specified form of State identification, even though they are American citizens of voting age and otherwise eligible to vote, lack of an ID can mean that they will not be given a ballot, even if they can verify their identity some other way.

For voters who want to vote by mail and may have access to some form of vote-by-mail, unreasonable ballot receipt deadlines, a scarcity of ballot return locations, and/or slow or unreliable Postal Service delivery can mean that their ballots won't be counted.

For young voters and for those who move frequently, antiquated registration systems and unreasonably early registration deadlines can leave them unable to register to vote or to update their registration record in time to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

All of these voting restrictions have a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Just like the poll taxes and literacy tests of the Jim Crow era, the truth is plain for all to see: Voter suppression laws are rooted in White supremacy.

The For the People Act presents an opportunity for us to establish a baseline of voting rights and ballot access for all voters. I know that the For the People Act will improve voting rights in America because, as California's secretary of state, I helped adopt and implement these best practices. These include automatic and same-day voter registration; online voter registration; expanded access to vote-by-mail; extended early voting periods—in-person early voting periods; and widespread, convenient access to secure, official ballot drop-off locations. Together, these policies help to ensure equitable access to the ballot and, in so doing, strengthen our democracy.

While California has led the way in making our elections more accessible to all voters, the policies we have implemented are not unique to our State. States like Maine and Alaska have also adopted automatic voter registration policies. States like Utah, Iowa, Idaho, and Wyoming also permit same-day voter registration. States like Florida and Ohio allow no-excuse vote-by-mail and provide voters with early voting options as well.

The election reforms within the For the People Act are not partisan. These reforms are not Democrat or Republican. They are common sense and are proven to work. All voters deserve equal voting rights and equal access to the ballot.

Colleagues, we are a stronger democracy and a better nation when we hear all voices from all corners of our Nation and when those voices are not just heard but counted. By passing the For the People Act, we can ensure that more voices are heard and more voices are, indeed, counted.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, first, I thank my colleagues who have gathered here on the floor to help pass and urge the passage of this very important piece of legislation, the For the People Act.

Our Constitution begins with three words that ring in the minds of each and every American, ''We the People.''

Seventy-six years after those words were written, President Lincoln resolved, in 1863, that those who had lost their lives on the battlefield at Gettysburg ''shall not have died in vain and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the Earth.''

One hundred two years after Gettysburg, our beloved former colleague, Congressman John Lewis—then a civil rights activist and leader—together with nonviolent marchers, was beaten bloody by Alabama State Troopers in 1965 as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge while demanding voting rights. Later that year in 1965, Congress acted and did pass the Voting Rights Act, and it was reauthorized regularly thereafter, most recently in 2006 by a vote of 90 to 0 here in the U.S. Senate

and 390 to 33 in the House, where I served at that time.

Then, in 2013, in the case of Shelby County v. Holder, the Supreme Court, in a notorious 5-to-4 decision, stripped away a key enforcement provision from the Voting Rights Act: the requirement that the Department of Justice approve changes to voting rights laws in States that had histories of discriminating against African-American voters and others in their past laws.

Almost immediately, like within 24 hours, you saw States that had been covered by that act begin to move to erect barriers to the ballot box, making it more difficult for people of color to vote. Indeed, in the case of the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP v. McCrory, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit said that the voting provisions passed by the North Carolina legislature, in the aftermath of the rollback of the Voting Rights Act, were designed to ''target African-Americans with almost surgical precision.''

Now we come to 2021. On January 6, we witnessed a violent mob, incited by the former President of the United States, attack this Capitol in order to overturn the results of a democratic election. The mob came because of the big lie—the big lie told by Donald Trump and fueled by some of his allies here on Capitol Hill—that he had been cheated out of an election victory. It is a pernicious and insidious lie that has caused Republican State legislatures across the country to try to build up barriers to voting: limiting vote-by-mail, reducing the number of days for early voting, even making it illegal in Georgia for anyone to provide water to someone who is waiting in line to vote—a real provision that has already passed the Georgia House and that is on its way to the Senate. These are all measures designed to make it harder for American citizens to exercise their right to vote.

We needed the For the People Act before January 6, but we need it more than ever now to establish some minimum national standards to ensure that every American's right to vote is secure.

In addition to the barriers being erected around the country to voting, our democracy faces another real and present danger: the flood of cash from Big Money and special interests—invading the airwaves and invading the internet—that seeks to drown out the voices of everyday Americans.

In 2010, in another notorious 5-to-4 Supreme Court decision, Citizens United, the Court opened the floodgates to unlimited amounts of corporate special interest money flowing into our elections. Over $14 billion was spent in the 2020 election cycle, much of it secret. In fact, one of the consequences of that decision, coupled with already existing laws, was that more money flowed secretly into our elections—the dark money, the dark money trying to hijack our democracy for the highest bidder.

As my colleagues have said, the American people have a right to know who is spending all of this money to try to influence their votes. That is why, back in 2010, I authored and the House passed the DISCLOSE Act—to require that the information be available to voters and the American people. In fact, had that House bill become law, we wouldn't have secret money today. While it was overwhelmingly popular in the country and supported by an overwhelming majority of Senators at the time, because of fate and a quirk of history in the death of Ted Kennedy, the Senate was not able to secure the 60 votes necessary to overcome a filibuster. Ted Kennedy passed away, and his replacement was a Republican. This Senate voted with 59 votes—a big majority—to pass the DISCLOSE Act, but because of the filibuster rule, it couldn't get over that hurdle.

The DISCLOSE Act is part of S. 1. Senator WHITEHOUSE and all of the Senators here have been part of that effort. It is part of S. 1.

We cannot afford to repeat the history of 2010. We cannot allow a minority of Senators who represent a minority of the public in this country and the people of this country to stop the For the People Act. We have a duty to every patriotic American who has worked hard—and the many who have spilled blood—for the right to vote. We have a duty to pass the For the People Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I pick up where Senator VAN HOLLEN left off because, when he was fighting for the DISCLOSE Act in the House, I was the manager of that bill on the floor here in the Senate.

It would do something very simple. If you are spending more than $10,000 in an election, we ought to know who you are. That is pretty easy. It is not going to rope in lots of small donors. It will get the big interests who are out there trying to control our democracy and hide who they are while they are doing it.

As Senator VAN HOLLEN said, this started with Citizens United—a wretched decision that unleashed unlimited money into our politics, but it said that the unlimited money was going to be transparent. That was its predicate: It is going to be transparent. You won't have corruption because everybody will be able to see. The ad will say: We are ExxonMobil, and we paid for this message.

Well, of course, the dark money forces, in having achieved that victory at the Supreme Court, went right out and violated that predicate—right out. They have built an entire architecture of deception around their campaign finances since then. It is the 501(c) corporations that don't have to report their donors. It is the donor-advised trusts that are money identity laundering devices for big donors. It is even as simple as phoney-baloney shell corporations. Sometimes they are stacked up, and the money goes to the phoney-baloney shell corporation. The shell corporation launders it through DonorsTrust, and DonorsTrust gives it to the 501(c), and it dumps it into the super PAC. They all know it is going on. This is orchestrated stuff.

So we have a real battle on our hands. We passed the billion-dollar-in-dark-money threshold a long time ago. When people are spending $1 billion in dark money to influence what goes on in this country, you can bet they are winning. You can bet they are winning. They wouldn't keep spending money by the billions if they were not winning. So we have to put a stop to this.

The American people are with us. The polling is unbelievable. It is in the nineties. Whether you are a Bernie Bro or a tea partier, you hate the idea that there is big dark money in politics calling the tune for Congress to dance to, but that is the fact. Look at the outcomes.

Look at climate change. There is no dispute about the science. We all know what needs to be done, but one big special interest, the fossil fuel industry, has shut down one political party. My strong bet is, if you looked at all of the dark money funding the Republican Party in Congress, you would find that it is 80 percent the fossil fuel industry. They have become the political wing of the fossil fuel industry, and they specialize in fake climate denial for that reason, and it is going to cost us. The lost decade on climate is going to cost us.

So dark money is not just a plague to the integrity of American democracy; it is a plague that harms our ability to deal with the other problems that are coming our way—wherever there is a big special interest that can play the game of hiding the money and moving it around.

Let me say one last thing.

Dark money? Not really. It is not dark to the candidate who is the beneficiary. When a big dark money donor sets up a shell corporation and gives it a couple of million dollars and then has that shell corporation launder the money through DonorsTrust and then has that money go into a super PAC to be spent for a particular candidate or against his opponent, do you think they don't find a way to let the candidate know what they did and why? The only people who are not in on the joke are the American people, and we have got to put an end to this.

Democracy behind masks isn't democracy at all. Let's get rid of this stuff. The American public will be with us. It will provide health and hygiene to our democracy again, and we will start to see results for the American people in a way that the dark money has prevented.

I thank Senator MERKLEY for leading us in this enterprise. This is a public service. This is why we came here. This

is the democracy that needs defending, and, by God, we are going to defend it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am happy to join in this block of time in which Members are coming forward to talk about the For the People Act.

I thank Senator MERKLEY for being our leader and inspiration in many aspects of this and Chair AMY KLOBUCHAR from the Rules Committee, who will have the honor of bringing this matter before our committee for debate and discussion.

Tomorrow is going to mark 11 weeks since we sat in this Chamber late into the night and debated the certification of the electoral college vote of the November 3 election. It was an experience none of us will ever forget.

Hours before we were told to rush out of this Chamber as quickly as possible because the insurrectionist mob was just a few feet away, we had been told they were going to keep this place safe for us. We were to sit at our chairs and gather our staffs along the walls. You will be safe. You will be just fine. Ten minutes later, they said: Run as fast as you can. It was an experience that none of us ever expected in the U.S. Capitol Building and one we will certainly never forget.

We had been rushed out of the Chamber as this mob attacked the Capitol in an effort to stop us from fulfilling our constitutional duty in recognizing Joe Biden as the President of the United States. If that were in a novel 20 years ago, I would have said: It is preposterous. It will never happen in America.

But I saw it. I lived it. Many of us did.

This mob had been fueled by weeks of lies, disinformation, and baseless allegations of fraudulent votes and a stolen election.

I couldn't get over that, yesterday, a lawyer named Sidney Powell, who was the big defender of the big lie, said: Do you mean people actually believed me? How could they possibly believe me?

Well, that is how far it has come. The preposterous statements being made by the pro-Trump forces about stealing the election now are so laughable that people are trying to escape legal liability by saying: Surely, you didn't take that seriously.

Well, an awful lot of people did across America, and many of them marched on this Capitol.

Despite this horrific attack on the Capitol and our democracy, some of our colleagues, to amplify these wild claims, they continue to object to the electoral vote count and claim that Congress needed to do more to assure voters that the 2020 election was legitimate.

A few of those colleagues even proposed a sham Commission to audit the election. They were relying on an 1876 precedent that was responsible for the end of Reconstruction and the beginning of the Jim Crow era, a precedent that established rank discrimination against African Americans for decades and invited brutal voter suppression efforts that sadly, amazingly, we are still fighting today.

Here is the reality: If those colleagues were serious about protecting democracy, they would be standing on the floor with us right now. They would have stayed in their seats when the electoral college vote was certified. They wouldn't have spent weeks challenging and questioning the legitimate results of an election that their chosen candidate actually lost, and they would be on the floor with us, as I said, in support of the For the People Act.

Anyone who truly believes that we need to strengthen the integrity of our elections and democratic process should be cosponsoring this bill.

The For the People Act ensures that all eligible Americans can cast a ballot without burdensome barriers that suppress the vote.

In 1890, there was established something called the Mississippi Plan. The Mississippi Plan was State legislation carefully crafted to make certain that African Americans didn't have the right to vote.

Other States looked at it carefully and said: This is the answer. Literacy tests, poll taxes, every obstacle they could dream of became part of the Mississippi Plan, with the express purpose of disenfranchising African Americans recently emancipated.

That plan, unfortunately, lived out its days for decades and performed as expected, suppressing the vote. Again, we face this kind of challenge.

The bill that we are talking about here invests in election infrastructure and provides State and local officials with the resources they need for safe and secure elections.

The bill reforms a broken campaign finance system that elevates the voices of wealthy donors today and special interests, and it strengthens and enhances ethics and transparency requirements.

I am proud to be here today because this bill also includes the Fair Elections Now Act. I have introduced this every year since 2007. And occasionally, just occasionally, I would get a Republican cosponsor.

The idea behind it is simple: public financing of campaigns, a voluntary, small-donor public financing system for Senate candidates who agree to raise small-dollar contributions, not big money.

The fair elections public financing system would elevate the views and interests of a diverse spectrum of Americans rather than just the wealthy.

I am lucky to have a House sponsor, JOHN SARBANES. His father and I served in the Senate together, and he really has done a remarkable job promoting the bill in the House.

We would pay for these campaigns, public financing, without spending a dime of taxpayers' dollars. It would be financed with assessments on wealthy bad actors and industry lawbreakers.

Voluntary, small-donor public financing of congressional campaigns would mean more candidates with more ideas and a Congress that works for more than just the top 1 percent in America.

I thank Senator MERKLEY for, once again, including this act in the bill, and, again, I thank Congressman SARBANES for his leadership in the House.

The Fair Elections Now Act is just one of the many critical reforms in this bill that will empower voters and combat corruption.

After months of the former President and his allies undermining faith in our electoral system with their unjustified claims, we must take immediate, concrete steps to repair our battered democracy.

I urge all my colleagues to join in this mission and support the For the People Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues who have come to the floor to speak so powerfully to the essential task of defending the ballot box, of stripping dark money out of our elections, of honoring the vision of equal representation by ending the practice of gerrymandering across this country.

Senator KLOBUCHAR, who chairs the Rules Committee and who will host and direct the committee hearing, the first ever for S. 1, For the People Act, made a powerful representation of how vote-by-mail gives every citizen a full opportunity to participate in elections without the manipulations that can occur on election day, when different people who do not want you to have access to a ballot can put all kinds of hurdles and obstacles in your way.

Senator VAN HOLLEN, who authored the DISCLOSE Act in the House, reminded us of John Lewis and his fellow protestors being beaten bloody on the Edmund Pettus Bridge to secure the right to vote, as so many other Americans have fought for the right to vote since our founding.

Senator PADILLA, who implemented so many reforms in California as Secretary of State, gave us a sense that this can be done anywhere in the country in time for next year's elections.

Senator WHITEHOUSE, who has championed the DISCLOSE Act in the Senate, noted that there is a scheme of 501(c)(3) corporations and donor advice trusts and phony-baloney shell corporations, as he put it, all working to corrupt our campaigns and that the amount of money that has been used to secure power to the powerful by manipulating the elections now exceeds $1 billion.

And Senator DURBIN, who has championed year after year after year the Fair Elections Now Act, presenting a powerful remedy for the role of Big Money donations in our campaigns through public financing—public financing, not with government funds

but with funds that come from corporate malfeasance.

So I appreciate so much these colleagues who have been all involved in so many different ways in this battle to save our Republic.

There is always a powerful force seeking to manipulate the election process to their favor, and it is one of many tools that that powerful group brings to bear. There are the dozens of lawyers who work night and day, being paid hundreds of dollars an hour, to secure power for the powerful. There are the public media campaigns that take tens of millions of dollars to frame issues to try to persuade Americans of their particular viewpoint or to drive a wedge between different groups of Americans. There is that dark money. There are those efforts in State legislatures to block the vote.

I want to just close by reminding us all that the Constitution clearly states that elections for Senators and House Members, this body—Congress—has the ability to pass laws to make sure those elections are fair across this country because every American of any State has a clear stake in the legitimacy of the elections in other States because it is the collective voice here that makes decisions. So this is not only a responsibility provided to us, it is a responsibility that we must fulfill to defend the ballot box, to end gerrymandering violating equal representation, and clear that dark money, polluting and corrupting our campaigns, out of the system forevermore.

Let's get this essential bill, this essential defense of the pulsating heart of our democracy, the ballot box—let's get this bill passed.

I yield the floor.

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

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am an unabashed optimist. I am a glass-half-full not a glass-half-empty kind of guy, and I tell my staff that I am like the little boy who goes down on Christmas morning and looks under the Christmas tree and finds a pile of manure and wonders where my pony is. That is how much of an optimist I am.

So I am optimistic about our progress made in the war against COVID–19 after this long year that we have all endured. So far, a quarter of Americans over the age of 18 have received at least one dose of the vaccine. More than two-thirds of people over 65 have gotten their first shot. In my State, they have recently said everybody 50 and up can get a shot. Now, very soon, any adult person over the age of 16 will be eligible to get the vaccine. That translates into good news across the board. New cases, deaths, and hospitalizations are all declining. Over the last week, the 7-day positivity rate in Texas dropped to the lowest point since last May.

While we continue to follow the public health guidelines to slow the spread of the virus, it is clear we are moving closer and closer to an eventual end of this pandemic, and there are a million reasons to be optimistic.

Despite the narrative pushed by some, all of this hope isn't the result of just the last couple of months, and it certainly is not the product of the partisan bill that was passed just 2 weeks ago. These efforts have been underway for more than a year now, and we owe a great deal of credit to Operation Warp Speed, the initiative set up by the Trump administration to accelerate the development of vaccines, treatments, and therapeutics.

Last summer, when President Trump speculated that we would have an effective vaccine by the end of the year, he received some serious blowback. One media outlet published a fact check saying it would require nothing short of a ''medical miracle.'' Well, thanks to the leadership of the previous administration, thanks to the great scientists, pharmaceutical companies, and others, that so-called miracle has come true not just once but twice. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines received emergency authorization last year, and Johnson & Johnson's vaccine was authorized last month.

Rather than setting ambitious goals to bring an end to the pandemic, the Biden administration has embraced a different approach. An Associated Press headline in January evaluated the situation pretty well when it said that Biden's early approach is to ''underpromise'' and ''overdeliver.''

Well, in December, President-Elect Biden announced his administration's vaccine goal as 100 million shots in the first hundred days. That announcement came about a week before the first doses of the vaccine were distributed, before we had a real-world test of the processes that had been in the planning stages for months. But it quickly became obvious that we were on a pace to meet that goal before President Biden even took the oath of office on January 20. The week of the inauguration, we averaged 1 million shots a day. On January 20, 1.5 million Americans received the vaccine. One physician and public health expert described the President's goal as a ''disappointingly low bar.'' To no one's surprise, the administration met that goal well ahead of the deadline.

Last week, the President claimed a victory for hitting 100 million vaccines in 58 days. Well, so did he follow up with a new goal, a truly ambitious one that would get us shots in arms even faster? Did he set up a new benchmark to encourage States to make their vaccination efforts more efficient and effective? Well, not yet. Maybe he will. Maybe he will announce a new goal this week. For the sake of our country, I hope he sets the bar high.

Given the fact that we are now vaccinating about 2.5 million Americans per day—a staggering number, really—it is time for the administration to take a truly bold step. The goal here isn't to set a target you are almost certain to meet. After all, you didn't see the previous administration set a target of a successful vaccine by the summer of 2021, which is what many experts believed at the time.

Unfortunately, the underpromise, overdeliver strategy doesn't end with vaccinations. Just look at the President's latest comments about small outdoor gatherings. In the same speech where he tried to take a victory lap for the ''disappointingly low bar'' set for vaccinations, he made a rather confusing promise to the American people.

He said:

> If we keep our guard up, stick together, and stick with the science, we can look forward to a Fourth of July that feels a little bit more normal with small groups able to gather for cookouts in backyards.

Well, that was a little bit of a head-scratcher, when President Biden said that he anticipated that everybody who wanted the vaccine could get it by May, and now he is talking about having outdoor gatherings on the Fourth of July.

I can tell you, these small outdoor gatherings have been a part of many Texans' routines for almost all year now. Families and friends have spent time in driveways, backyards, open-air spaces, parks. They follow the public health guidelines to keep themselves and their loved ones safe while managing some sense of normalcy.

The Centers for Disease Control has said it is safe for fully vaccinated individuals to gather not just outdoors but indoors as well. But based on the President's remarks last week, he is trying to frame these gatherings as a reward if things go well over the next few months. If you do everything right, then you might be able to hang out with your family in the backyard in 3 months. Well, the administration's own Centers for Disease Control has already told us that these gatherings are safe. Your current public health guidelines can't also double as a goal for 3½ months from now.

Then there is another big inconsistency between what the experts are telling us and what the administration is doing, and that has to do with reopening schools. Some children have now hit the anniversary mark of virtual learning. Studies have shown consistently that this is having a huge negative impact on America's kids academically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

We need our schools to reopen, and, of course, we need that to happen safely, which they can. Back in December, then President-Elect Biden seemed to share that goal. He promised to safely reopen the majority of schools within his first hundred days in the White

House, another hundred-day goal. The experts tell us it is not only possible, but it has already been done across the country.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report in January that said:

> There has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission.

In short, the schools are not a breeding ground for COVID–19, and as long as proper precautions are taken, schools can reopen safely. In fact, it has already happened across most of Texas. Nearly two-thirds of Texas schools are fully in-person, and just 3 percent of districts are still fully remote. Two-thirds are fully reopened, and 3 percent are fully remote.

Unfortunately, in this case, the science is at odds with a key supporter of our Democratic colleagues, and that is the teachers unions. For months, teachers unions have fought a safe return to in-person instruction even though the experts and real-world evidence tell us that it is safe. It has gone so far that they have now gotten into some pretty sticky situations.

A leaked post from a private Facebook group for the Los Angeles teachers union warned teachers not to post pictures of their spring break photos because it makes it difficult to argue that it is unsafe to return to school. Well, it is tough to tell parents that it is not safe for their kids to go to school and then turn around and tell teachers it is fine to go on vacation; just don't post pictures. Trusting science and listening to the experts means doing so all the time, not just when it is convenient or politically expedient.

We are seeing progress every day in our fight against COVID–19. That is the light at the end of the tunnel that is getting bigger and brighter, and the question is not if we get there but when. How quickly can we get more vaccines into arms? When will our children—all our children—return safely to the classroom? How long until families can hug one another without fear of spreading the virus to someone they love?

We all know this is a community effort. It is a team effort. It is a personal responsibility effort. Each of us has a role to play in stopping the spread of the virus. But leadership matters too. The goals and benchmarks set by the administration will determine how quickly all of these things can happen. Now is not the time to walk back goals, set low bars, or bow to unions and political supporters. The administration needs to set clear metrics and targets for how we reopen and find our new normal, and these goals should be based on the science and the advice of the experts—nothing less.

So we are getting close to safely crossing the finish line, and we shouldn't let politics or any other consideration slow us down.

I yield the floor.

I would 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.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 928

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, in a moment, I am going to propound a unanimous consent request. But before I do so, I want to make some brief observations.

Earlier this month, Democrats passed their extreme partisan reconciliation bill—a bill that President Biden signed into law. When the Senate was considering the bill, I introduced an amendment to ensure that illegal aliens would not receive the $1,400 taxpayer payments provided in the bill. Every single Democrat in this body voted against that amendment. It failed by a single vote. If even one Senate Democrat had voted for that amendment, it would have passed.

At the time, Senator DURBIN incorrectly told this Chamber that no illegal aliens would receive stimulus checks under this bill. It was clear then, and it is even more clear now, that that statement was very much in error, as even Senator DURBIN has admitted.

Last Thursday, I gave my Democratic colleagues a chance for a do-over, once it became clear that there was a very substantial number of illegal aliens who would be receiving these checks. Unfortunately, the Democrats objected again and put themselves on record that they are just fine with millions of illegal immigrants getting taxpayer stimulus checks.

There has been some debate as to the exact number, but, just this week, the Center for Immigration Studies released an economic report that catalogued that we are indeed talking about millions of illegal immigrants who are receiving these checks.

At the same time we were debating this partisan reconciliation bill, the Senate considered another amendment, which I had introduced and Senator CASSIDY had introduced, to prevent the payments from going to criminals currently incarcerated in prison. Again, unfortunately and astonishingly, every single Democrat in this Chamber voted against it. It failed by a single vote. If even one Democrat had demonstrated the common sense to say violent criminals who are currently in prison right now, today, shouldn't be getting $1,400 taxpayer stimulus checks, that amendment would have passed. But every Democrat lined up in a party-line partisan vote to say no.

Today, I am going to give Democrats another chance at a do-over to recognize that that extreme position is a position, frankly, none of us could go home and explain to our constituents without being laughed at, even in the bluest of States. And I am going to give an opportunity in this instance for Democrats to vote on stopping the funds going to criminals currently incarcerated and sending those funds instead to the Crime Victims Fund, a program that is run by the Department of Justice to compensate victims of crime.

So this is a choice the Democrats have: Do you want $1,400 checks going to criminals in prison, or do you want instead to direct those funds to the victims of crime that have suffered at the hands of those criminals?

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 928, introduced earlier today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, just two quick points. First, this is not really about prisoners. This is about disrupting payments to families all across the country who need the money to make rent and pay for groceries.

Here is why. The IRS administers the tax system for millions and millions of Americans. The Cruz amendment has the practical effect of keeping these folks who are hurting from getting that check that they are going to use to pay for essentials. That is because their check would be on hold while the IRS sets up the system envisioned by this amendment.

Now, I guess that is what my colleague from Texas wants. After all, he opposed the bill. He opposed these payments from the get-go. So if he passes this amendment, he gets what he wants, but for all those folks who are hurting, their checks are on hold.

The last point I want to make is that it wasn't always this way for Republicans and our colleague from Texas. Republicans were for these payments before they were against them. They voted for two rounds of relief checks going out to all the people who are being discussed here when they controlled the White House and the Senate.

Senator CRUZ voted for the CARES Act. It passed unanimously. There were 44 Republicans for the December relief bill, with no exception like the Senator from Texas wants.

Donald Trump was so happy with the checks going to prisoners that he put his name on them. The only difference between the CARES Act relief checks that Republicans unanimously supported and America Rescue Plan relief checks is the party in the White House.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the Senator from Oregon, I guess, demonstrates the principle that hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue, because the Senator from Oregon suggests that somehow payments to people who are not criminals will be delayed if we don't pay criminals in prison. That claim, on the face of it, is absurd.

The Federal prisons are administered by the Bureau of Prisons. Government may not be good at everything, but I feel quite confident that the Federal Government can produce a list of currently incarcerated prisoners. I know the States can.

The IRS, likewise, is perfectly capable of recognizing whether it is mailing checks to prisoners in prison. This is not whether you have ever been convicted of a crime. It is, Are you sending the checks to Sing Sing? If so, don't send it.

The claim that somehow Joe Six-Pack at home is not getting his check because we don't want to send checks to prisoners is demonstrably untrue.

The Senator from Oregon also claims Republicans oppose stimulus checks, when he knows that is simply not the case. As he noted, this body overwhelmingly passed bipartisan COVID relief five times last year. It is only when Senate Democrats took the majority that bipartisan legislation ended because the Democrats decided to push a hard partisan bill instead.

A clean bill providing relief checks would have passed with an overwhelming bipartisan majority in this body, and the Senator from Oregon knows that.

We have now discovered, though, that given a straight-up choice between sending checks to criminals in prison versus sending checks to the victims of crime, Senate Democrats stand with the criminals.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 929

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I am going to suggest an even narrower situation. Perhaps we can't agree on victims of crime. How about murderers?

We just had a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on gun violence. We saw a horrific mass murder in Colorado. Can't we agree that murderers shouldn't get checks—$1,400 stimulus checks—from the taxpayers? Let's take the money going to murderers and put it in the crime victims task force fund instead.

And so, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 929, introduced earlier today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. WYDEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, there isn't information about this crime or these crimes at the Federal, State, and local levels. So, again, we are back in exactly the same place.

The Senator from Texas wants to hold up the checks to millions and millions of people in spite of the fact that he voted—he voted earlier—for a system that got the checks to everybody in a timely way. And when you don't have the information about the specific crimes at the Federal, State, and local levels, it becomes impossible to carry out what the Senator from Texas seeks to do. And the net effect is, again, that millions and millions of Americans aren't getting the funds that they need to pay for essentials, rent and groceries.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, you know, it could be hard in these partisan days to know what the truth is. Both sides yell at each other. They insult each other. It is hard to know who is telling the truth.

I ask the folks at home who are listening to this debate to exercise a little bit of common sense. The Senator from Oregon just told you the Federal Government has no idea who are murderers currently in prison. I want to suggest that doesn't make any sense.

I feel quite confident the Department of Justice could produce a list of currently incarcerated murderers in Federal prisons within 24 hours. I am absolutely certain the State of Texas could produce that list. I am confident the State of Connecticut could produce the list of the murderers currently in Connecticut prisons. I am even confident the State of Oregon could produce a list of the murderers convicted of homicide currently incarcerated in the State of Oregon.

The claim that we don't know who the murderers are who are in our prisons serving time for murder—it doesn't pass the laugh test.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 930

Mr. President, so let's see if we could agree in a different area—rapists, those who committed sexual assault.

Again, these are public records and the Department of Justice and every State criminal justice authority have a list of all the rapists. How about let's not send $1,400 checks to rapists? Take the money and give it to the Crime Victims Fund so it can go to victims of rape.

Here is a choice for Democrats: Do you want to send money to the rapists or the victims of sexual assault? This ought to be a hundred-or-nothing choice.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 930, introduced earlier today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to read, specifically, what the IRS has told us, because I gather my colleague would like to just continue this for some time. But here is what the IRS says:

> In the information the IRS receives from the Bureau of Prisons and State prison systems, we do not get the crime for which the person is incarcerated.

So we can have a host more of these amendments, if my colleague wants to do it. But I get why he is so anxious to have his amendment passed—because he was always for keeping people from getting checks, and his amendment, if passed, would put those checks on hold. So that is why I have objected, and we will put this into the record as well.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, once again, the Senator from Oregon has said something that is demonstrably false and that he knows is false, which is that he has suggested that I opposed sending stimulus checks to the American citizens, to law-abiding citizens. I not only didn't oppose it, I voted for it. Republicans supported it. He knows that. That is a red herring.

He just read a statement from the IRS Agency saying they get a list of prisoners from the Bureau of Prisons, and he said: But we don't know the crime.

The first unanimous consent request I put before this body is, everyone on that list in the Bureau of Prisons, don't send them a check. That doesn't delay your check. If you are not looking at bars, if you are not in a jail cell that is 5 feet by 10 feet, this doesn't affect you. This only affects criminals currently in prison.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 931

Mr. President, let's try one more time. The Democrats have objected to not sending checks to criminals in prison. The Democrats have objected to not sending checks to murderers in prison. The Democrats have objected to not sending checks to rapists in prison.

Let's try a group that I think may be the lowest of the low, which is child molesters. I spent a lot of years in law enforcement, and I think there is no more horrific offense than those who commit crimes of violence and sexual assault against kids. When I was solicitor general of Texas, the cases where people sexually abused kids I thought should be in Dante's Ninth Circle of Hell.

So here is a chance for some bipartisan agreement. Can't we all agree that the Federal Government shouldn't send $1,400 checks to the child molesters in prison right now for molesting

kids? And before the Senator from Oregon says, ''Who knows who the child molesters are,'' well, the Department of Justice and every State department of justice knows who the child molesters are in their prisons.

Let's take the money that the Democrats want to send to child molesters, and let's take it from the child molesters and give it to the victims of crimes, the kids who have been molested. This is as simple a legislative choice as I can imagine.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 931, introduced earlier today. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, once again, our colleague from Texas is offering an idea that would disrupt the system in a way that would keep millions and millions of Americans who are hurting from getting help in a timely way. He has come back with, essentially, one version after another because he thinks that, somehow, this is the kind of sensational idea that will cause people to rally to his side.

I believe what he has been proposing—now, I gather, four times—is so disruptive, so unworkable that it is going to hurt the millions of people whom this Congress wanted to help, and that is what the Senator from Texas has sought to do from the very beginning. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, there is an old saying that you don't learn anything from the second kick of a mule.

The first time the Senator from Oregon said that I sought to disrupt stimulus payments, perhaps he did so because he didn't know my views on that topic, but he has since been corrected that I voted for stimulus payments to American citizens in the time of economic crisis and didn't oppose them. So he is now repeatedly stating falsehoods, knowing that they are false.

You know, all of us were there when Joe Biden gave his inauguration speech making a call to unity, making a call to healing, and there was a chance we could have done that. On COVID relief, you don't have to ask theoretically. Last year, when Republicans had control of the Senate, we passed five bipartisan COVID relief bills, coming together with overwhelming bipartisan majorities.

The Democrats decided, when they took control, they didn't want to do that. You want to know just how far out of touch and how radical today's Democratic Party is? We have seen the Democrats now say we will send taxpayer stimulus checks to millions of illegal immigrants. We have seen Democrats say we will send the taxpayer stimulus to criminals in prison. We have seen the Democrats say we will send the taxpayer stimulus checks to murderers in prison. We have seen them say we will send the checks to rapists in prison. And we now just saw them say we will send the checks to child molesters in prison.

It should be the essence of common sense to say don't give this money to violent criminals; give it to victims of crime instead. In a sane world, that would be a hundred-to-nothing proposition.

I challenge any one of you in the brightest of blue States: Go home and explain to your constituents that you refused to take the money from child molesters and give it to the victims of that crime. That is the position of every Democrat in this Chamber because every single Democratic Senator was the deciding vote rejecting the amendment on the floor.

It is unfortunate just how extreme the hard left is right now, but it is far out of touch with the American people, and it has long abandoned any semblance of common sense.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Here is what we are for. We are for making sure that needy people get help to pay for groceries and make rent rather than have one of our colleagues come out with something that is unworkable and disruptive and is going to keep those people from getting help. That is what this debate is all about, something that is unworkable.

I read the direct comment from the IRS with respect to not having the information or getting help to people who are hurting.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the Senator from Oregon suggested that the concern of the Democrats is to get taxpayer funds to needy people. People currently incarcerated are not needy. The Senator from Oregon said we need to help Americans struggling with rent. You know what? People currently incarcerated pay zero in rent. They don't have rent costs.

So the argument of the Democrats is: We don't know who the criminals are who are currently in jail. That does not comport with reality, and any fair-minded person watching this knows that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS V. HARVARD

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am sure you have been to Paris. The architect, as you undoubtedly know, who designed the Louvre's iconic glass pyramid was actually an American. He was an Asian American. His name was I.M. Pei. Mr. Pei emigrated from China to the United States in the 1930s.

By the time he passed at the age of 102, he had designed a number of famous buildings. He had done that all across the world, including on U.S. soil, including the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

America is proud of Mr. Pei. He is just one of millions of Asian Americans whose talents have helped America continue to be an exceptional nation, a nation made up of exceptional people who take advantage of all of the opportunities that these United States have to offer.

The contributions of individual Asian Americans have helped our country pioneer—and the Presiding Officer knows this—advances in architecture, in medicine, in art, and in technology. But, more than that, Asian Americans are our friends, and they are our neighbors.

The recent murder of Asian-American women in an evil assault in Atlanta was an assault not just on the Atlanta community but on the United States of America. President Biden has correctly denounced these attacks, and he is not alone.

I know the Presiding Officer can join me in this. I condemn these evil murders in the strongest possible terms. No one can justify—no one—the brutal theft of eight lives. Every community—every single one—across our country is grieving for the victims and is grieving for the families.

These victims were all made, they were each made, in God's image, and Americans know that. I also feel the same way about the shooting in Boulder. We all do.

America pioneered government that is based on inalienable rights that God gives each person. God has imbued every man and woman with dignity, and Americans answer that dignity with respect, respect for each individual and their right to make the most of the manifold opportunities our country offers.

Unfortunately, President Biden's rhetoric in defense of the Asian-American community is not altogether matched by respect for the right of Asian Americans to reap the reward of their talent and grit.

The Biden administration, thus far—it has time to correct its course—has shown and did show right out of the gate a determination to stick its head in the sand while some of America's top universities are actively discriminating against Asian Americans.

Last year, as the Presiding Officer knows, the Justice Department sued Yale University. The Justice Department contended that Yale rejected many qualified Asian-American applicants on the basis of race—not on the basis of qualification, on the basis of race.

The decision by the Justice Department came 2 years after several Asian-American organizations filed a complaint with the Department of Justice

and the Department of Education that accused Yale of what I just described: racial discrimination.

Yet only a few weeks—only a few weeks after President Biden set up shop in the Oval Office, the Department of Justice withdrew its own lawsuit based on racial discrimination against Yale University, and that is an actual fact. Watch what we say, not what we do.

Unfortunately, Harvard University also seems determined to discriminate against Asian-American applicants. In 2014, Students for Fair Admissions sued Harvard, claiming that the school was using an application system that intentionally reduces the number of Asian Americans through evaluations that are subjective and potentially racially biased.

You see, Harvard apparently believes it knows how to discriminate in the right way. It believed the same thing a number of years ago when it limited the number of Jewish people who could attend Harvard.

When Harvard considers an applicant, the school doesn't just look at their grades or their test scores or their academic awards. In fact, the admissions team at Harvard often looks past these objective indicators to a student's—this is what Harvard calls it—personal ratings, which is an unfair, ridiculous, and a subjective standard.

These personal ratings, as Harvard calls them, supposedly take into account character traits like humor, sensitivity, helpfulness, and courage. For years, Harvard has consistently granted lower personal ratings scores to Asian Americans than it has to other applicants, and that, too, is a fact.

The judge in the Students for Fair Admissions' lawsuit wrote the following:

> The data demonstrates—

These are the judge's words, not mine.

> The data demonstrates a statistically significant and negative relationship between Asian American identity and the personal rating assigned by Harvard admissions officers, holding constant any reasonable set of observable characteristics.

I didn't say that; the judge in the case did.

Now, I want to be fair. It may look smart or wise for Harvard to look for well-rounded applicants—I get that—until you realize and think about that these personal ratings are not just subjective; they are subversive. If you think about it, the scores, these scores—they are not objective like test scores or grades or extracurricular activities; these personal ratings are value judgments that can easily be tainted by racial bias. It is clear that the personal ratings minimize the accomplishments of Asian Americans in particular.

Just look at the numbers. Harvard's admission scores work like this: They use a scale of 1 to 6. One is the strongest possible rating. When it comes to personal ratings—remember, this is the subjective analysis of the personhood of the applicant by Harvard, not the test scores, not the grades, not the extracurricular activities. When it comes to personal ratings, only 17.6 percent of Asian-American applicants receive a score of 1 or 2—17.6 for Asian Americans. For African Americans, that number is 19.01 percent. For Hispanic Americans, it is 18.7 percent. In fact—and these are the numbers—Harvard gives Asian Americans the weakest personal ratings of any ethnic group, bar none.

Harvard admissions officials have reportedly handed out these scores without even interviewing all of the candidates in question—personal ratings without interviewing the applicants. This happens now despite the fact that Asian Americans have the highest grades and test scores. So on the objective criteria—test scores, grades—Asian Americans have the highest scores. What pulls them down? The personal ratings.

Harvard officials admitted in 2013 that if Harvard considered only academic achievement, then proportional Asian-American representation that year would have doubled. Think about that. If Harvard went on the objective criteria—extracurricular activities, grades, test scores—twice as many Asian Americans would have been admitted to the university. Why weren't they? Because of the personal ratings. They call it ''personal'' even though many of the applicants are never even interviewed.

The Department of Justice has historically supported the Students for Fair Admissions lawsuit. In 2018, the Justice Department filed a statement of interest in the case. Last year, the Justice Department filed an amicus brief in the case. A Federal judge ruled against the plaintiffs in 2019 in the case. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit upheld that decision last November—this despite the fact that the Federal district court judge in the case openly acknowledged that Harvard grants lower personal ratings scores to Asian-American applicants.

The fruits of Harvard's policy are pretty clear. You don't have to be Mensa material to figure this out. The Ivy League school has repeatedly rejected highly qualified Asian-American candidates because of their race.

But there is still hope for justice for our Asian-American students. The Supreme Court may well take up this case, and the White House could defend the cause of merit against Harvard's alleged racial discrimination.

So let me say this as clearly as I can. If President Biden—if the Biden team is committed to fighting racial discrimination against Asian Americans, if President Biden and his team want to lift up Asian Americans, as they say they do, it is not hard to see how countering racist policies within the privileged halls of Harvard—a school that receives Federal dollars—it is not hard to see how supporting that litigation must be part of President Biden's commitment. So today, with all the respect I can muster, I am calling on President Biden and his Justice Department to support the Asian-American students who have brought their case against Harvard.

Harvard is an extraordinary school. Nothing I say is meant to denigrate the quality of that great university. But being a pillar of higher education doesn't mean that Harvard is above the law. I.M. Pei attended Harvard in the 1940s. Who knows if they would accept him today because of his personal rating. You know, that is a shame, and it shouldn't stand.

President Biden should stand up for the rights of Asian Americans to be treated fairly by America's schools. His Justice Department should support this lawsuit.

To be is to act. All we are is the sum of our actions. Everything else is just conversation. Don't just talk about supporting Asian Americans; do it. Do it. Please don't be selective in the reality you choose to accept.

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

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

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining cloture motions filed during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 18, ripen at 11:30 a.m., tomorrow, Wednesday, March 24.

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

VOTE ON MURTHY NOMINATION

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I yield back all time and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all postcloture time has expired.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 131 Ex.]

YEAS—57

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

NAYS—43

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

The nomination was confirmed.

(Mr. PETERS assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR LIEUTENANT GENERAL NGUYEN CHI VINH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to one of Vietnam's highest ranking military officers, Senior Lieutenant General Nguyen Chi Vinh.

General Vinh, who has served as Vietnam's Deputy Minister of National Defense since 2009, has played an indispensable role in the reconciliation between Vietnam and the United States. After more than four decades of military service, he is finally nearing retirement from the Ministry of National Defense.

General Vinh was born in 1957. He studied at the Institute of Military Technology before embarking on his long and distinguished career in the Vietnamese People's Army. His father, General Nguyen Chi Thanh, came from a humble family and rose to become a decorated military officer and politician. Today, one of Hanoi's main thoroughfares bears his name.

As someone who lived through the Vietnam war era, I remember it a catastrophe for both countries. The more than 58,000 American soldiers and other servicemembers who died, whose names are etched in the granite Vietnam Veterans Memorial, are only part of the story. We remember their families and the many tens of thousands who returned home with severe disabilities.

In Vietnam, virtually no family was unscathed. Hundreds of thousands are still missing among the estimated 3 million Vietnamese who died. The majority were civilians, whose families suffered grievous losses and severe hardships as the fighting raged around them. Many of their stories remain untold.

In the decades since, memories of that time have faded and the world's attention has turned elsewhere. Yet during the past quarter century since the normalization of relations with Vietnam, there has been a sustained effort by both countries to address some of the worst legacies of the war. By doing so, we have built a new partnership and set an example for other former enemies.

It began in the late 1980s with the first use of the Leahy War Victims Fund by the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, to assist people with severe war-related disabilities. That was authorized by President George H. W. Bush, after he and I discussed the need to assist Vietnamese who had been injured during the war. It led to funding by the State Department to locate and destroy unexploded landmines and bombs, which litter the Vietnamese countryside and have maimed and killed tens of thousands of innocent people, including children, since the war ended.

Nearly 15 years ago, those war legacy programs expanded to address the cruel legacy of Agent Orange, and it is in this that General Vinh and I became acquainted.

Since then, General Vinh has been my principal Vietnamese counterpart in working to address the legacy of dioxin contamination at former U.S. military bases and the needs of Vietnamese with severe physical and cognitive disabilities resulting from exposure to dioxin. I consider him a friend and am grateful for the hospitality he has shown me, my wife Marcelle, and other Senators when we have visited Vietnam.

From 1961 to 1971, the U.S. Air Force sprayed nearly 19 million gallons of herbicides in Vietnam, of which at least 11 million gallons were Agent Orange, in an effort to defoliate trees and shrubs and kill agricultural crops that were providing cover and food to North Vietnamese soldiers. Decades later, we learned that the Agent Orange was contaminated with dioxin, which can cause problems with reproduction, development, and the immune system. Dioxin can disrupt hormones and lead to cancer. It is also a persistent pollutant that can remain in the environment for many years.

Millions of Vietnamese were exposed, and hundreds of thousands suffered severe physical and cognitive disabilities. My wife Marcelle and I have met three generations of Agent Orange victims, from young children to their parents and grandparents. Hundreds of thousands of Americans who served in Vietnam were also exposed, and thousands have been battling cancers for years.

Fortunately, thanks to studies funded by the Ford Foundation, it was possible to identify key ''hotspots'' with significant contamination, and working closely with General Vinh and USAID, we cleaned up the contaminated soil and sediment at the former U.S. airbase in Da Nang. Seven years and $110 million dollars later, it is once again a busy commercial airport. In fact, Air Force One landed there in 2017, when President Trump visited Vietnam. That project would not have been possible without the leadership and perseverance of General Nguyen Chi Vinh, and I will never forget visiting the site with him when we formally launched the project in 2014.

Since then, we have moved on to Bien Hoa, on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, the site of the largest U.S. airbase during the war where Agent Orange was stored and loaded onto airplanes. Today it is a shadow of what it once was, and it is contaminated with dioxin that has been leaching into the nearby Dong Nai River for half a century.

In 2019, General Vinh and I, along with Deputy Prime Minister Truong Hoa Binh and U.S. Ambassador Daniel Kritenbrink, and in the presence of eight other U.S. Senators, inaugurated a joint U.S.-Vietnam project to clean up Bien Hoa, including a U.S. commitment to contribute $300 million over 10 years, half from the U.S. Department of Defense and half from USAID. I had several conversations with Secretary of Defense James Mattis about Bien Hoa, and the Pentagon's contribution is the result of his recognition that we have a responsibility and a national interest in helping Vietnam address war legacy issues.

At the same time, USAID launched a 5-year, $65 million effort to expand our health and disability programs, which are being implemented in eight provinces that were sprayed with Agent Orange.

Over more than four decades, the Government of Vietnam has provided essential access and support in locating the remains of hundreds of American MIAs. This year, we are embarking on a 5-year, $15 million program, jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Defense and USAID, to help the Vietnamese locate and identify some of their own people missing or killed during the war.

Much has been written, and I suspect more will be, about the collaboration between our two countries in addressing the legacies of the Vietnam war. Issues that for years were a cause of anger and resentment are today examples of how two former enemies can work together for the betterment of the people of both countries. These projects opened the door for the United States and Vietnam to cooperate on a wide array of other issues, from climate change and wildlife trafficking, to public health and regional security.

Tens of thousands of Vietnamese students are studying in the United States, and we are supporting institutions of higher education in Vietnam.

This has been possible because of the efforts of many people over many years. Senators John McCain and John Kerry played an instrumental role in the normalization of relations. By doing so, they set the stage for both countries to build trust based on mutual respect by addressing sensitive war legacy issues, which Ambassadors of both countries have also strongly encouraged.

It is in this that Senior Lieutenant General Nguyen Chi Vinh has built his own legacy. The partnership that has developed from our cooperation on war legacies and which today extends to programs jointly funded and implemented by Vietnam's Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense would not have been possible without General Vinh's vision, his leadership, and his good will. For that we owe him our lasting appreciation and respect.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, on Monday, March 15, due to a snowstorm in Denver, I was unable to travel to Washington in time for the vote to confirm Deb Haaland to serve as Secretary of Interior. Had I been present, I would have voted to confirm her to serve in this important position.

REMEMBERING JOSEPH MARTIN ROSE, SR.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. Joseph Martin Rose, Sr., Moka'ang Giizis or ''Rising Sun'' in the Ojibwe language, a beloved elder and member of the Eagle Clan of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. As a member of the Three Fires Midewiwin Grand Medicine Lodge, Joe was a teacher, culture keeper, pipe carrier, and treasure to his community. His life was one of far too many claimed by the COVID–19 pandemic.

Joe was born on April 24, 1935, to Carl Rose, Sr., and Mary ''Dolly'' (Jackson) Rose in Oklahoma. When his father volunteered to repair naval ships in Alaska during World War II, his mother brought the family back home to Odanah to live with her parents on the Bad River Native American Reservation. Joe often told stories about growing up in Odanah, calling it a ''time of kerosene lamps, outhouses, and wood heat.'' He credited his grandfather, Dan Jackson, with instilling in him a strong connection to the natural world by teaching him about traditional plants, ceremonies, and medicines. He spent his youth netting fish in the spring, wild ricing in late summer, duck hunting in the fall, then ice skating and enjoying bonfires in the winter.

He attended DePadua High School in Ashland, where he played nose tackle on the football team, wrestled, and sang in the school choir. His athleticism earned him a scholarship to Northland College, where he majored in biology and secondary education, earning a certification to teach high school science and math. After graduation, he spent the next 10 years teaching in South Dakota and Wyoming, while coaching youth sports. With the help of his parents, he raised two children, taught full time, and earned a master's degree in guidance counseling before returning to Bad River in 1970.

Back in Wisconsin, he became the homeschool coordinator and guidance counselor at Ashland High School. As an advocate for Bad River children, he taught them Native American arts and crafts and offered courses about culture. In 1974, he was asked to develop the newly formed Native American Studies Program at Northland College, one of the first such programs in America. As its director, he created a culture-based curriculum that emphasized environmental stewardship and the connection Ojibwe people have with Lake Superior.

Joe's experiential learning courses were memorable for the visits to his home on Waverly Beach, birch bark canoes, ceremonial lodges, and a round house built by his students. He helped create the Traditional Ways Gathering, an annual event celebrating Ojibwe crafts such as beading, basket making, and flintknapping. He formed a relationship with the recently dedicated David R. Obey Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland and curated its exhibits on Lake Superior tribal history and culture.

As a staunch defender of Native American treaty rights, Joe and his son, Joe Dan, were among Lake Superior Ojibwe who exercised their rights to spearfish lakes in the ceded territory. They did so in the face of sometimes violent demonstrations in opposition to those rights. He later served on the Voigt Intertribal Task Force, which facilitates the cooperative management of shared natural resources in ceded territory.

Joe retired as an associate professor in 2007, although he continued to teach and serve in leadership roles until the end of his life. Even after retirement, Joe continued his activism against environmental threats facing Lake Superior, including nuclear waste, oil exploration, garbageincineration, factory farming, and taconite mining in the Penokee Hills. His most recent fight was against the Enbridge Line 5 oil pipeline that crosses the Bad River reservation, one of his primary issues of concern as a member of the Ashland County Board. One way or another, Joe was a part of virtually every significant environmental and treaty-rights struggle in the region over the past half century.

While soft-spoken, Joe had a voice that proved powerful and deeply resonant. He believed that he had the responsibility to ''go out and share this knowledge and wisdom of how to live in harmony and balance with the natural world.'' With this ethos and an indomitable faith in grassroots organizing, he never turned down an opportunity fight the good fight and share his knowledge with others. The countless people who were fortunate enough to know and learn from Joe Rose, Sr., will keep his memory alive and continue his good work for generations to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE KINDRED HIGH SCHOOL VIKINGS

• Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, my State enjoys many legendary sports rivalries. But make no mistake about it, the Class B Boys High School Basketball Tournament played every March is, without question, North Dakota's premier sporting event. This year, 108 teams began the basketball season in 16 districts and 8 regions. The regional champions met the third weekend of March to compete for the State title. Every year, these games draw the attention of the entire State, along with fans from across the Nation, all of whom claim a connection with at least one of the competing teams.

This week, I stand a little taller as a proud 1979 graduate of Kindred High School. The Kindred Vikings won their first-ever boys basketball State championship title in Minot Saturday night, defeating the Edgeley-Kulm-Montpelier Rebels 40–34. Their 21–4 season was capped with impressive tournament matchups, where the Vikings showcased their agility and skill against some of the best basketball players in the State. In their semi-final victory against Four Winds-Minnewaukan, Kindred's Matthew Pearson sunk six three-pointers to score 18 points, as Paul Olson scored 15 points and Jaiden Peraza 10. In the championship game, Paul Olson scored 23 points, making 8 of 15 shots and 8 rebounds. Paul, Jaiden, and Gavin Keller were the Vikings named to the all-tournament team.

I want to recognize this year's team members: Brock Woehl, Cole Campbell, Ethan McKenney, Jeremiah Dockter, Matthew Pearson, Jorgen Swensen, Elijah Heinrich, Paul Olson, Maxwell McQuillan, Trey Heinrich, Jaiden Peraza, Chase Miller, Gavin Keller, Presley Peraza, and Riley Sunram, along with manager Jack Davis and statisticians Rylie Ranking, Leah Rolland, and Zoe Sharp.

As a Kindred High School student athlete who lettered 4 years in football, basketball, and track, I realize my high school skills would not qualify me to be the ball boy for this year's squad. I congratulate the team, as well as Coach Brad Woehl, his assistants Scott Milbrandt, Matt Hagen, and Jimmy Hoy, and the hometown fans on winning this championship. I join the rest

of North Dakota in thanking the Kindred Vikings for being an inspiration to all of us by demonstrating what can be achieved by combining a passion for excellence with determination and teamwork.●

REMEMBERING ANDY HOFFMAN

● Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I first met Andy Hoffman at a chili cook off in Butte, NE, in October of 2004. I was running for my first term in the Nebraska Legislature. I was walking from group to group, talking with the cooks and tasting their chili, when I came upon a young man in jean overalls. I introduced myself, and we ended up talking for over 30 minutes.

Actually, it would be more accurate to say he ''grilled'' me for over 30 minutes with a smile on his face. He was kind, and he later became a supporter and a dear friend.

We stayed in touch during my 8 years in the unicameral. Never one to keep strongly held opinions to himself, Andy would call me every now and then to tell me how he felt about bills in the legislature. When I decided to run for U.S. Senate, I asked him to serve as one of my county chairs.

Andy agreed, but a few weeks later, his son Jack was diagnosed with brain cancer. Jack was just 5 years old at the time.

Andy and his wife, Bri, had their lives turned upside down. But instead of giving up, they supported Jack every step of the way as he fought cancer. And they started the Team Jack Foundation in his honor, which helps fund pediatric brain cancer research and raise awareness about this terrible disease. Andy spent the years since Jack's diagnosis traveling the country and appearing on national television, where he spoke about how important this funding is for children like Jack.

Like most Nebraskans, Jack loves Husker football. In 2013, his favorite player, Rex Burkhead, invited him to join the team for their annual spring game. Jack won Best Moment at the ESPY Awards that year when he ran 69 yards for a fourth-quarter touchdown and into the hearts of millions of people around the world. ''Sports Illustrated'' even made him one of their five nominees for Sportsman of the Year. Jack and Rex were kind enough to sign their jerseys for me, and I still have them hanging in my office today.

To recognize the Hoffman family's heroic efforts, I was pleased to work with the White House to arrange an Oval Office visit with President Obama for Jack and the Hoffmans. And at that same time, I led a U.S. Senate resolution making Jack's birthday, September 26, National Pediatric Brain Cancer Awareness Day.

Andy was relentless in bringing attention to this disease. Under Andy's leadership, Team Jack has raised over $8.4 million to help make sure no child has to go through what Jack has. He even published a book last year, ''Yards After Contact'', about Jack's fight.

Andy led a successful law practice with offices in Atkinson, O'Neill, and Central City. He was also a passionate runner, even qualifying for the Boston Marathon in 2014. And he was especially fond of hunting, fishing, and spending all the time he could outdoors.

Andy passed away on March 1, at age 42, after his own hard-fought battle with glioblastoma, an extremely aggressive type of brain cancer. Our State lost a remarkable Nebraskan. His wife, Bri, and three children, Jack, Ava, and Reese, lost a loving husband and father, and Bruce and I lost a wonderful friend.

We are heartbroken that Andy is gone, but we take comfort in the fact that his legacy will live on through the incredible work of the Team Jack Foundation.

The world is a better place today because of Andy's life. At the end of the day, I think that is all that any of us can ask for.

I ask that you join me in honoring Andy's life. Please keep the Hoffman family in your prayers.●

TRIBUTE TO FAY BRICKMAN

● Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, I would like to wish Ms. Fay Brickman of Charleston, SC, a very happy and healthy 100th birthday.

Ms. Brickman married her high school sweetheart, Jack, after he returned from serving in World War II. They were married for 70 years before his passing. Together, they touched the lives of countless people in their community by generously supporting Charleston's academic institutions and consistently devoting time to their synagogue, Brith Shalom Beth Israel, where Fay was the president of the sisterhood.

I would like to recognize Ms. Brickman for the impact she made on our State and the legacy she built through her work and family. She is blessed with six brilliant children, all of whom hold law degrees, and 11 grandchildren, who visit regularly. I wish the family a wonderful time as they gather to celebrate Fay's 100th birthday.●

TRIBUTE TO DALE GILBERT

● Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, today I would like to take a moment to recognize the great work of Dale Gilbert. Mr. Gilbert served as a meteorologist for nearly 25 years at WYFF–TV, which is a local station in Greenville, SC.

Dale Gilbert began his career at WYFF in the early 70s, becoming one of the youngest people on the air for the network. During his time at WYFF, he received many awards, including the South Carolina Broadcasters Association Masters Award. Mr. Gilbert was well loved by his community, and will be missed for the local legend that he has become.●

MEASURES REFERRED ON MARCH 22, 2021

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 6. An act to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain aliens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1112. An act to require a report on the military coup in Burma, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 1603. An act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for terms and conditions for nonimmigrant workers performing agricultural labor or services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 937. A bill to facilitate the expedited review of COVID–19 hate crimes, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–644. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal years 2013 through 2018 Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funds and was assigned case number 19–03; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–645. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the fiscal year 2020 Annual Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Assessments from the Secretaries of Defense and Energy, the three national security laboratory directors, and the Commander, United States Strategic Command (OSS–2021–0133); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–646. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Administrator, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 17, 2021; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–647. A communication from the Supervisory Workforce Analyst, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Strengthening Wage Protections for the Temporary and Permanent Employment of Certain Immigrants and Non-Immigrants in the United States; Delay of Effective Date'' (RIN1205–AC00) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 17, 2021; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–648. A communication from the Chief of the Regulatory Coordination Division, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds;

Implementation of Vacatur'' (RIN1615–AA22) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2021; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–649. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 17, 2021; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–650. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Administrator, Department of Transportation, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 17, 2021; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. WARNER, from the Select Committee on Intelligence:

Special Report entitled ''Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence Covering the Period January 4, 2019 to January 3, 2021'' (Rept. No. 117–2).

By Mr. BROWN, from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

Special Report entitled ''Report on the Activities of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the United States Senate During the 116th Congress'' (Rept. No. 117–3).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. REED for the Committee on Armed Services.

Space Force nominations beginning with Col. Dennis O. Bythewood and ending with Col. James E. Smith, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 6, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Sharon R. Bannister and ending with Brig. Gen. Paul A. Friedrichs, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. John J. Allen and ending with Brig. Gen. Daniel H. Tulley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Rear Adm. (lh) James A. Aiken and ending with Rear Adm. (lh) George M. Wikoff, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Capt. Christopher D. Alexander and ending with Capt. Mark A. Schafer, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Navy nominations beginning with Capt. Ronald J. Piret and ending with Capt. Ralph R. Smith III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 24, 2021.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Joseph D. Noble, Jr., to be Rear Admiral.

Navy nominations beginning with Rear Adm. (lh) William E. Chase III and ending with Rear Adm. (lh) John A. Okon, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 24, 2021.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Col. Joseph R. Clearfield and ending with Col. Ahmed T. Williamson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 3, 2021.

Marine Corps nomination of Col. Sean N. Day, to be Brigadier General.

Marine Corps nomination of Brig. Gen. Mark A. Hashimoto, to be Major General.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, Jr., to be Admiral.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Air Force nominations beginning with Tasrif Ahmed and ending with Isaac D. Yourison, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Haider W. Aljewari and ending with Thomas M. Woolf, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Daniel James Aber and ending with Daniel Scott Zevitz, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Erin E. Artz and ending with Seth P. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Michelle R. Alders and ending with April Lashel Woody, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Aaron J. Agirre and ending with Gregory S. Zilinski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Benjamin Berzinis and ending with Clinton K. Wahl, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jose C. Aguirre and ending with Scott M. Zelasko, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Nicholas B. Duvall and ending with Scott D. Wright, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Diane M. Caldera and ending with William A. Pashley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Bryan Mark Bailey and ending with Jason P. Willey, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nomination of Conn P. McKelvey, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Adam H. Fisher and ending with Sylvette Ortiz, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Tina C. Benivegna and ending with Gia Marie Wilson-Mackey, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Gary L. Frisard and ending with Brian J. Pearson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Barry E. Dickson, Jr. and ending with Amy L. Hunt, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Amie M. Douglas and ending with Semih S. Kumru, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Robert E. Beyler and ending with Nicole P. Wishart, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Charlotte C. Appleton and ending with John M. Tudela, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jennifer A. Alfar and ending with Matthew L. Hudkins, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Louis Edward Bellace and ending with Cynthia M. Washington, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nomination of Paul Joseph Sinuk, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Christopher J. Blaney, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Richard D. Engleman, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Elizabeth A. Beal, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jeffrey D. Adkins and ending with Melissa M. Tallent, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nomination of David L. Walker, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Raeann H. Macalma, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Joshua B. Allen, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Michael Jon Bates and ending with David M. Jackson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nomination of Laurie Ann Flagg Inacio, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Matthew R. Allen and ending with Shaun M. Willhite, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Peter Brian Abercrombie II and ending with Christopher C. Wood, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Gregory M. Adams and ending with Ryan A. Zeitler, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Obi Agborbesong and ending with Bryce D. Warren, which nominations were received by the

Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Kevin W. Byrd and ending with William L. Weiford III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Michael R. Andrews and ending with Ronnie B. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Air Force nominations beginning with Pedro E. Avila Morales and ending with Katelyn M. Zeringue, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Mark S. Born and ending with Henry Cartagena, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Michael L. Barnett and ending with James B. Prisock, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nomination of Lawrence B. Austin, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of John B. Blackburn, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Carlos J. Kavetsky, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Laronda D. Davis, to be Major.

Army nomination of Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr., to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Randall S. Bossler, Jr., to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Joseph A. Marty and ending with Brian W. Mccoy, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nomination of Fenicia L. Jackson, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Jermain Y. Williams, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Timothy M. Benedict and ending with Susan Stankorb, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Harris A. Abbasi and ending with D015486, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Silas C. Abrenica and ending with Daniel J. Yourk, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Paul E. Baker and ending with Stephen L. Willson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Jonathan E. Abshire and ending with D015253, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Nathanael B. Achor and ending with D014388, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nomination of Ikechukwu L. Eweama, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Edward F. Burke, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Rob R. Billings and ending with Ovid Villarreal, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nomination of Stephen F. Barker, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with James Acevedo and ending with Lashell Y. Davis, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nominations beginning with Joseph A. Anderson and ending with John M. Winston III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Army nomination of Michael W. Mundle, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Douglas W. Hedrick, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Nicholaus A. Abbott and ending with D015207, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Michael J. Allen and ending with Christopher M. Smith, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 6, 2021.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Douglas A. Mayorga and ending with Mark L. Oldroyd, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 6, 2021.

Marine Corps nomination of Jonathon T. Frerichs, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with William S. Chairsell III and ending with Richard W. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Navy nomination of Rodney A. Noah, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Jonathan S. Channell, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Hassan A. Brown, to be Commander.

Navy nomination of James G. O'Loughlin, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Philip P. Castellano and ending with Gregory J. Yamamoto, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Navy nomination of Peter Minh V. Nguyen, to be Lieutenant Commander .

Navy nomination of Troy T. Tartaglia, to be Captain.

Space Force nominations beginning with Raj Agrawal and ending with Sacha N. Tomlinson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Space Force nominations beginning with Leroy Brown, Jr. and ending with Forrest D. Taylor, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Space Force nominations beginning with Christopher A. Kennedy and ending with Derek B. Worth, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Space Force nominations beginning with Lance E. Basgall and ending with Stephanie J. Webb, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

Space Force nominations beginning with Mark C. Bigley and ending with Stephen G. Lyon, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 22, 2021.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. KING:

S. 891. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a refundable tax credit for the installation of energy efficient air source heat pumps; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 892. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that kombucha is exempt from any excise taxes and regulations imposed on alcoholic beverages; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 893. A bill to support the use of technology in maternal health care; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 894. A bill to identify and refer members of the Armed Forces with a health care occupation who are separating from the Armed Forces for potential employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. WICKER, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 895. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exemption from gross income for mandatory restitution or civil damages as recompense for trafficking in persons; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 896. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to establish additional criteria for determining when employers may join together in a group or association of employers that will be treated as an employer under section 3(5) of such Act for purposes of sponsoring a group health plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 897. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitation of the exclusion for dependent care assistance programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. BRAUN, Ms. SMITH, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 898. A bill to require reporting regarding certain drug price increases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL:

S. 899. A bill to establish the Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund to ensure a safe, sustainable, convenient transportation option for the people of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. REED):

S. 900. A bill to amend title 40, United States Code, to establish a Southern New England Regional Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 901. A bill to provide access to counsel for children and other vulnerable populations; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 902. A bill to authorize a grant program for the development and implementation of housing supply and affordability plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 903. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require a DNA test to determine the familial relationship between an alien and an accompanying minor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 904. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to digitize and make publicly available geographic information system mapping data relating to public access to Federal land and waters for outdoor recreation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 905. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit certain expenses associated with obtaining or maintaining recognized postsecondary credentials to be treated as qualified higher education expenses for purposes of 529 accounts; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 906. A bill to expand and enhance programs and activities of the Department of Defense for prevention of and response to domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect among military families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 907. A bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to add Rhode Island to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. REED, Ms. SMITH, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 908. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the negotiation of lower covered part D drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries and the establishment and application of a formulary by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under Medicare part D, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PADILLA, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 909. A bill to significantly lower prescription drug prices for patients in the United States by ending government-granted monopolies for manufacturers who charge drug prices that are higher than the median prices at which the drugs are available in other countries; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KING, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. TESTER, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PAUL, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. LUMMIS, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 910. A bill to create protections for financial institutions that provide financial services to cannabis-related legitimate businesses and service providers for such businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 911. A bill to require the installation of secondary cockpit barriers on existing aircraft, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 912. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide information regarding vaccines for seniors as part of the Medicare & You handbook and to ensure that the treatment of cost sharing for vaccines under Medicare part D is consistent with the treatment of vaccines under Medicare part B, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. REED, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 913. A bill to conduct a study on the spread of COVID–19-related disinformation and misinformation on the internet and social media platforms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 914. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize programs under those Acts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 915. A bill to repeal section 3003 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 916. A bill to provide adequate funding for water and sewer infrastructure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. LEE, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 917. A bill to allow for expedited approval of generic prescription drugs and temporary importation of prescription drugs in the case of marginally competitive drug markets and drug shortages; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. COTTON):

S. 918. A bill to offer financial support to health care providers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BENNET, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 919. A bill to establish duties for online service providers with respect to end user data that such providers collect and use; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. REED, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 920. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow for the importation of affordable and safe drugs by wholesale distributors, pharmacies, and individuals; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. COTTON, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 921. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to further protect officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 922. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide funding to States for extending broadband service to unserved areas in partnership with broadband service providers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. PETERS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. WARREN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 923. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a consumer recycling education and outreach grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 924. A bill to establish a demonstration program to provide payments on eligible loans for individuals who are eligible for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 925. A bill to establish the Federal Agency Sunset Commission; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. TESTER, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 926. A bill to plan, develop, and make recommendations to increase access to sexual assault examinations for survivors by holding hospitals accountable and supporting the providers that serve them; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 927. A bill to improve the provision of health care and other benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 928. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that the 2021 recovery rebates as provided for in the American Rescue Plan Act are not provided to prison inmates and that such sums shall be redirected to the Department of Justice to be paid out in the form of restitution to compensate victims of crime; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 929. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that the 2021 recovery rebates as provided for in the American Rescue Plan Act are not provided to prison inmates convicted of murder and that such sums shall be redirected to the Department of Justice to be paid out in the form of restitution to compensate victims of crime; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 930. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that the 2021 recovery rebates as provided for in the American Rescue Plan Act are not provided to prison inmates convicted of rape and that such sums shall be redirected to the Department of Justice to be paid out in the form of restitution to compensate victims of crime; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 931. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that the 2021 recovery rebates as provided for in the American Rescue Plan Act are not provided to prison inmates convicted of child sex abuse and that such sums shall be redirected to the Department of Justice to be paid out in the form of restitution to compensate victims of crime; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 932. A bill to establish the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel, to provide agency and higher level reviews of classification decisions, to provide expedited review of classification decisions for members of Congress, and to provide protections for those challenging classification decisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 933. A bill to designate the Battleship IOWA Museum, located in Los Angeles, California, as the National Museum of the Surface Navy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 934. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve rural health clinic payments; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. ERNST, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 935. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make technical corrections to rural health clinic payments; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 936. A bill to require online marketplaces to collect, verify, and disclose certain information regarding high-volume third party sellers of consumer products to inform consumers; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 937. A bill to facilitate the expedited review of COVID–19 hate crimes, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 938. A bill to require the President to declare a national emergency relating to climate change under the National Emergencies Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S.J. Res. 13. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission relating to ''Update of Commission's Conciliation Procedures'' ; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. HAGERTY, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. Res. 130. A resolution remembering the 5th anniversary of the terrorist attacks at Brussels Airport and the Maalbeek metro station in Belgium and honoring the victims of the terrorist attacks; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. ROMNEY):

S. Res. 131. A resolution condemning the Government of the People's Republic of China's treatment of the Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and calling for an investigation into the abuses and crimes committed in the XUAR; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 65

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 65, a bill to ensure that goods made with forced labor in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China do not enter the United States market, and for other purposes.

S. 89

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 89, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to secure medical opinions for veterans with service-connected disabilities who die from COVID–19 to determine whether their service-connected disabilities were the principal or contributory causes of death, and for other purposes.

S. 150

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) were added as cosponsors of S. 150, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the inclusion of certain audio-only diagnoses in the determination of risk adjustment for Medicare Advantage plans, and for other purposes.

S. 169

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 169, a bill 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 for other purposes.

S. 196

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 196, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish an energy efficiency materials pilot program.

S. 321

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) were added as cosponsors of S. 321, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the Women's Army Corps who were assigned to the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, known as the ''Six Triple Eight'' .

S. 377

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 377, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 406

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 406, a bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

S. 437

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) were added as cosponsors of S. 437, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to concede exposure to airborne hazards and toxins from burn pits under certain circumstances, and for other purposes.

S. 632

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added

as cosponsors of S. 632, a bill to amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors, and for other purposes.

S. 636

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) 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. 662

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 662, a bill to establish an interactive online dashboard to allow the public to review information for Federal grant funding related to mental health programs.

S. 675

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 675, a bill to provide for the reporting to State and local law enforcement authorities of cases in which the national instant criminal background check system indicates that a firearm has been sought to be acquired by a prohibited person, so that authorities may pursue criminal charges under State law, and to ensure that the Department of Justice reports to Congress on prosecutions secured against prohibited persons who attempt to acquire a firearm.

S. 692

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 692, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the female telephone operators of the Army Signal Corps, known as the ''Hello Girls''.

S. 702

At the request of Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 702, a bill to prohibit Federal funding of State firearm ownership databases, and for other purposes.

S. 723

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor 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. 730

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 730, a bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to remove the prohibition on States and territories against lowering their taxes.

S. 760

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 760, a bill to require recipients of Federal funds to disclose information relating to programs, projects, or activities carried out using the Federal funds.

S. 761

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 761, a bill to require the publication of fossil-fuel powered travel by the President, the Vice President, and political appointees, and for other purposes.

S. 803

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 803, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove short-barreled rifles from the definition of firearms for purposes of the National Firearms Act, and for other purposes.

S. 815

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 815, 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. 848

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 848, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to improve the service obligation verification process for TEACH Grant recipients, and for other purposes.

S. 860

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 860, a bill to develop and deploy firewall circumvention tools for the people of Hong Kong after the People's Republic of China violated its agreement under the Joint Declaration, and for other purposes.

S. 884

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 884, a bill to close loopholes in the immigration laws that serve as incentives to aliens to attempt to enter the United States unlawfully, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 34

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 34, a resolution recognizing the 200th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

S. RES. 97

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) 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 atrocity allegations pertaining to the conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia.

S. RES. 105

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 105, a resolution condemning the coup in Burma and calling for measures to ensure the safety of the Burmese people, including Rohingya, who have been threatened and displaced by a campaign of genocide conducted by the Burmese military.

S. RES. 119

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 119, a resolution establishing the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program for the placement in offices of Senators of children, spouses, and siblings of members of the Armed Forces who are hostile casualties or who have died from a training-related injury.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 907. A bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to add Rhode Island to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing the Rhode Island Fishermen's Fairness Act along with my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE. This legislation seeks to address a longstanding inequity in our nation's fisheries management system that denies Rhode Island a voice in the management of many stocks that our fishing industry relies on.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Rhode Island has voting membership on the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) since NEFMC-managed stocks represent a significant percentage of landings and revenue for our state. However, Rhode Island has an even larger stake in Mid-Atlantic fisheries. Yet, it does not have voting representation on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), which currently consists of representatives from New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

According to data provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), between 2015 and

2019, Rhode Island accounted for approximately a quarter of the commercial landings from stocks under MAFMC's sole jurisdiction, both by weight and value. The significance of commercial landings from stocks managed by MAFMC is growing every year for Rhode Island, accounting for 58% of Rhode Island's federally managed commercial fisheries landings in 2019.

After making an appearance during last summer's Democratic National Convention, Rhode Island calamari quickly became a social media sensation, and for good reason. Calamari (or squid) is by far the most important commercial species in the Ocean State. In 2019 alone, Rhode Island landed over 5.5 million more pounds of squid than any other state on the East Coast. But, Rhode Island does not have a formal say in how this species is managed because it does not have representation on the MAFMC.

The legislation we are introducing offers a simple solution with a sound precedent. North Carolina was added to the MAFMC as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Act in 1996. Like Rhode Island, a significant portion of North Carolina's landed fish species were managed by the MAFMC, yet the state was not represented on the council.

Just like the 1996 law that added North Carolina, the Rhode Island Fishermen's Fairness Act would create two seats for our state on the MAFMC. One seat would be appointed by the Secretary of Commerce based on recommendations from the Governor of Rhode Island, and a second seat would be filled by Rhode Island's principal state official with marine fishery management responsibility. To accommodate these new members, the bill would increase the MAFMC from 21 to 23 voting members. This would guarantee Rhode Island the same minimum representation as other states currently on the council, without altering their status.

With mounting economic, ecological, and regulatory challenges, it is more important than ever that Rhode Island fishermen have a voice in the management of the fisheries they depend on. I urge our colleagues to join us in supporting this commonsense legislation.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 912. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide information regarding vaccines for seniors as part of the Medicare & You handbook and to ensure that the treatment of cost sharing for vaccines under Medicare part D is consistent with the treatment of vaccines under Medicare part B, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill that will help to improve adult vaccination rates throughout this country. I am thankful to Senators CAPITO, WHITEHOUSE, and SCOTT of South Carolina for their partnership on this important legislation.

Before there were vaccines, nearly everyone got measles, and diseases like whooping cough, polio, and rubella were commonplace among children and adults. Luckily for us, vaccines are now a cornerstone of our nation's disease prevention efforts. They have a demonstrated record limiting the spread of debilitating and potentially deadly conditions—from measles to flu to pneumonia—saving lives and reducing health care costs. A successful vaccination campaign is also essential to fully reopening society and preventing future COVID–19 outbreaks.

Unfortunately, adult vaccines rates are not nearly as high as they could and should be. Prior to the pandemic, more than 50,000 adults per year died from vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States, while millions more became ill as a result, causing them to miss work and leaving some unable to care for those who depend on them. The health care costs associated with low adult vaccine rates are enormous—each year, the U.S. spends $15 billion treating Medicare beneficiaries alone for these vaccine-preventable diseases.

Because the immune system deteriorates as people age, adults 50 and over are especially susceptible to many vaccine-preventable diseases and account for a disproportionate number of deaths and illnesses from these disease. As Americans age, the impact of these diseases and their complications is likely to grow—unless we quickly and substantially improve use of and access to adult vaccines, especially among Medicare beneficiaries.

By increasing vaccine access, we can save thousands of lives and potentially billions of dollars. Unfortunately, older adults seeking access to and coverage for vaccines encounter many barriers. They may not know where or how to get vaccinated and cost can be an obstacle for both patients and providers.

That's why we've introduced the Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act of 2021. The bill improves vaccine information and education for Medicare beneficiaries, including the risks and consequences of vaccine-preventable disease, and ensures older adults know what vaccines are right for them at the right time.

The bill also eliminates the cost burden of vaccines on our nation's aging population. Vaccines are available for free under private insurance, but under Medicare, vaccine coverage is split between Medicare Part B and Medicare Part D. Seniors can access vaccines covered under Part B—such as flu, pneumonia and Hepatitis—with no cost-sharing. However, vaccines covered under Part D, such as shingles (herpes zoster) and pertussis (Tdap), can include a wide range of cost-sharing requirements. For seniors, many of whom live on fixed incomes such as Social Security benefits, these additional costs may preclude them from being vaccinated.

A 2018 study of Tdap and herpes zoster vaccine claims under Medicare Part D demonstrated that higher out-of-pocket cost-sharing is associated with higher rates of cancelled vaccination claims—in other words, when the costs of vaccines are too high, seniors can't or won't get them. The study found that cost-sharing of $51 or greater is associated with a 2 to 2.7-times greater rate of cancelled vaccination claims compared with $0 cost-sharing.

There are more than 300,000 cases of shingles reported in the U.S. each year. About 50 percent of people who experience shingles will have postherpetic neuralgia, a debilitating, painful, and long-lasting disease. This is just one example of the types of conditions that vaccines can prevent.

We have a lot of room for improvement for uptake of these vaccines. Passing the Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act of 2021 will help us to do so. By reducing cost barriers and improving access and raising awareness, we can implement these vaccines better and set the stage for healthy aging.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. REED, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 913. A bill to conduct a study on the spread of COVID–19-related disinformation and misinformation on the internet and social media platforms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the COVID–19 Disinformation Research and Reporting Act. I thank Representative JENNIFER WEXTON for working with me on this important piece of legislation, which will help shine a light on the ways social media and other online platforms amplify and spread misinformation and disinformation about the coronavirus pandemic to the detriment of public health. I also thank my colleagues—Senators BOOKER, BLUMENTHAL, KLOBUCHAR, WARREN, and REED—for cosponsoring this bill.

As I stand here today nearly 30 million Americans have been diagnosed with COVID–19 and over 540,000 have died from the virus.

The numbers alone are staggering. But when you hear and read the personal stories of individuals and families who are suffering, it is truly tragic. It makes you mournful that for many of the individuals who died, they died alone in the absence of their loved ones.

While many things contributed to this massive loss of life, I am here to talk about one in particular: the insidious spread of coronavirus-related misinformation and disinformation online. This ''infodemic'' has undercut the efforts of public health officials at every turn, and threatens to prolong the virus's impact on the health of our people and economy long after a safe and effective vaccine is available.

The online spread of misinformation about public health is nothing new.

Claims that the 2014 Ebola epidemic was a form of population control spread across social media. Anti-vaccination groups have long used Facebook and YouTube to share junk science and recruit new members.

However, social media platforms' response to coronavirus was supposed to be different. Early in the pandemic, the major social media platforms announced new measures to combat misinformation while making sure users had access to accurate, authoritative information about the virus. Facebook added a COVID–19 Information Center to the tops of users' News Feeds and announced it would remove misinformation that could contribute to imminent physical harm. Twitter verified accounts that provided credible updates on the pandemic and committed to removing false or misleading content that contradicted information from health authorities. YouTube began directing users who searched for COVID-related information to the WHO or other health authorities and banned false information contradicting health authorities on treatment, prevention, diagnosis, or transmission of COVID–19.

Unfortunately, these measure proved lacking and insufficient. The conspiracy film Plandemic was viewed more than 8 million times across social media platforms, and the sequel was viewed over 100,000 times on YouTube during its first week alone. An August 2020 study by advocacy group Avaaz found that misinformation about vaccines and other health topics had been viewed an estimated 3.8 billion times on Facebook in the previous year—four times more than factual, authoritative content from institutions like the WHO and CDC. The study found that only 16% of previously fact-checked health misinformation on Facebook carried a warning label.

Spend even a small amount of time on the internet or social media and you will find rampant misinformation and conspiracy theories about COVID–19. Some examples of these falsehoods include: Bill Gates created the virus to use a vaccine as cover to implant microchips into Americans. No, actually, Dr. Fauci created the coronavirus to seize political power. You shouldn't wear a mask to protect against the coronavirus, because wearing a mask actually weakens your immune system. And do not worry if you catch the coronavirus—you can treat it by drinking bleach.

These claims might seem ridiculous, but they have real word consequences. A study published in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene found that 5,800 people had been hospitalized and at least 800 people died in the first three months of 2020 alone as a direct result of coronavirus-related misinformation. As recently as August, the Georgia Department of Health and the Texas Poison Control Center had to warn people not to drink bleach to treat COVID. A recent poll found that only 51 percent of people wear a facial covering in public, despite its proven efficacy in preventing the spread of COVID. And, perhaps must troubling, polls suggest that over 30% of the U.S. population will not get a COVID vaccine.

If we hope to get past the coronavirus and avoid similar public health crises in the future, we must understand where misinformation originates, how it spreads, and strategies to stop it.

This is exactly what the COVID–19 Disinformation Research and Reporting Act will do. It directs the National Science Foundation to partner with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a study on the spread of COVID–19-related disinformation and misinformation on the internet and social media platforms. This study will provide critical information on the roles disinformation and misinformation have played in the public response to COVID–19, including public acceptance of and demand for COVID–19 vaccines; the sources of COVID–19-related disinformation and misinformation and the ways it has influenced the public debate; the role social media plays in the disseminating and promoting this disinformation and misinformation; and potential strategies for combatting misinformation and disinformation in the future.

This information will not stop the next pandemic from coming. And, it will not force the next Administration to take it seriously and follow the advice of doctors and scientists. But it can give us the knowledge and tools necessary to avoid another infodemic and ensure the American public receives accurate and authoritative information when it is most needed.

I therefore encourage my colleagues to support the COVID–19 Disinformation Research and Reporting Act.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 933. A bill to designate the Battleship IOWA Museum, located in Los Angeles, California, as the National Museum of the Surface Navy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the ''Battleship Iowa National Museum of the Surface Navy Act,'' which I introduced today.

This simple bill would designate the Battleship USS Iowa Museum located in Los Angeles, California, as the ''National Museum of the Surface Navy.''

The Battleship, USS Iowa Museum, would be the official museum to honor the millions of Americans who have proudly served and continue to serve in the United States Surface Navy since the founding of the Navy on October 13, 1775.

The Battleship USS *Iowa* is an iconic ship that served as a home to hundreds of thousands of sailors from all 50 states. Commissioned in 1943, the Battleship Iowa has received accolades as the ''World's Greatest Navy Ship'' and had several namesakes, including the ''Mighty I'' and the ''Big Stick,'' which referred to President Teddy Roosevelt's famous adage: ''Speak softly and carry a big stick.''

The USS *Iowa* was also known as the ''Battleship of Presidents.'' In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used the ship for meetings with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Primer Joseph Stalin. President George H.W. Bush re-commissioned the USS *Iowa* in 1984 while serving as Vice President of the United States. Prior to the USS *Iowa*'s decommissioning in 1990, President Ronald Reagan used the ship for our nation's Celebration of Liberty in New York City on July 4, 1986.

The USS *Iowa* earned nine battle stars for service in World War II and two for service during the Korean War. The ship was also awarded the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Navy Occupation Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and the Navy ''E'' Ribbon—four times.

In 2012, the Navy donated the Battleship *Iowa* to the Pacific Battleship Center, which established the Battleship USS Iowa Museum at the Port of Los Angeles. Since its opening, the Museum has welcomed millions of visitors.

The Museum also hosts numerous military activities, including enlistments, re-enlistments, commissionings, promotions, and community service days. The museum also provides on-site training for federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the museum has closed all of its indoor exhibits and has struggled to attract visitors. As a non-profit organization, the museum is supported solely by admissions, donations, event space rentals, and gift shops.

HOW THE BILL WOULD HELP

Our bill would designate the USS Battleship Iowa Museum as the ''National Museum of the Surface Navy'' to raise awareness and educate the public on the important role of the United States Surface Navy.

The ''National Museum of the Surface Navy'' would build on the success of the Battleship USS Iowa Museum by introducing new exhibits and programs with a focus on education, veterans, and community.

CONCLUSION

It is imperative that we preserve the legacy of those who have served on the Battleship USS *Iowa* and all Surface Navy ships.

I hope my colleagues will join me in support of this bill. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 936. A bill to require online marketplaces to collect, verify, and disclose certain information regarding high-volume third party sellers of consumer products to inform consumers; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 936

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Integrity, Notification, and Fairness in Online Retail Marketplaces for Consumers Act'' or the ''INFORM Consumers Act''.

SEC. 2. COLLECTION, VERIFICATION, AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION BY ONLINE MARKETPLACES TO INFORM CONSUMERS.

(a) COLLECTION AND VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION.—

(1) COLLECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An online marketplace shall require any high-volume third party seller on such online marketplace's platform to provide, not later than 2 business days after qualifying as a high-volume third party seller on the platform, the following information to the online marketplace:

(i) BANK ACCOUNT.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—A bank account number, or, if such seller does not have a bank account, the name of the payee for payments issued by the online marketplace to such seller.

(II) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—The bank account or payee information required under subclause (I) may be provided by the seller in the following ways:

(aa) To the online marketplace.

(bb) To a payment processor or other third party contracted by the online marketplace to maintain such information, provided that the online marketplace ensures that it can obtain such information on demand from such payment processor or other third party.

(ii) CONTACT INFORMATION.—Contact information for such seller as follows:

(I) With respect to a high-volume third party seller that is an individual, a copy of a valid government-issued identification for the individual that includes the individual's name and physical address.

(II) With respect to a high-volume third party seller that is not an individual, one of the following forms of contact information:

(aa) A copy of a valid government-issued identification for an individual acting on behalf of such seller that includes the individual's name and physical address.

(bb) A copy of a valid government-issued record or tax document that includes the business name and physical address of such seller.

(iii) TAX ID.—A business tax identification number, or, if such seller does not have a business tax identification number, a taxpayer identification number.

(iv) WORKING EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER.—A current working email address and phone number for such seller.

(B) NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE; ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—An online marketplace shall require any high-volume third party seller on such online marketplace's platform to promptly notify the online marketplace of any change to the information collected under subparagraph (A).

(ii) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, an online marketplace shall—

(I) inform any high-volume third party seller on such online marketplace's platform of the notification requirement described in clause (i); and

(II) instruct any such seller to electronically certify, not later than 3 business days after receiving such instruction, that—

(aa) there have been no changes to such seller's information; or

(bb) such seller has provided any changes to such information to the online marketplace.

(iii) SUSPENSION.—In the event that an online marketplace does not receive the annual certification from a high-volume third party seller required under clause (ii), the online marketplace shall suspend any future sales activity of such seller or any payments to such seller for prior sales activity until such seller provides such certification.

(2) VERIFICATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An online marketplace shall—

(i) verify the information collected under paragraph (1)(A) not later than 3 business days after such collection; and

(ii) verify any change to such information not later than 3 business days after being notified of such change by a high-volume third party seller under paragraph (1)(B).

(B) PRESUMPTION OF VERIFICATION.—In the case of a high-volume third party seller that provides a copy of a valid government-issued tax document, any information contained in such document shall be presumed to be verified as of the date of issuance of such document.

(b) DISCLOSURE REQUIRED.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An online marketplace shall—

(i) require any high-volume third party seller on such online marketplace's platform to provide the information described in subparagraph (B) to the online marketplace; and

(ii) disclose the information described in subparagraph (B) to consumers in a clear and conspicuous manner on the product listing or (for information other than such seller's identification) through a clear and conspicuously-placed link on the product listing or in close proximity to the physical product.

(B) INFORMATION DESCRIBED.—The information described in this subparagraph is the following:

(i) Subject to paragraph (2), the identity of the high-volume third party seller, including—

(I) the full name of the seller;

(II) the physical address of the seller;

(III) whether the seller also engages in the manufacturing, importing, or reselling of consumer products; and

(IV) contact information for the seller, including—

(aa) a current working phone number; and

(bb) a current working email address or other means of electronic messaging (which may be provided to such seller by the online marketplace).

(ii) The identification of any seller that supplies the consumer product to the consumer upon purchase, if such seller is different than the high-volume third party seller listed on the product listing prior to purchase.

(2) EXCEPTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), upon the request of a high-volume third party seller, an online marketplace may provide for partial disclosure of the identity information required under paragraph (1)(B)(i) in the following situations:

(i) If such seller certifies to the online marketplace that the seller does not have a business address and only has a residential street address, the online marketplace may—

(I) disclose only the country and, if applicable, the State in which such seller resides; and

(II) inform consumers that there is no business address available for the seller and that consumer inquiries should be submitted to the seller by phone, email, or other means of electronic messaging provided to such seller by the online marketplace.

(ii) If such seller certifies to the online marketplace that the seller is a business that has a physical address for product returns, the online marketplace may disclose the seller's physical address for product returns.

(iii) If such seller certifies to the online marketplace that the seller does not have a phone number other than a personal phone number, the online marketplace shall inform consumers that there is no phone number available for the seller and that consumer inquiries should be submitted to the seller's email address or other means of electronic messaging provided to such seller by the online marketplace.

(B) LIMITATION ON EXCEPTION.—If an online marketplace becomes aware that a high-volume third party seller has made a false representation to the online marketplace in order to justify the provision of a partial disclosure under subparagraph (A) or that a high-volume third party seller who has requested and received a provision for a partial disclosure under subparagraph (A) has not provided responsive answers within a reasonable time frame to consumer inquiries submitted to the seller by phone, email, or other means of electronic messaging provided to such seller by the online marketplace, the online marketplace shall suspend the selling privileges of such seller unless such seller consents to the disclosure of the identity information required under paragraph (1)(B)(i).

(3) REPORTING MECHANISM.—An online marketplace shall disclose to consumers in a clear and conspicuous manner on the product listing of any high-volume third party seller—

(A) a reporting mechanism that allows for electronic and telephonic reporting of suspicious marketplace activity to the online marketplace; and

(B) a message encouraging consumers seeking goods for purchase to report suspicious marketplace activity to the online marketplace.

(4) COMPLIANCE.—If a high-volume third party seller does not comply with the requirements to provide and disclose information under this subsection, the online marketplace shall suspend any future sales activity of such seller or any payments to such seller for prior sales activity until such seller complies with such requirements.

(c) ENFORCEMENT.—

(1) UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE ACTS OR PRACTICES.—A violation of subsection (a) or (b) by an online marketplace shall be treated as a violation of a rule defining an unfair or deceptive act or practice prescribed under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)).

(2) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall enforce this Act in the same manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction, powers, and duties as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) were incorporated into and made a part of this Act.

(B) PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES.—Any person that violates subsection (a) or (b) shall be subject to the penalties, and entitled to

the privileges and immunities, provided in the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.).

(3) REGULATIONS.—The Commission may promulgate regulations under section 553 of title 5, United States Code, with respect to the collection, verification, or disclosure of information under this section, provided that such regulations are limited to what is necessary to collect, verify, and disclose such information.

(4) AUTHORITY PRESERVED.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit the authority of the Commission under any other provision of law.

(d) SEVERABILITY.—If any provision of this section, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this section and the application of such provision to other persons not similarly situated or to other circumstances shall not be affected by the invalidation.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Federal Trade Commission.

(2) CONSUMER PRODUCT.—The term ''consumer product'' has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Magnuson-Moss Warranty—Federal Trade Commission Improvement Act (15 U.S.C. 2301 note) and section 700.1 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) HIGH-VOLUME THIRD PARTY SELLER.—The term ''high-volume third party seller'' means a participant on an online marketplace's platform who is a third party seller and who, in any continuous 12-month period during the previous 24 months, has entered into 200 or more discrete sales or transactions of new or unused consumer products resulting in the accumulation of an aggregate total of $5,000 or more in gross revenues.

(4) ONLINE MARKETPLACE.—The term ''online marketplace'' means any person or entity that operates an electronically based or accessed platform that—

(A) includes features that allow for, facilitate, or enable third party sellers to engage in the sale, purchase, payment, storage, shipping, or delivery of a consumer product in the United States; and

(B) is used by one or more third party sellers for such purposes.

(5) SELLER.—The term ''seller'' means a person who sells, offers to sell, or contracts to sell a consumer product through an online marketplace's platform.

(6) THIRD PARTY SELLER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''third party seller'' means any seller, independent of an online marketplace, who sells, offers to sell, or contracts to sell a consumer product in the United States through such online marketplace's platform.

(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term ''third party seller'' does not include, with respect to an online marketplace, a seller—

(i) who operates the online marketplace's platform; or

(ii) who—

(I) is a business entity that has made available to the general public the entity's name, business address, and working contact information;

(II) has an ongoing contractual relationship with the online marketplace to provide for the manufacture, distribution, wholesaling, or fulfillment of shipments of consumer products; and

(III) has provided to the online marketplace identifying information, as described in subsection (a), that has been verified in accordance with that subsection.

(7) VERIFY.—The term ''verify'' means to confirm information provided to an online marketplace pursuant to this section by the use of one or more methods that enable the online marketplace to reliably determine that any information and documents provided are valid, corresponding to the seller or an individual acting on the seller's behalf, not misappropriated, and not falsified.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 130—REMEMBERING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TERRORIST ATTACKS AT BRUSSELS AIRPORT AND THE MAALBEEK METRO STATION IN BELGIUM AND HONORING THE VICTIMS OF THE TERRORIST ATTACKS

Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. HAGERTY, and Mr. CRUZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 130

Whereas, on March 22, 2016, 35 people were killed and more than 300 people were wounded by 3 bombs that detonated at Brussels Airport in Zaventem, Belgium, and the Maalbeek metro station in Brussels, Belgium (referred to in this preamble as the ''terrorist attacks'');

Whereas Justin Shults, Stephanie Shults, Gail Minglana Martinez, and Bruce Baldwin were Americans who lost their lives, among the many other victims, as a result of the terrorist attacks;

Whereas Justin Shults, an east Tennessee native who was 30 years old and working as an accountant while living in Brussels at the time of the terrorist attacks, was a graduate of Vanderbilt University and a devoted husband to his wife Stephanie;

Whereas Stephanie Shults, a Kentucky native who was 29 years old and working as an accountant while living in Brussels at the time of the terrorist attacks, was a graduate of Vanderbilt University, where she met her husband Justin;

Whereas Gail Minglana Martinez, a Texas native who was 41 years old at the time of the terrorist attacks, was a proud mother of 4 children and wife to her husband Kato, who were all injured in the terrorist attacks; and

Whereas Bruce Baldwin, a Missouri native who was 66 years old at the time of the terrorist attacks, was a husband to his wife Virginia, had worked for the Department of State, and was a member of the Army who served in Vietnam: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) remembers the 5th anniversary of the March 22, 2016, terrorist attacks at Brussels Airport and the Maalbeek metro station in Belgium (referred to in this resolution as the ''terrorist attacks'');

(2) honors the memory of Justin Shults, Stephanie Shults, Gail Minglana Martinez, and Bruce Baldwin, the 4 Americans who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks;

(3) expresses its deepest condolences—

(A) to the other victims who were killed or wounded as a result of the terrorist attacks;

(B) to the families of the victims; and

(C) to the home countries of each victim; and

(4) pledges continued resolve to stand against terrorism and extremism.

SENATE RESOLUTION 131—CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S TREATMENT OF THE UYGHURS AND OTHER ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE XINJIANG UYGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION (XUAR) AND CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ABUSES AND CRIMES COMMITTED IN THE XUAR

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. ROMNEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 131

Whereas the Uyghurs are one of several predominantly Muslim Turkic groups living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the northwest of the People's Republic of China (PRC);

Whereas, following Uyghur demonstrations and unrest in 2009 and clashes with government security personnel and other violent incidents in subsequent years, PRC leaders sought to ''stabilize'' the XUAR through large-scale arrests and extreme security measures aimed at combatting alleged terrorism, religious extremism, and ethnic separatism;

Whereas, in May 2014, the PRC launched its ''Strike Hard Against Violent Extremism'' campaign, which placed further restrictions on and facilitated additional human rights violations against minorities in the XUAR under the pretext of fighting terrorism;

Whereas, in August 2016, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Politburo member Chen Quanguo, former Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) Party Secretary, known for overseeing intensifying security operations and human rights abuses in the TAR, was appointed as Party Secretary of the XUAR;

Whereas, beginning in 2017, XUAR authorities have sought to forcibly ''assimilate'' Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities into Chinese society through a policy of cultural erasure known as ''Sinicization'';

Whereas, since 2018, credible reporting including from the BBC, France24, and the New York Times has shown that the Government of the PRC has built mass internment camps in the XUAR, which it calls ''vocational training'' centers, and detained Uyghurs and other groups in them and other facilities;

Whereas, since 2015, XUAR authorities have arbitrarily detained an estimated 1,500,000 Uyghurs—12.5 percent of the XUAR's official Uyghur population of 12,000,000—and a smaller number of other ethnic minorities in the ''vocational training'' centers and other detention and pre-detention facilities;

Whereas, in 2017, the XUAR accounted for less than two percent of the PRC's total population but 21 percent of all arrests in China;

Whereas The Atlantic, Radio Free Asia, and other sources have revealed that detainees are forced to renounce many of their Islamic beliefs and customs and repudiate Uyghur culture, language, and identity;

Whereas investigations by Human Rights Watch and other human rights organizations have documented how detainees are subject to political indoctrination, forced labor, crowded and unsanitary conditions, involuntary biometric data collection, both medical neglect and intrusive medical interventions, food and water deprivation, beatings, sexual violence, and torture;

Whereas research by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute suggests that, since late 2019, many detainees have been placed in

higher security facilities and convicted of formal crimes;

Whereas Human Rights Watch has reported that the PRC uses data collection programs, including facial recognition technology, to surveil Uyghurs in the XUAR and to identify individuals whom authorities may detain;

Whereas PRC authorities have placed countless children whose parents are detained or in exile in state-run institutions and boarding schools without the consent of their parents;

Whereas New York Times reporting revealed that numerous local PRC officials who did not agree with the policies carried out in XUAR have been fired and imprisoned;

Whereas Associated Press reporting documented widespread and systemic efforts by PRC authorities to force Uyghur women to take contraceptives or to subject them to sterilization or abortion, threatening to detain those who do not comply;

Whereas PRC authorities prohibit family members and advocates inside and outside China from having regular communications with relatives and friends imprisoned in the XUAR, such as journalist and entrepreneur Ekpar Asat;

Whereas PRC authorities have imposed pervasive restrictions on the peaceful practice of Islam in the XUAR, to the extent that Human Rights Watch asserts the PRC ''has effectively outlawed the practice of Islam'';

Whereas individuals who are not detained in camps have been forced to attend political indoctrination sessions, subjected to movement restrictions, mass surveillance systems, involuntary biometric data collection, and other human rights abuses;

Whereas international media, nongovernmental organizations, scholars, families, and survivors have reported on the systemic nature of many of these abuses;

Whereas, on June 26, 2020, a group of 50 independent United Nations experts jointly expressed alarm over China's deteriorating human rights record, including its repression in Xinjiang, and called on the international community ''to act collectively and decisively to ensure China respects human rights and abides by its international obligations'';

Whereas, on October 6, 2020, 39 United Nations member countries issued a public statement condemning human rights violations by PRC authorities and calling on the PRC to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights unfettered access to Xinjiang;

Whereas the United States Congress passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–145);

Whereas the United States Congress passed the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114–328; 22 U.S.C. 2656 note), which has been used to sanction PRC officials and entities for their activities in the XUAR;

Whereas the United States Government has implemented additional targeted restrictions on trade with Xinjiang and imposed visa and economic sanctions on PRC officials and entities for their activities in the XUAR;

Whereas the United States Government has documented human rights abuses and violations of individual freedoms in the XUAR, including in the 2019 Department of State Report on International Religious Freedom;

Whereas, on August 25, 2020, the Biden for President campaign stated, ''The unspeakable oppression that Uighurs and other ethnic minorities have suffered at the hands of China's authoritarian government is genocide and Joe Biden stands against it in the strongest terms.'';

Whereas, on January 19, 2021, former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo ''determined that the PRC, under the direction and control of the CCP, has committed genocide against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang'';

Whereas, on January 19, 2021, during his confirmation hearing, Secretary of State Antony Blinken testified that ''forcing men, women, and children into concentration camps, trying to in effect reeducate them to be adherents to the Chinese Communist Party – all of that speaks to an effort to commit genocide'';

Whereas, on January 19, 2021, Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen, during her confirmation hearing, publicly stated that China is guilty of ''horrendous human rights abuses'';

Whereas, on January 27, 2021, in response to a question from the press regarding the Uyghurs, Secretary Blinken stated that his ''judgement remains that genocide was committed against the Uyghurs''; and

Whereas, on March 10, 2021, in response to a question on Xinjiang during his testimony before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, Secretary Blinken reiterated, ''We've been clear, and I've been clear, that I see it as genocide, other egregious abuses of human rights, and we'll continue to make that clear.'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the atrocities committed by the CCP against Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim Turkic groups in Xinjiang, including forced labor, sexual violence, the internment of over 1,000,000 individuals, and other horrific abuses;

(2) urges the President, the Secretary of State, and the United States Ambassador to the United Nations to speak publicly about the ongoing human rights abuses in the XUAR, including in formal speeches at the United Nations and other international fora;

(3) urges the President, the Secretary of State, and the United States Ambassador to the United Nations to appeal to the United Nations Secretary-General to take a more proactive and public stance on the situation in the XUAR, including by supporting calls for an investigation and accountability for individuals and entities involved in abuses against the people of the XUAR;

(4) supports continued targeted sanctions and the use of all diplomatic tools available to hold those responsible for the atrocities in Xinjiang to account;

(5) urges United States agencies engaged with China on trade, climate, defense, or other bilateral issues to include human rights abuses in the XUAR as a consideration in developing United States policy;

(6) supports Radio Free Asia Uyghur, the only Uyghur-language news service in the world independent of Chinese government influence; and

(7) recognizes the repeated requests from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for unfettered access to the XUAR and the PRC's refusal to comply, and therefore—

(A) calls on PRC authorities to allow unfettered access by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the XUAR;

(B) urges collaborative action between the United States Government and international partners to pressure PRC authorities to allow unfettered access to the XUAR;

(C) urges the President, the Secretary of State, and the United States Ambassador to the United Nations to simultaneously outline a strategy to investigate the human rights abuses and crimes that have taken place in the XUAR, collect evidence, and transfer the evidence to a competent court; and

(D) urges United States partners and allies to undertake similar strategies in an effort to build an international investigation outside of the PRC if PRC authorities do not comply with a United Nations investigation in the XUAR.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1401. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1799, to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to extend the covered period for the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1401. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1799, to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to extend the covered period for the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. PROHIBITION ON PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM LOANS AND SECOND DRAW LOANS FOR APPLICANTS CONVICTED OF A FELONY IN RELATION TO A RIOT OR CIVIL DISORDER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (36), by adding at the end the following:

''(W) PROHIBITION.—An applicant is not eligible to receive a covered loan if an owner of 20 percent or more of the equity of the applicant has, as of the date of the application, been convicted of a felony in relation to a riot or civil disorder during the 2-year period preceding the date of the application.''; and

(2) in paragraph (37), by adding at the end the following:

''(P) PROHIBITION.—An applicant is not eligible to receive a covered loan if an owner of 20 percent or more of the equity of the applicant has, as of the date of the application, been convicted of a felony in relation to a riot or civil disorder during the 2-year period preceding the date of the application.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to an application for a loan under paragraph (36) or (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) that is submitted on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1868

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1868, an act to prevent across-the-board direct spending cuts, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

I further ask that the bill be considered 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 objection?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Democrats have just passed a $1.9 trillion spending package. They filled the bill with lots of partisan priorities. They refused to work with Members on this side of the aisle. Almost all of what we are doing here—have done there is going on a credit card. That is going to have to be paid for by our children and their children.

Democrats also ignored the Medicare sequester as part of that $1.9 trillion bill. As a doctor, I have cared for patients in Wyoming for more than two decades. I cannot ignore this decision.

There are more cuts to healthcare providers serving seniors. That is what these have done. They go into effect starting April 1. They are coming.

Congress must help those working on the frontlines fighting the COVID–19 pandemic. It should be our highest priority. Ignoring cuts to Medicare while spending $1.9 trillion on other things, to me, is irresponsible.

Instead, just a few days after their partisan spending bill was signed into law, here we have the chairman of the Budget Committee back asking for additional money.

Now, he knows the right thing to do is to help these Medicare providers on the frontlines, and I want to do exactly the same thing. Once again, instead of working on a bipartisan basis, Senate Democrats are rushing through another partisan spending package.

There is a better way. Senator COTTON and I have introduced the Protecting Seniors Access to Healthcare Act. Our legislation takes a small amount of the money from State and local governments as part of that $1.9 trillion bill. Instead of billions going to Gavin Newsom and instead of billions going to Andrew Cuomo, our legislation gives a small fraction of that money to help our healthcare providers around the country. Instead of a blank check, our bill gets the money to where it is needed the most: to healthcare providers on the frontlines of this pandemic.

Our bill also includes commonsense provisions to ensure that taxpayer money is not given to illegal immigrants or prisoners. Our bill simply says that if you are here illegally, you don't get the payments in the Democratic spending bill.

Senator COTTON and I know we can't hand out American taxpayer dollars to illegal immigrants. That is why our border is being flooded right now—because President Biden offers benefits for illegal immigrants. We also shouldn't be cutting checks to people sitting in jail.

The question is whether Washington Democrats are interested in solving problems or just playing politics. I think we can provide much needed relief for Medicare providers, and we should. It is completely irresponsible for the Democrats and the administration to spend $1.9 trillion and fail to help the healthcare providers who are working to serve Medicare patients.

Therefore, Mr. President, I ask that the Senator modify his request to instead take up H.R. 1868 with my substitute amendment at the desk and ask unanimous consent that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Vermont so modify his request?

Mr. SANDERS. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there an objection to the original request by the Senator from Vermont?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I understand we are not in a quorum call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Correct.

DEFENSE BUDGET

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am down here today to talk about something that I have talked about many times before, and that is the need to have a strong defense budget so we can deter our adversaries.

You know, it is not like it used to be in the old days. It is for real. These guys—China, for example, is in a position they have never been in before. I think it is important that we talk about this budget that is coming up again. It is more important now than ever.

Over the past few weeks, the Senate Armed Services Committee has been having hearings in which we have heard from top military leaders, defense experts, and Pentagon officials. What we have heard has been grim.

LTG H.R. McMaster told us that since the 1990s, China has undertaken the ''largest peacetime military buildup in history.''

Admiral Davidson, who leads the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said, ''I think our conventional deterrent is actually eroding in the region.''

Last week, Admiral Faller, who leads the U.S. Southern Command, said, ''Now more than ever, I feel a sense of urgency about global threats we face in our neighborhood.''

Now, I agree. I thought the Cold War was bad, but the threats we are facing now, especially from China, are more complex and more dangerous than they ever have been before. In fact, I look back sometimes wistfully at the days of the Cold War when things were predictable. We had two superpowers. We knew what they had; they knew what we had. Mutual assured destruction meant something. It really doesn't anymore. Times have changed. I agree that the Cold War was bad, but it is worse today.

I am glad to hear President Biden and members of his administration say that China is our top pacing threat. Both Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks told the Armed Services Committee during their nomination hearings that was the situation.

What concerns me is, I haven't seen the Biden administration take any action that backs up these words. Instead, we are hearing rumors that the Biden administration is considering a flat defense budget, which is actually a 2-percent cut when you adjust for inflation. At the same time, China is increasing theirs by 6.8 percent.

It kind of reminds me of the last 5 years of the Obama-Biden administration. That would have been from 2010 to 2015. During that 5-year period, the budget for the military was reduced by 25 percent. At the same time that it

was reduced by 25 percent, China was increasing theirs by 83 percent. This was happening out in the real world. People are not aware of this.

This sort of thing tells me that the administration isn't serious about pushing back on China. And do you know what? It also tells China the same thing. So talk is cheap, but defending our country is not.

If we really want to send the right signal to Beijing—a signal that says you can't ever win against us—we need sustained investment in our defense.

We have seen what happens when we cut defense spending before. Look no further than the Obama administration's 25 percent cut over 5 years. If we had just increased defense spending with the rate of inflation over the past decade, we could have invested another $400 billion in modernizing our military—money we wouldn't have to spend today. Instead, we are playing catchup with China, which added at least $200 billion that we know of—we never know for sure with China—to its defense budget over the same time period. Chinese military modernization has been nothing short of astonishing. Their ability to move fast and increase production rates is leaving us back in the dust.

We have invested heavily in the advanced capabilities we know we need, like hypersonic weapons, biotechnology, and quantum computing.

We are already spreading our military too thin. Our servicemembers have been asked to do too much with too little for too long.

But we know how we can put our military on a better track. We have a blueprint—the 2018 National Defense Strategy. This strategy actually has been very effective. It was put together back in 2018 by six Democrats and six Republicans, and they all had expertise in the area, where it has not been questioned. So we actually have a document here that shows us what we can do.

If we had increased—the Chinese military modernization has been nothing short of astounding. Their ability to move fast and increase production rates is leaving us in the dust.

Here we have something that we can follow, and it has been successful so far. We have all agreed that this is what we should be doing, but we have not been doing it successfully. We know the strategy is right when it comes to priorities and the long-term nature of this competition. Secretary Austin and Secretary Hicks said as much in our committee hearings.

So why are they talking about adding more missions, including the Department's role in climate change and pandemic response and not countering China?

So we know what the strategy needs to be, and that tells us what the demands on our force look like. Those demands keep growing. Now we need to mesh the budget with the strategy. We know what it looks like, and that is at least a 3- to 5-percent real growth above inflation.

Now, that is what was determined some time ago, in 2018, and that is what we really need to be doing, but we are not doing it. And yet we know what should be done.

So, you know, this is a new administration, and I am going to do all I can. I have already met with the President, with the administration. I know that they are concerned, but we are going to have to get down and actually get it done. It means, in real dollars, an increase of at least $75 to $125 billion each year. Now, that would be if we stuck with the 3- to 5-percent increase that is predicted as being necessary in this book. This kind of investment for 5 years in a row would completely close the difference between U.S. and Chinese defense spending.

And what does the investment get us? It allows us to keep our commitment to our servicemembers to not only take care of them and their families but also to give them the tools and training to do their jobs.

You know, often, we hear about the fact that we are spending too much on the military. We talk about that we spend more on the military than both China and Russia put together. But there is a reason for that. The most expensive line that we have in our military is taking care of the troops, their families. You know, in the communist countries, they don't have to do that. They give them the guns; they go out and kill people. They don't have to spend the money that we do. But we do it, and we do it right. But we need to continue to increase so we can get dug out of the hole that we have dug over decades of insufficient funding and overuse of the force. The bills have been piling up for years. This is a down payment to get the U.S. military healthy for decades of strategic competition.

Now, I am hesitant to even entertain this idea, but I think it is important to talk about it. I know that there are some out there who would like to see the President go even further and cut defense spending by 10 percent. This is wrong, and Congress has already flat rejected it on a bipartisan basis last year. In the Senate it was defeated by 77 to 23. Even in the Democrat-led House, it was defeated on a 3-to-1 margin.

Now, take it from the President's own Deputy Secretary of Defense, Kath Hicks, who wrote that a 10-percent cut would turn the United States into a regional power, increase nuclear proliferation, and weaken our allies. This is completely opposite of everything President Biden says he wants to do. It would preemptively surrender the 21st century to the Chinese Communist Party.

A strong defense budget is the first step. It underpins all of our efforts when it comes to diplomacy, the economy, and technology.

Is China going to slow its military investments any time soon? No, it is not. In fact, we know their actual level of spending is a lot larger than it looks. Economics, yes, but the Chinese Communist Party also lies about its military budget—no surprise. We know that they lied about COVID–19, and they continue to lie about their human rights atrocities against the Uighurs.

So if we don't properly resource our military and put our right forces in the right place at the right time with the right staff, we are going to fall further behind.

So it is kind of early right now, and this is the time, though, that we need to be talking about it immediately to be preparing for the future.

The bipartisan 2018 NDS Commission report already said the U.S. military could very well lose the next state-on-state war it fights.

We need the Biden administration to lead here—to walk the walk and not just talk the talk when it comes to China. And if the Biden team won't lead, I will make sure that we use our role in Congress to send the message.

It is not just Beijing that needs to see that we are serious, but our allies and our partners need to see this as well.

The best signal we can send is a strong defense budget topline. This can't simply wait any longer. This is common sense, and this is something, I think, that we will, on a bipartisan basis, recognize that we need to do and prepare for immediately. That is what we intend to do, and that is what is expected of us at this time.

With that, I will yield the floor.

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.

(Mr. HICKENLOOPER assumed the Chair.)

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, following morning business, on Wednesday, March 24, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Calendar No. 40, Rachel Levine, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Calendar No. 38, David Turk, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy en bloc; further, that at 11:30 a.m., the Senate vote on cloture on Calendar Nos. 40 and 38, in that order; further, that if cloture is invoked on either of these nominations, all postcloture time be considered expired at 4:45 p.m. and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order upon which cloture was invoked; further, that if either nomination is confirmed, 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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, pursuant to Public Law 96–388, as amended by Public Law 97–84, and Public Law 106–292, appoints the following Senators to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council for the 117th Congress: The Honorable BERNARD SANDERS of Vermont; The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN of Maryland; and The Honorable JACKY ROSEN of Nevada.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to Public Law 101–509, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Denise A. Hibay of New York.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 100–458, sec. 114(b)(2)(c), the appointment of the following individual to serve a six-year term as a member of the Board of Trustees of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development: The Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS of Delaware (term expiring 2026).

The Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 116–92, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Commission on Combating Synthetic Opioid Trafficking: Dewardric LeRon McNeal of Maryland vice The Honorable Kathleen H. Hicks, PhD, of Virginia.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to Public Law 70–770, the reappointment of the following individual to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission: The Honorable MARTIN HEINRICH of New Mexico (reappointment).

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 94–304, as amended by Public Law 99–7, appoints the following Senators as members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) during the 117th Congress: The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN of Maryland (and designate him Chairman) The Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island; The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire; The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL of Connecticut; and The Honorable TINA SMITH of Minnesota.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 123.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. 123) designating March 2021 as ''National Women's History Month''.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 123) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 18, 2021, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

RECOGNIZING THE HERITAGE, CULTURE, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICAN INDIAN, ALASKA NATIVE, AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 125.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 125) recognizing the heritage, culture, and contributions of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women in the United States.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 125) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 18, 2021, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 937

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 937) to facilitate the expedited review of COVID–19 hate crimes, and for other purposes.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 24; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the nominations, as provided under the previous order.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NOMINATION OF MARTIN JOSEPH WALSH

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is not often I come down to the floor to say I have a lot in common with the Senate majority leader, Senator SCHUMER from New York. In fact, in my 6 years in the Senate, I don't think I have ever done that.

But after reading his remarks prior to the vote that we took yesterday on the Secretary of Labor, Marty Walsh, I thought I would come down and make a few points on that nominee, that vote, and some issues I have in common with the majority leader and now-Secretary Walsh and maybe some issues I don't have so much in common with the majority leader but I think I do have with Secretary Walsh, which is why I voted for him.

First, as I mentioned, I, too, supported our now-Secretary of Labor, Marty Walsh, for some of the reasons that Senator SCHUMER did. Let me explain. Secretary Walsh started in the Laborers' Union, Local 223, in Boston, age 21, following in his father's footsteps. Now, as many people know, the Laborers are the biggest building construction union in the country. They build things—pipelines, roads, oil wells, bridges. They have made America strong. I am a big fan of Laborers and leaders like Joey Merritt back home and Terry O'Sullivan, whom I am going to talk a little bit about.

Secretary Walsh followed his father's example and joined the Laborers in

Boston. He is also the son of Irish immigrants, which is something that is near and dear to my heart. And Senator SCHUMER said he has something very much in common—yesterday, when he spoke about Secretary Walsh—with Secretary Walsh because his grandfather was an immigrant from Eastern Europe who also, when he came over to America, got very involved with the labor movement. That is really a very common, powerful story of the American dream, common to millions—Senator SCHUMER's family, Secretary Walsh's family, and it is certainly a story that I have in common with those two.

You see, my great-grandfather was from a family of Irish immigrants, and he was also very involved in the labor movement. In fact, he was one of the original cofounders of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the IBEW. He was its first grand marshal.

I have something I am quite proud of here. It is a page from the history books of the IBEW, talking about my great-grandfather's great work for the IBEW when it first got off the ground.

I look forward to working with Secretary Walsh on helping the men and women in America, certainly in my State, who build things. They have succeeded. They rise up and help others rise up—other working men and women—the way Secretary Walsh's father did, the way Senator SCHUMER's grandfather did, the way my great-grandfather did. It is a great American story.

But I must say that my views and Senator SCHUMER's diverge on some of the other things he may have been speaking about when he talked about Secretary Walsh's nomination yesterday.

One, he was critical of some of the Trump administration's Department of Labor policies as related to the men and women who build things—these working men and women—despite the fact that prior to the pandemic, with some of the policies that we implemented here, the United States had the strongest economy in decades, the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years, wages were finally going up after 2 decades of stagnation. And very importantly for the working men and women of this country, there was a huge expansion and boom in the American energy sector, ''all of the above'' energy: oil, gas, renewables, as important to the Presiding Officer as it is to Alaska.

Let me describe one other narrative that I believe certainly is true that I have seen in my professional life in Alaska—in America but certainly back home in my State—and that is the narrative that I am not so sure my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to highlight. But I am going to highlight it because I think it is really important, particularly now, and it is this: When national Democrats, whether during the Obama administration or now, during the Biden administration, are set up with the choice where they have to choose between the interests of the working men and women in this country who build things versus the interests of the extremists—radical environmental groups who want to kill jobs and shut them down—they almost always side with these groups who kill jobs, not the working men and women of America, not the working men and women of Alaska.

This is true. My colleagues sometimes don't want to admit it, but it is true. Do you know who else has seen it, and do you know who else I believe knows it is true? Secretary Walsh as a laborer. He has seen it. That is another reason why I voted for him.

He and his fellow laborers, whether in Boston or Alaska, also know that this issue is true. When there is a choice between the working men and women of America who build things versus the extremists who want to shut things down, way too often, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle go with the extremists, not the men and women who build things in this country.

Now, this narrative is not only continuing under the Biden administration; it is accelerating, and it has been bad for Alaska, bad for America, bad for working families, and, to be honest, it is a bit surprising. President Biden came into office talking about his blue collar roots, but right now, the record is anything but supporting the men and women who build things.

Here is a snapshot of what is going on in my State. In the first 4 weeks of the Biden administration, there were eight Executive orders focused on Alaska—eight. No other State has had that many Executive orders focused on Alaskan working families.

Day one, ANWR—trying to shut that down. We got that done in this body. They also killed the Keystone Pipeline—10,000 jobs, laborers' jobs. Marty Walsh knows a lot about that. It goes on and on and on. There are Executive orders right now that, from my State's perspective, are focused on hurting working men and women.

There is another one I will talk about. It is a project we have, a big energy project in Alaska called the Willow project. This has been permitted by Democratic and Republican administrations for 25 years to finally get it going—the Clinton administration, the Obama administration, the Trump administration, everybody. It is in the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska, a place set aside by Congress over 70 years ago for oil and gas development and good jobs. It is not controversial at all. The Biden administration has put a hold on that. Here is the estimate. It is a $7 billion project that will produce American energy and an estimated 2,000 direct jobs on the Willow project. This isn't some pie-in-the-sky project that we were starting this winter. There were 2,000 direct jobs, 75 percent of which are union jobs, and they are saying ''We are going to put a hold on it''—thousands of additional supporting jobs, and they are going to put a hold on that. Why? Well, we know why, because in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, some of the most extreme radical environmental groups in the country sued to stop it, and they were successful.

So guess what happened in Alaska this winter during a recession. The 2,000 men and women who were working on this project were given pink slips and told to go home. That is what happened.

Mr. President, don't just take my word for it. I want to quote again from Terry O'Sullivan. He is the head of the Laborers, the biggest construction union in the country. This was his reaction after day one of the Biden administration, where there was a choice of working men and women who build things like pipelines or the radical extremist environmental groups who want to shut down and kill American jobs. It is a choice—day one, the radical environmentalists win.

Here is what the head of the Laborers—remember, Marty Walsh, Secretary Walsh is a Laborer from Boston. Here is what the head of the Laborers, the great American Terry O'Sullivan, said:

> The Biden administration's decision to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline permit on day one of his presidency is both insulting and disappointing to the thousands of hard-working LIUNA members—

Those are the Laborers.

> —who will lose good-paying, middle class family-supporting jobs.
>
> By blocking this 100 percent union project, and pandering to environmental extremists—

Remember, this is Terry O'Sullivan talking, not Senator SULLIVAN talking.

> —a thousand union jobs will immediately vanish and 10,000 additional jobs will be foregone.

That is Terry O'Sullivan. Remember the choice: Men and women who build things and make our country great versus extremist groups like the Center for Biological Diversity—they go with the extremists.

Here is Mark McManus, general president of the United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters. They were going to build the Keystone Pipeline, too, just like LIUNA members:

> In revoking this permit, the Biden Administration has chosen to listen to the voices of fringe activists instead of union members and the American consumer on Day 1 [of the Biden administration]. Let me be . . . clear.

This is Mark McManus still talking.

> When built with union labor by the men and women of the United Association, pipelines like Keystone XL remain the safest and most efficient modes of energy transportation in the world. Sadly, the Biden Administration has now put thousands of union members and workers out of work.

This is why the Secretary of Labor we just confirmed—and I was glad to support him because he is a Laborer. He knows how to build things. He knows these politics. This is why it is important to have his voice because

the voice of the extremist is much stronger in this administration. It is not just policies of killing union jobs—the men and women who build things for America—but if you listen, it is how the new members of this administration talk about these jobs. Listen. You have to listen, and what you hear is a condescending tone as it relates to these jobs. You may have heard John Kerry and Gina McCarthy, the climate change czars in the White House, who were saying in one of their press conferences that we need to help people make ''better choices'' on their jobs. That is pretty condescending. They are talking about laborers. They are talking about my oil and gas workers in the great State of Alaska or in Colorado.

The Secretary of Energy, in her confirmation hearing, talked about how some of the jobs might have to be ''sacrificed.''

Even in the Environment and Public Works Committee—and I am a very bipartisan guy—some of my Senate colleagues on the other side of the aisle were recently talking about: We need to encourage people to get more ''relevant jobs.''

What is more relevant than powering America?

Until recently, the men and women who built America—pipelines, oil and gas rigs, roads, bridges, the men and women with dirt under their fingernails—were celebrated, which is as they should be. They built this country. They powered this country. They won wars for this country. By the way, they often fought in wars for this country. Then they came home. They got good jobs in the building trades as laborers, operating engineers, pipefitters, teamsters, IBEWs—the IBEW like my great-grandfather helped start. Not so much anymore.

The new Secretary of Energy is now calling them ''fossil workers'' who are from ''fossil communities.'' I am not kidding. Listen to her. I have been trying to give them a little bit of advice: Don't use that term. It is condescending. You are talking to workers as if they are some kind of dinosaur that should be put in a museum. Communities? Fossil communities? Really?

Madam Secretary, if you are listening, ditch that language. It drips with an attitude of being condescending toward these great Americans.

Well, I was just home in my State with a bunch of these so-called ''fossil workers'' this past weekend. These are some of the best, most patriotic Americans anywhere. They are tough; they are hard-working; they love their country, but I will tell you they are concerned. They are concerned. Why? Because they know that exactly what I have been talking about here is happening—the radical, extremist environmental groups want to kill and are killing jobs.

By the way, as for that lawsuit I talked about on the Willow Project, 200 Alaskans were sent home during a recession. Men and women who have to pay mortgages and pay tuitions were sent home.

So my workers in the great State of Alaska are concerned. They know that these groups they are sending have a beeline into the White House and that they want to kill jobs—energy jobs—in my State and in America. They are worried that the majority now, the Senate majority, has similar views, so they are nervous.

Yet I am hopeful on one thing. Given his background and his heritage—now I am talking about the Secretary of Labor, Secretary Walsh.

I believe that, when the decisions are made—and I hope when the decisions are being made in the Biden administration to kill more good-paying energy jobs that built this country—and when they are coming before the Biden administration, the new Secretary of Labor is going to stand up for the working men and women, stand up for the laborers in Boston whom he knows so well or the laborers in Alaska whom he knows so well and look at the other Cabinet members and say: Not on my watch. We are not going to kill any more of these jobs.

That is what I am hopeful for. That is what he committed to me to do, and that is why I voted for Secretary Walsh as the new Secretary of Labor.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I have one more topic I would like to talk about today. It is another important one, and it is one that many have been talking about here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Many have spoken very eloquently about this topic, and depending on when they have spoken about it—this year, this week, last year, a decade ago, a century ago—it is a topic that is really fundamental to this institution, and it looks as if Members in this institution are trying to change the institution forever. Now, I am talking about the filibuster.

As you know, there has been much talk recently about the possibility of getting rid of the filibuster. This is an action that will fundamentally transform this institution, certainly, but I believe, frankly, it will transform our country. I don't think this is a wise move at all. The irony is—and I am going to talk about it—until very recently, the vast majority of my colleagues, Republican and Democratic, were in agreement on this topic in that getting rid of the legislative filibuster was not a wise move for the Senate and not a wise move for America.

Now, this might seem like an insular issue—something that people in Washington, DC, get incensed about, wound up about, and the people back home might not necessarily care because it might not impact them—but I don't think that this is the case at all. This rule, the filibuster, is at the very heart of what keeps extreme legislation, pushed by a small minority of the public, from passing. It is a rule that, in the Senate, certainly encourages, if not demands, compromise and bipartisan work both when one's party is in or out of power.

Now, look, our instincts as Senators—all of our instincts—are to get things done for our States, for our country, but what is good for Alaska isn't always good for Colorado, and what is good for Colorado isn't always good for New York. What is good for the majority isn't always good for the minority and vice versa and isn't always good for the Nation. That is the heart of federalism. It is also why the majority can't wield unfettered power in the U.S. Senate. With the exception of a few laws, what is required here is typically 60 votes on legislation. It is what separates this body, the Senate, from the House.

For the good of the country, if you look at our history, we must work together, find compromise, find consensus, find solutions, particularly on major legislation, to get a broad-based buy-in from all Americans or most Americans. This is what the filibuster has required.

Remember, the Framers understood that, here in the Senate, we would be different from the House. We would be the bulwark against what James Madison called an anchor, a necessary fence, against the fickleness and passions that pervade the House. No offense to our Members of the House of Representatives, but as George Washington is said to have told Thomas Jefferson, the Framers created the Senate to cool House legislation. It was the cooling saucer you had with regard to the tea in the cup.

Indeed, the Senate—often referred to as the ''world's greatest deliberative body'' in its earliest days—was founded on the right of unlimited debate. That is what the filibuster is. Even in the first session of the Senate in 1789, Senators used this right to debate and debate and debate in order to delay consideration of legislation. It wasn't until the mid-1800s that this tactic was coined the ''filibuster.''

The point is that this procedural rule in the Senate has been here, in one form or another, since the founding of the Republic, and when you hear my colleagues talk about it as some new, recent procedure, it is just not factually accurate. Before the 1900s, there was no formal procedure to even end debate if a Senator chose to talk a bill to death. It wasn't until 1917, during a debate about arming Merchant Marine vessels during World War I, that the Senate established the cloture tool, giving the body the ability to end debate by a certain margin of Senators.

Now, as some of my colleagues have been debating recently and have mentioned throughout its history, we have seen the filibuster, cloture used for good. We have used it to stop legislation, and it has also been used for ill—to delay much needed, historic reforms like civil rights legislation during the

fifties and sixties, legislation which was filibustered by Democratic Senators until the filibuster was finally broken in the sixties. It has also been used for many other purposes, but Members on both sides have used it for centuries. In fact, one scholar's account was that the very first Senate filibuster was over a bridge across the Potomac River. I am not sure why, but I guess it was an important issue back then.

So slowing things down, cooling passions, that is what this body was designed to do, and that is what this procedure has done for decades. That is why my friends on the other side, who are undertaking a push to get rid of this, need to think. They need to stop. They need to think. The American people need to understand the consequences, and our good friends in the media who are covering the Senate need to write some real history about this.

As my friends on the other side of the aisle know, this is one of these issues that, when the shoe was on the other foot, we did not take action. What am I talking about? Recently, the Republicans held the majority in the Senate, and, recently, with President Trump, we had a Republican in the White House. There was frustration, and they wanted to move things quicker, and the President, President Trump, was pressuring many Senators: Let's get rid of the filibuster. We didn't. We didn't. We told the President: It is not a good idea for the Senate, and it is not a good idea for the country.

That is what we did when the shoe was on the other foot. We said no. It is not good for this body, and it is not good for the country. The Republican President was pushing: We need to get things done. We need to get rid of it. No.

Let me just read a few of the things that were said recently about the necessity of keeping the filibuster.

My friend from Delaware, in 2018, said:

> I am committed to never voting to change the legislative filibuster.

Now, he said that when a Republican President was in the White House.

My friend from New Jersey, in 2009, said:

> My colleagues and I—everybody I have talked to—believes the legislative filibuster should stay here, and I will personally resist any efforts to get rid of it.

My Democratic friend from Montana said just a little over a year ago:

> I am a ''no'' on changing the filibuster. The move to make the Senate like the House, I think, is a mistake.

I could go on.

> I don't want the Senate to become like the House. The consequences of getting rid of the filibuster are too great.

These are all words spoken very recently by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Even more impressive, just a few years ago, we had 61 Senators—33 Republicans, 25 of whom are still here, and 30 Democrats, 27 of whom are still in the Senate today—who sent a letter. I have it right here.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this letter sent to the Senate majority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, and the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, saying we have to maintain the 60-vote threshold for filibusters involving legislation.

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

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, DC, April 7, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Democratic Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER SCHUMER: We are writing to urge you to support our efforts to preserve existing rules, practices, and traditions as they pertain to the right of Members to engage in extended debate on legislation before the United States Senate. Senators have expressed a variety of opinions about the appropriateness of limiting debate when we are considering judicial and executive branch nominations. Regardless of our past disagreements on that issue, we are united in our determination to preserve the ability of Members to engage in extended debate when bills are on the Senate floor.

We are mindful of the unique role the Senate plays in the legislative process, and we are steadfastly committed to ensuring that this great American institution continues to serve as the world's greatest deliberative body. Therefore, we are asking you to join us in opposing any effort to curtail the existing rights and prerogatives of Senators to engage in full, robust, and extended debate as we consider legislation before this body in the future.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Collins, Christopher A. Coons, Orrin Hatch, Joe Manchin III, Claire McCaskill, John McCain, Lisa Murkowski, Patrick J. Leahy, Roger F. Wicker, Lindsey Graham, Luther Strange, Richard Burr, Angus S. King, Jr., Mark R. Warner, Michael F. Bennet, Jerry Moran, Amy Klobuchar, Roy Blunt, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Marco Rubio.

Martin Heinrich, Jeanne Shaheen, John Boozman, Thom Tillis, Sherrod Brown, Dianne Feinstein, Shelly Moore Capito, John Thune, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Bill Cassidy, Bill Schatz, Heidi Heitkamp, Michael B. Enzi, Jeff Flake, Dean Heller, Chuck Grassley, Cory A. Booker, Maria Cantwell, Mazie K. Hirono, Rob Portman.

Lamar Alexander, Thad Cochran, John Kennedy, Joe Donnelly, Jon Tester, Ben Sasse, Thomas R. Carper, Todd Young, Pat Roberts, Kamala D. Harris, Margaret Wood Hassan, Bill Nelson, Tammy Duckworth, Johnny Isakson, Jack Reed, Edward J. Markey, Mike Lee, Debbie Stabenow, Sheldon Whitehouse, Robert Menendez, Tim Kaine.

United States Senators.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, this was sent in April 2017. Now, what was going on in April 2017? Republicans had the majority, and President Trump was pressuring us to get rid of the filibuster. We said no.

This is what the letter said:

> Regardless of our past disagreements on that issue, we are united—

Remember, 61 Senators, 27 Democratic Senators, who are still here, just 3 years ago said this—

> we are united in our determination to preserve the ability of Members to engage in extended debate when bills are on the Senate floor.
>
> We are mindful of the unique role the Senate plays in the legislative process, and we are steadfastly committed to ensuring this great American institution—

The U.S. Senate—

> continues to serve as the world's greatest deliberative body. Therefore, we are asking you to join us in opposing any effort to curtail the existing rights and prerogatives of Senators to engage in full, robust, and extended debate as we consider legislation before this body in the future.

That is the letter. Twenty-seven of my Democratic friends said ''Don't get rid of the filibuster'' 3 years ago. Where are they now?

Why is it that when this topic comes up, Senators MANCHIN and SINEMA are the only ones the media focuses on? How come they are not asking the questions of the other 25—one-quarter of the entire body—who wrote this letter? What happened? Where is their conviction?

When the shoe was on the other foot, we said we are not doing it, but they now want to do it. Nobody is asking them. I think the media should take a look at every Senator who signed this letter 3 years ago and say: Hey. Why did you change your opinion so quickly? Three years ago, you were adamantly against the filibuster, getting rid of it. What happened? Could it be that you now have power and you—but we didn't do that when we had the power, when we had the White House.

It is a really important question. Actually, it is so important, I would welcome any of my colleagues who signed the letter, Democrat or Republican, to come on down and explain to your constituents, explain to the American people why you switched so quickly and what you think it is going to do to the structure of the U.S. Senate and literally to our country.

What strikes many of us is how, on so many issues, people change their side—it happens on both sides—when people are holding power from different perspectives.

Let me provide another example that even hits our media friends. In 2004, when George W. Bush was President and Republicans had the majority, they were evidently considering getting rid of the filibuster, and they didn't.

The New York Times wrote the following:

> The Republicans see the filibuster as an annoying obstacle, but it is actually one of the checks and balances that the founders, who worried greatly about the concentration of power, built into our system.

It is the New York Times saying the Founders built the filibuster into our system.

> People who call themselves conservatives should find a way of achieving their goals without declaring war on one of the oldest traditions in American democracy.

The filibuster. That is the New York Times. So Republicans heeded the advice of the New York Times. It doesn't happen a lot, but it did.

So let's see where the New York Times was on this one just about a month ago.

The filibuster is a centuries-old parliamentary tool that has been transformed into a weapon for strangling functional government. The filibuster must go.

Well, so much for the New York Times's convictions. I wonder why they are changing their tune. I wonder why they are changing their tune. Probably the same reason that some of my Democratic colleagues are changing their tune after signing this letter.

So I will end with one final quote. This is from a politician we all know well, all very familiar with him. It is from a speech on the Senate floor by U.S. Senator—in 2005, U.S. Senator Barack Obama. He spoke about how the American people expect their politicians to work to create a more perfect union.

What they do not expect is for one party, be it Republican or Democrat—

This is former Senator, former President Obama speaking right here on the floor—

to change the rules in the middle of the game so that they can make all the decisions while the other party is told to sit down and keep quiet.

Sounds a little bit like what is going on with this filibuster debate.

I understand that Republicans are getting a lot of pressure to do this—

''This'' meaning get rid of the filibuster—

from factions outside the [Senate] Chamber, but we need to rise above the ''ends justify the means'' mentality because we are here to answer the people—all of the people, not just the ones who are wearing our particular party label.

That was Senator Obama—former Senator Obama, former President Obama saying in 2005: Don't do it, Republicans. You have the power. You have the Presidency. You have the Senate. Don't get rid of the filibuster.

Well, I couldn't agree more with our former President. Again, when we had the ability to do this just 3 years ago, we said no.

I hope our friends in the media will write about this. Don't hold your breath. But here is one instance when the shoe was on the other foot. Because it was so important to America, so important to this institution, we declined to make the power move.

It would be really good—whether it is President Obama, who has spoken out about this now; or the New York Times, who has changed their tune; or all 25 of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who signed this letter 3 years ago saying ''Don't do it''—come on down, speak to the American people. Tell them why you have had such a drastic change of heart.

But I will tell you this: If we do do it, you are going to regret it; we are going to regret it; the American people are going to regret it. And do you know what? In my discussions with some of my Democratic colleagues, and I am not going to name names, they know that. They know that. They are getting a lot of pressure. Majority Leader SCHUMER is getting a lot of pressure from the far left.

Don't let the far left ruin this institution. Don't let the far left bludgeon you guys into changing America, because I think deep down in your heart of hearts, especially all of you who signed this letter 3 years ago know what the right thing to do for the U.S. Senate is and the right thing to do for the United States of America is, and it is to continue to keep what the Founding Fathers devised for this body.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:47 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at 10:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 23, 2021:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

SHALANDA D. YOUNG, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

VIVEK HALLEGERE MURTHY, OF FLORIDA, TO BE MEDICAL DIRECTOR IN THE REGULAR CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, SUBJECT TO QUALIFICATIONS THEREFOR AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND REGULATIONS, AND TO BE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS.