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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 16, 2021, at 11 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARTIN HEINRICH, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of our destinies, attune our spirits to the graciousness of this season as You fill us with Your measureless love. Thank You for Your plan of redemption, intended to extricate humanity from ruin.

Lord, the legislative process often involves disagreements at deep levels, but keep our Senators away from disagreeable spirits. Give them wisdom. Patiently, look for ways to cooperate in strengthening this land we love. Let the glorious message of peace on Earth and good will toward all guide their deliberations.

We pray in Your righteous 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, December 15, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARTIN HEINRICH, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. HEINRICH 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany S. 1605, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 1605, a bill to designate the National Pulse Memorial located at 1912 South Orange Avenue in Orlando, Florida, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the bill.

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the bill, with Schumer amendment No. 4880 (to the House amendment), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 4881 (to amendment No. 4880), to modify the effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

KENTUCKY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in the aftermath of Western Kentucky's devastating tornado outbreak, I have maintained close contact with State and local officials. My staff has been on the ground since the outset of the crisis, helping residents access Federal resources and keeping me up-to-date with any developments. Toward the end of the week, I will travel back to Kentucky to meet with my constituents and visit the areas affected.

The stories coming out of Kentucky are harrowing. But in recent days, we also heard about the generosity, the hard work, and the hope that are helping our State recover.

Kentuckians desperately need help to rebuild, so our universities, normally bitter rivals on the court, are rallying together to raise money and gather supplies for relief efforts.

This Christmas is shaping up to be exceptionally difficult for children all across Western Kentucky, so churches

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

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are organizing toy drives to help make the holidays a little bit brighter. Western Kentucky community organizations are stretched to the limit, so businesses based in the Commonwealth, from distilleries to car manufacturers, to insurance companies, have stepped up and donated literally millions. Remarkable stories of survival and resiliency have trickled out of the disaster zone.

Last weekend's storm destroyed much of the First Christian Church in Mayfield, but the congregation discovered their communion table and altar cross fully intact while picking through the rubble. A symbol of hope and rebirth survived amid so much pain.

Across town, the Mayfield Health and Rehabilitation nursing home was physically devastated when it took a direct hit from the tornado on Friday night, but all 74 of the facility's elderly residents survived with only minor injuries. As one staff member said, this was ''truly a miracle.''

And in Bremen, KY, when a man visited the wreckage of his home on Saturday, he discovered his grand piano mostly undamaged—undamaged—despite the storm. Amid the surrounding devastation, he sat down to play and to sing hymns. His songs, shared on social media, warmed the hearts of thousands.

These stories of hope have ricocheted across the Commonwealth, bringing smiles and strength to communities that need them most. And they give me faith that Kentucky will recover from this crisis stronger than ever.

S. 1605

Now, Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, today, the Senate will pass this year's National Defense Authorization Act by a big bipartisan margin.

I have talked for weeks about the importance of this legislation, given the global threats and international challenges that face our country from China to Russia, to the fight against terrorists in the Middle East.

I will also be proud to vote for this bill because of the enormous impact it will have on my home State. The proud servicemembers based in Kentucky play an outsized role in our national defense. From deploying across the world to fighting COVID–19 here at home, they do amazing work to keep America safe.

In the past week, they have stepped up to provide critical support as Kentucky deals with the aftermath of our devastating tornadoes. Our Commonwealth's heroes and their families deserve our full support, and I am proud that this year's National Defense Authorization Act delivers for them.

Nearly $1 billion for the Assembled Chemical Weapon's Alternative Program that supports the chemical munitions destruction mission at the Blue Grass Army Depot; robust funding to deter Russia in Europe; the emission of Fort Knox's Fifth Corps Headquarters; continued investments in research and modernization that will guarantee our soldiers, including those at Fort Campbell, are prepared to counter emerging threats like China.

We have also built on our previous efforts to lift up Kentucky's military families. The bill provides additional funding for modern, high-quality childcare facilities, including $27 million for a new childcare development center at Fort Knox. It authorizes an across-the-board 2.7-percent pay raise for our troops.

This bill is critically important to the servicemembers who make immense sacrifices to keep our Nation safe. I am proud to support it and help cement the Commonwealth's role as America's most military-friendly State.

INFLATION

Mr. President, now one final matter, I described yesterday how inflation is hurting families all across our country. Since then, yet another key economic indicator has set an unfortunate record.

In the last year, wholesale prices grew at their fastest pace on record. Anyone with a shred of sense knows this is the absolute wrong time—wrong time—to unleash a multitrillion-dollar taxing-and-spending spree.

Every single day brings new evidence our Democratic colleagues should give the country a break. But the cost of Washington Democrats' latest obsession isn't the only problem. The context of what they want to pass is actually just as bad.

We have known since the start of the COVID pandemic that Democrats saw it as an opportunity to transform American society. They have actually been quite candid about that. And their reckless taxing-and-spending spree they are writing behind closed doors is a Trojan horse to let the radical left dictate intimate details to American families.

There is a long list of policies inspired by the authors of the Green New Deal. A whole slew of new programs and mandates are aimed at fitting the entire country's systems for producing and consuming energy into sort of a California-shaped box: special subsidies for expensive lifestyle choices like electric vehicles and electric bicycles; new redtape to strangle the most reliable and affordable sources of American energy; subsidies for supply chains that China dominates so that America borrows in order to ''Build Back Beijing''; and don't forget the so-called Civilian Climate Corps, just what we need at a time of inflation and labor shortages—a Potemkin make-work program for liberal activists.

Of course, Washington Democrats intend to grab greater control over the development of America's young people long before they are eligible for made-up green jobs. Their spree contains a massive ''toddler takeover'' that insults the diversity of American families and their aspirations. It only throws money at a subset of secular childcare centers that woke bureaucrats happen to favor.

Forget faith-based options, forget flexible part-time arrangements, forget being remotely fair to families with a parent at home, Democrats want to bring their inflation into childcare and make daycare more expensive, more inflexible, and more unfair.

And then there is the latest offensive in a long campaign to restrict more of American's healthcare choices. Democrats' plan would mean more one-size-fits-all programs, more government control, a wet blanket over the world-leading innovation pipeline that creates new cures, and a further gamble with seniors' Medicare when the trust fund is already in danger of insolvency.

Then there are the massive tax hikes our colleagues want to use to cover the bill—all those radical changes, all those Big Government intrusions into family life, compared with the crushing tax hikes that would hit our country like a ton of bricks.

There are new surcharges on individual taxpayers. There are tax hikes for passthrough businesses. There is a brandnew, radical scheme to make American industry less competitive that Senate Democrats scribbled down with no hearings or committee process.

President Biden promised he wouldn't raise taxes one penny on anyone making less than $400,000. But experts agree that Democrats' tax hikes would break that promise. People with far less income would be affected.

So for goodness' sake, in 2022, their bill would give a bigger percentage tax cut to people making more than $1 million every year than the families that pull in between $75,000 and $100,000. That is according to the Joint Committee on Taxation.

The average person who makes upward of $1 million gets a bigger tax break—a bigger tax break—from Democrats' bill than the average household that makes just under—just under—six figures.

In large part, that is because of an absurdly expensive tax giveaway that Democrats want to hand out to benefit high-income earners in blue States. Their SALT policy would make the Federal Government subsidize the property tax bills of people with mansions who choose to live in high-tax States.

It is an insane proposition, and it is struggling to even earn support from Democrats' rank and file. But their leaders from New York and California are obsessed with it, so go figure.

But SALT is only just the beginning of the gravy train this bill steers toward Democrats' pet projects and causes. There is also a tax code tweak that would create a special deduction for union dues, while letting one for charitable contributions actually expire. Another special incentive—to the tune of $10 billion—would help liberal colleges and universities indoctrinate students in new ''environmental justice'' programs, whatever that is. Still,

others would pour $29 billion into funding a ''National Green Bank,'' $2.5 billion into increasing—listen to this—''tree equity,'' $1.67 billion to bail out news outlet, and an extra billion on top for ''improving climate resilience'' of Pacific salmon—an extra billion on top for ''improving climate resilience'' of Pacific salmon.

And then, of course, there are the extra special ways Democrats want to use this bill to fulfill more personal hometown priorities. Speaker PELOSI didn't end up getting to earmark millions of Federal dollars for redeveloping a park in her district. Ah, but she did secure one Congressman's vote by upping the funding for a defunct regional commission that largely benefits his district by 13,000 percent. That is old-school vote-buying, a slap in the face to taxpayers.

Our own colleague, the Democratic leader, has pledged to ''use all of [his] power'' to personally steer tens of billions of dollars toward a hometown New York City housing authority with a long and storied reputation of corruption, mismanagement, and scandal.

So it is hard to wrap your head around all this; that is, unless you subscribe to Washington Democrats' apparent core principle—core principle: When the American people are footing the bill, the menu is all-you-can-eat.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEBT LIMIT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the House came together with the Senate to raise the debt limit, which I think was good because another closedown of our government would have been disastrous. So I am proud, as President pro tempore, to sign the joint resolution that raises the debt limit, and that will go now to the President. The Speaker signed it, I have signed it, and now the President will be able to sign the bill. I was very, very proud to do that.

S. 1605

Mr. President, on another matter, we are going to soon have the opportunity to vote on passage of the fiscal year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, the NDAA. As they do every year, I am sure Senators will get out press releases touting all of the things in this bill that they support, as I do: a pay raise for the military, increases for medical research, investments to counter Chinese aggression. These are things all worth talking about, but let's be honest and go beyond the rhetoric, tell the American people about what we are doing and what we are not.

We can stand here on the Senate floor—we can do it back home—and declare our unwavering support for our troops and their families, can claim to support a strong national defense, but until we put our money where our mouth is and provide the funding we say we support, then those words ring hollow. It is only rhetoric.

Now, the NDAA is an important piece of legislation, and I applaud those Senators who put it together. It sets overarching policy for the Department of Defense. It guides our national security. But—but—make sure people understand that what it does not do is provide the funding to implement the policies it sets. It says what the policies will be; it declares what the funding should be; but there is not one penny—not one penny—in this bill. That is the job of the Appropriations Committee.

As we prepare to vote for the NDAA, Republicans have not come to the table to negotiate top-line spending numbers so that we can actually enact an appropriations bill to pay for our national defense. Some have said that they would be fine if the government ended up operating under a full-year continuing resolution. Fortunately, there are some key Republicans, as with all Democrats, who don't want a continuing resolution; they would like to get the bills done. But we have to actually do it. We can't talk about it. We can't be private and say ''Oh, yeah, I am for you on that,'' but we actually do it.

So I suggest that if people are wondering whether a continuing resolution helps us, do the math. A full-year CR would not only reduce defense spending by $35 billion compared with what is in the NDAA bill, but it would actually cut defense spending below last year's level. Just think about that.

We can talk about all the wonderful things we are doing, but if we don't pass the appropriations bill, if we only have a continuing resolution, we cut defense spending below last year's levels. So instead of the $35 billion that they are touting and one minute waving the flag and declaring they support our troops and our military and then the next day have no problem in cutting the funds—if we refuse to go ahead and actually pass the appropriations bills and go instead to a continuing resolution, we are cutting funds. It almost makes me think of Alice in Wonderland. I wonder if we are going through the looking glass.

Democrats have put a fair offer on the table to get us through this morass. It provides a 5-percent increase for defense programs compared to last fiscal year, a 13-percent increase for all other programs. The 5-percent increase for defense we picked because it is equal to the increase contained in the NDAA that we are going to vote on today.

I would predict that the large majority of Senators, Republicans and Democrats alike, will vote for the NDAA with that 5 percent increase. Well, stop holding up the appropriations bill that actually has the money—that has the money. The NDAA is a promissory note; the appropriations bill is the cash.

The money we have in appropriations is equal to the increase for defense programs that Republicans unanimously endorsed when the NDAA was marked up in the Senate Armed Services Committee. It is equal to the increase that just passed the House. In the U.S. Congress, that is as close to a consensus as I have seen around here, and I have been here a few years.

One Republican House appropriator has even said publicly that he wants an appropriations deal at the NDAA levels because the NDAA fully funds our defense needs for the coming year. I want him to know that is the offer the Democrats put on the table 2 months ago. So far, I have heard deafening silence.

We have to go for it. We have people in both parties who understand the need for an appropriations bill. I recommend we all get together and get it done because the men and women who serve in the military deserve more than lipservice.

Any Senator who votes for this authorization bill today should have no problem embracing an offer that provides the money to actually pay for it. They certainly should not be putting us on a course for a full-year continuing resolution, which would cause cuts in our national defense and, I believe, would weaken our national security.

Secretary Austin has said that a full-year's CR would be unsound, misappropriate billions of dollars, and erode the U.S. military advantage relative to China. The Secretary also noted that investments in research, infrastructure, and public health are equally critical to our national security.

I ask unanimous consent that Secretary Austin's full statement be printed in the RECORD at the end of my statement.

The strength of our military and national security is built on the strength of our people. Without domestic investments in education, healthcare, research, economic development, and science, we can't maintain our military. Without combating the opioid, substance abuse, and mental health crises facing our country today, we will no longer be able to recruit the best of the best. We need full-year appropriations bills to make these investments so people can sit and see what we have and where we are going with it.

Recently, some Members on the other side of the aisle have taken to the floor of the Senate to decry a lack of progress on the appropriations bills. They criticize Democrats for not bringing bills to the floor. But let's be real. The only reason we have been unable to move more bills through committee or bring bills to the floor for debate is because Republicans have said they oppose them until we have a top line. OK. Then negotiate the very top line they require to move bills instead of refusing to negotiate that top line. Come

on. You can't put barriers across the highway and then complain that traffic is stopped.

I have been calling for bipartisan and bicameral negotiations with the White House to reach an agreement on top lines since March—March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and now December. It is probably time enough to get moving.

In October, I released a comprehensive proposal, with the support of House Democrats, on a path forward. I would ask the Republicans to join us at the negotiating table. We have a job to do. We are 10 weeks into the fiscal year. Let's step up and make a serious offer on a top-line agreement. We Democrats have done that. Republicans need to do that now—not one that panders to the extremes of their base—and do it in the next few weeks.

I have been here for a lot of years. Most of the time I have been here, I have been on the Senate Appropriations Committee. I have seen Republicans and Democrats come together. I have seen Senators from the left and the right come together, knowing that you have to have a consensus, knowing that you don't pass appropriations bills on sound bites and on a wish list; you do it with substantive work.

Our staff has been working throughout recesses and everything else to have this, so let's get to work. Let's negotiate full-year appropriations bills that address our country's many needs, including our country's national defense. We have done this over and over again over the years. We can easily do it now.

I have talked with the leaders of both parties. I think we are ready. I think anybody who fully understands how appropriations work know that a continuing resolution for the year is not the way to go. It doesn't help the country. It doesn't help the people whom we represent. It certainly doesn't help the credibility of the U.S. Senate. And we are in a position where the House wants to work with us. Let's get to work and spend a few days doing that. Let's pass the omnibus with the individual appropriations bills in it. It has been done in the past. It can be done again.

My staff has been working night and day and weekends. We have everything together. I have talked with several Senators on both sides of the aisle. They want to go forward. Well, let's go forward for the sake of the country, for the sake of this body that I respect so much.

Every single day, when I walk here into the Senate, I think what a privilege it is to be here. But with that privilege comes a responsibility—a responsibility to the people of this country, the people we represent. We can fulfill that responsibility by passing these appropriations bills.

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

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LLOYD J. AUSTIN III ON THE IMPACT OF A FULL-YEAR CONTINUING RESOLUTION—DEC. 6, 2021

The Department of Defense once again faces the threat of a continuing resolution to fund our programs and operations into the new year. While the short-term CR passed by Congress was a necessary measure to keep the government open and provide additional time to reach agreement on full-year appropriations bills, some have even suggested a CR could last an entire year, an unprecedented move that would cause enormous, if not irreparable, damage for a wide range of bipartisan priorities—from defense readiness and modernization, to research and development, to public health.

A full-year CR would be a fiscally unsound way of funding the Department of Defense and government as a whole. It would misalign billions of dollars in resources in a manner inconsistent with evolving threats and the national security landscape, which would erode the U.S. military advantage relative to China, impede our ability to innovate and modernize, degrade readiness, and hurt our people and their families. And it would offer comfort to our enemies, disquiet to our allies, and unnecessary stress to our workforce.

Essentially, in terms of real dollars, a CR would represent a budget cut—and a significant one at that.

I urge Congress to reach a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on FY 2022 appropriations, and avoid a full-year CR, in the coming weeks.

First and most importantly, failure to reach an agreement would put our military and their families under additional and needless stress. It would mean that providing the 2.7 percent pay increase the President proposed and they so richly deserve—as well as housing allowances and other new benefits—would come at the expense of suspending many of their change-of-station moves and force us to limit the numbers of new recruits we bring in. And it would result in over five billion dollars in cuts to our operating accounts, too, hurting the readiness of our troops and curtailing our ability to cover the health-care needs of military families.

More than 100 military construction projects—many of which directly impact the quality of life of our people—would also be delayed if Congress maintains current funding levels under a full-year CR. And make no mistake about it, the impacts of those delays would be felt not only across the Department, but also in local communities around the country as job opportunities are lost and revenue for local businesses diminishes.

Of course, failing to reach an agreement on appropriations would also significantly impact the programs, the technologies and the initiatives we are trying to undertake to ensure we remain the most capable military in the world. The Department's efforts to address innovation priorities such as cyber, artificial intelligence and hypersonics programs would be slowed.

At a time when our adversaries are advancing their concepts and capabilities to erode our strategic advantages . . . and as we begin to knit together a truly groundbreaking vision of integrated deterrence . . . our hands will be tied. We will be forced to spend money on things we don't need and stop spending money on investments we desperately do need.

And I'd note that as important as full-year appropriations are for the Department of Defense, investments at the State Department, in research and development at the major research agencies, and in infrastructure and public health are equally critical to our national security.

Again, I strongly urge Congress to seize this opportunity to sustain American competitiveness, advance American leadership, and enable our forces by immediately reaching a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on full-year 2022 appropriations. It's not only the right thing to do, it's the best thing they can do for our nation's defense.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

S. 1605

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on NDAA, for the past six decades, Congress has worked on a bipartisan basis to pass an annual Defense bill without fail. After today, this year will be no different.

Later this morning, the Senate will hold a vote to pass NDAA legislation for fiscal year 2022 that has been negotiated on a bipartisan, bicameral basis. After it is approved by this Chamber, the bill will go to the President's desk for his signature.

With so many priorities to balance, I thank my colleagues for working hard over these last few months, both in committee and on the floor, to get NDAA done. I want to particularly recognize my colleague Chairman REED for his work shepherding this important process through.

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

Mr. President, now, for a Build Back Better update, this week, Democrats also continue working on getting the Senate into a position where we can vote on the President's Build Back Better legislation. We are also continuing to hold conversations, as Senate Democrats, on the urgent work of advancing the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

There is universal view in our caucus that we need to pass legislation to protect our democracy. What the Republican legislatures are doing—on a purely partisan basis—is undermining, destroying our democracy.

We believe that we can restore the Senate to work the way it is supposed to and at the same time deal with voting rights. And that is what we are aiming to do.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now, on judicial nominations, in addition to our legislative agenda, the Senate is also making good progress this week on confirming more of President Biden's nominees, both to his administration and the Federal bench.

Today, we will vote to confirm two more of the President's judicial nominees, and it is possible I will file cloture on more today. At the district

level, we will confirm Samantha Elliott to serve as district judge for the District of New Hampshire. And we will also vote on the confirmation of Jennifer Sung to sit as a circuit judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Throughout her career, Ms. Sung has proven herself to be an exceptional and impartial adjudicator, a valiant advocate for working Americans, and I am confident she will be an excellent judge who adds to the personal and professional diversity of the Ninth Circuit.

For much of her time in private practice, Ms. Sung dedicated herself to representing workers in disputes against unscrupulous employers. The folks she has fought for over her career haven't been privileged individuals. On the contrary, they have been everyday working Americans: low-income workers, minority workers, and largely underserved communities—folks who just want a fair shake.

As a member of the Oregon Employment Relations Board, where she has served in a quasi-judicial role adjudicating disputes between workers and management, Ms. Sung has displayed immense skill striking a delicate balance between protecting the interests of working Americans while applying the law fairly and impartially and without preconception. This balance is crucial for anyone under consideration for the bench, and that is the point.

We are having, of course, demographic diversity. Ms. Sung represents that as an Asian American. But we are also having professional diversity, where people from different walks of life and different experiences serve in these very important courts, not just prosecutors and people from big law firms. So this is a very, very important change that we are making to the bench.

This year, we have made progress in adding that new level of diversity to the bench, but we still have a lot of work to do to make our courts reflect the diversity and richness of our democracy.

And on one more judge, Ali Nathan, earlier this morning it was my honor to come before the Senate Judiciary Committee to introduce Ali Nathan, nominated by President Biden, on my recommendation, to serve as circuit judge for the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Judge Nathan is a remarkable and barrier-breaking nominee for the Federal bench. A graduate of Cornell Law School, a clerk for both the Ninth Circuit and the Supreme Court, under Justice Stevens, and a member of President Obama's White House counsel and the Office of the Solicitor General in New York, Judge Nathan's resume is nothing short of impeccable.

I can happily say that this will be the second time I have recommended Judge Nathan to serve on the bench. A decade ago, I urged President Obama to consider Ali Nathan to serve as district judge in the Southern District.

I am glad President Obama listened. And after a decade of admirable service on the bench, it is clear that appointing her was the right decision. And, one more important point, if confirmed to the Second Circuit, Judge Nathan would only be the second LGBTQ woman to serve as a Federal appellate judge in the United States—another important step in tearing down the barriers in the halls of justice.

If confirmed, I am confident that Judge Nathan will serve with distinction and excellence on the Second Circuit.

So, thanks to Senate Democrats, President Biden has more total circuit and district judge nominees confirmed before December 15 of his first year than any President since Ronald Reagan. By the end of the day, the tally will stand at 31 new judges confirmed in 2021.

Let me repeat that. By the end of today, the Senate will have confirmed 31 judges in President Biden's first year—20 to the district courts and 11 to serve as appellate judges on the Federal circuit.

Four years ago, under President Donald Trump, Republicans lacked any robust legislative agenda and focused almost entirely on rubberstamping the parade of far-right, unqualified, and highly ideological nominations to the Federal bench.

This year, we are administering the antidote: All year long the Democratic majority has begun rebalancing our courts with mainstream, highly qualified, and diverse judges—historically diverse both in their profession and personhood.

Over half of the new judges are women, over half are people of color, and all of them are immensely qualified by virtue of their skills, their experience, and their unique perspectives they bring to the Federal bench.

We are going to continue working as much as we can for the rest of this year to confirm more judges. And you can be sure that we will push even harder in 2022.

Mr. President, one more point on Republican nomination obstruction, besides judicial nominees, we have a responsibility in this Chamber to confirm President Biden's nominees to his administration. Every President—and this one too—deserves to have his administration filled, and for years in the past, both sides have worked together when possible. But this year, we are seeing a new low from Senate Republicans. Because of the cynical blockade of a handful of Members on the other side, the Senate now faces a backlog of at least 150 nominees, many of whom would have sailed through the Chamber in years past.

We have now had to file cloture on twice as many nominees at this point in President Biden's administration as Republicans had to do under President Trump.

Let's be clear about the nominees at issue. We aren't talking about partisan firebrands or candidates who come out of left field. The bulk of these men and women are uncontroversial, by the book, professional public servants. Many of these nominees would work on issues like supply chains and national security, which our Republican colleagues say they want to address. But now those lives, and the lives of their families, have been thrown into total limbo, all because a handful of Republicans have hijacked the rules of the Senate to slow the confirmation process to a glacial pace, against precedent and common sense.

We have been working over the past day to secure a lift on many of these holds. I want to echo what Senator MENENDEZ has made clear: If the Senator from Texas offers a proposal that does not include lifting all State, Treasury, and USAID nominees, we cannot come to an agreement.

Democrats are working to clear as much of the backlog as possible by consent. If we can't make too much progress, we may need to stay and hold votes on nominees this weekend and next week until we do.

I 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. THUNE. 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. THUNE. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that prior to the vote, I be able to complete my remarks, followed by Senator INHOFE, followed by Senator REED.

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

S. 1605

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I am pleased that today we will finally move to a vote on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022. Thanks to the Democrats' focus on their reckless Build Back Better tax-and-spending spree, consideration of the NDAA, one of the most important bills we consider every year, was delayed for months.

Of course, once we finally got onto the bill, Democrats rushed the process. Senators of both parties filed a total of 1,000 amendments on this bill, but not one—not a single one—of those amendments received a vote on the Senate floor.

But at least we are finally here set to pass this critical legislation. I am pleased the Republicans were able to strengthen this bill in committee and in the so-called preconference negotiations. This includes removing troublesome provisions like red-flag laws that would summarily suspend the Second Amendment rights of our men and women in uniform.

Thanks in large part to Republican efforts, the final bill is $25 billion above President Biden's inadequate budget request.

We have made a lot of progress over the past several years on rebuilding our military, which, I might add, after years of underfunding and budgetary uncertainty, combined with heavy operational demands, had been left underequipped, undermanned, and underprepared to meet the threats of the 21st century. The situation had gotten so bad that in 2018, the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission released a report warning that our readiness had eroded to the point where we might struggle to win a war against a major power like Russia or China—an especially chilling warning considering the mounting destabilization from both of these countries today. The Commission noted that we would be especially vulnerable if we were ever called on to fight a war on two fronts.

But, as I said, over the past several years, we made a lot of progress on restoring military readiness. Unfortunately, President Biden's inadequate budget request threatened to undo some of that progress. So I am pleased—very pleased—that, thanks in large part to Republican efforts, Democrats and Republicans have agreed on a final number that will continue our reinvestment in our military so that our men and women in uniform will have the resources they need to address the threats of the 21st century.

With both China and Russia flexing their military power and the growing danger of a further Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is critically important that we ensure that our Nation is always prepared to defend itself and our vital national interests, whatever the threat.

On the subject of Ukraine, I am very pleased the final bill we will vote on today includes an additional $50 million in military assistance for Ukraine. Ukraine has spent years dealing with a Russian invasion that threatens to push further into its sovereign territory, and we should be supporting the efforts of this free nation to defend itself from Russian aggression.

I am particularly proud to announce that this year's NDAA contains the necessary funding to continue essential preparation for the B–21 mission at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota.

We found out in June of this year that Ellsworth had officially been named ''Main Operating Base 1'' for the future B–21 bomber, home of the Raider. This designation not only means Ellsworth will be the first base to host the B–21 Raider but will also host the formal training unit and the first operational squadron. The stealth B–21 bomber will eventually replace the Air Force's B–1s, which have been a proven workhorse within Global Strike Command but must be divested to free up capacity and resources for an even more agile and capable bomber fleet.

Once operational, the B–21 Raider will be a critical part of our Nation's long-range strike capabilities and nuclear deterrent well into the future. I am incredibly proud that South Dakota and Ellsworth were chosen to serve as the first operating base for the B–21s.

When I first came to the Senate, the outlook for Ellsworth wasn't so rosy. I had barely arrived here in the Senate when Ellsworth was placed on the base realignment and closure, or BRAC, list. It was an all-hands effort by the congressional delegation and Ellsworth and State and community leaders to make the case to the Bush administration and BRAC Commission to remove Ellsworth from the closure list.

Many thought that South Dakota might not have the clout to make this stand, that we didn't wield enough influence. We were only given about a 12-percent chance of pulling through, but we were determined that we weren't going to lose Ellsworth. We stood our ground, and we won the day. Ellsworth was removed from the BRAC list that August, and we got right to work on building up the base so that we would never again find ourselves in the same position.

In 2007, we saw the Air Force Financial Services Center open at Ellsworth, and 2011 saw the arrival of the 89th Attack Squadron and its command and control stations for MQ–9 Reapers. In 2015, a decade-long mission paid off with the quadrupling of the training airspace for the base. The Powder River Training Complex is now the largest training airspace in the continental United States and can be used for large-force exercises that draw combat aircraft from across this country. It is also well-suited for B–21 training, which is undoubtedly one of the reasons Ellsworth was chosen as the first home of the Raider.

I am committed to ensuring that Ellsworth has everything it needs for its new mission so that it can continue to serve as one of our Nation's essential military assets for decades to come. To that end, I worked to ensure that this year's National Defense Authorization Act contain not only full funding for B–21 development but full funding for the first of many equipment and support facilities that will be needed for the B–21 mission at Ellsworth, including a low observable coating and restoration facility, a wash rack and maintenance hangar, expanding the flight simulator facility, and more. It is imperative that these and follow-on military construction projects at Ellsworth stay on pace to ensure the B–21, once fielded, can begin operations alongside the current B–1 mission at Ellsworth to enable a smooth transition from one mission to the next.

The National Defense Authorization Act also ensures adequate support for our B–1s in South Dakota and in Texas and deployed on Bomber Task Force missions so that they have the resources they need until they are replaced by the B–21s.

I will continue to do everything I can here in Congress to support our B–1s at Ellsworth and advance the B–21 mission.

Providing for our Nation's defense is one of our most serious responsibilities as Members of Congress. We have an obligation to ensure that our Nation is prepared to meet any threat, whether the danger comes from terrorism, rogue states, or major powers. We have an obligation to ensure that our men and women in uniform have the resources they need to confront the threats that we ask them to face.

I am frustrated that it took us so long to move to consideration of this year's National Defense Authorization Act, but I am happy we did at least manage to secure a solid piece of legislation, and I look forward to voting for this bill later today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate is finally voting on the fiscal year 2022 Defense authorization bill. It is the most significant bill of the year.

There is an old document that nobody reads anymore called the Constitution. It kind of tells us what we are supposed to be doing around here, and sometimes we forget. We are talking about national defense. That is what we are supposed to be doing. That is why Congress has passed a defense authorization bill for the last 60 years. This will be the 61st year in a row. It will pass. It will pass in about another half hour from now. It is going to pass because it has passed in the past, and everyone realizes this is the most important thing we do here. A lot of people don't say that, but it is true.

Every year, we come together—the House and the Senate, the Republicans and the Democrats—and put our differences aside and build this bill together and show our servicemembers that we really support them. I think that is so important.

All we have to do is argue about this bill, and what we are doing is reflecting on the people who are out there on the line, out there making the sacrifice and losing their lives in many cases. It is important that they know this is the most important thing we do, and that is exactly what we did this year.

It looked a little different this year because the Senate didn't take up the bill until after Veterans Day. I was critical of Senator CHUCK SCHUMER. We filed our bill—Senator REED and I filed this on September 22. We didn't take it up until November 17. That is 2 months that was wasted that we could have used and used very productively. We don't need to do that. We can't let that happen again.

It is the most important bill we do all year, and it shouldn't be left to the last minute. That is especially the case right now because we face threats like we have never before in my lifetime faced. We have China and Russia. They are growing and modernizing their militaries at a rate that we have never

seen before and using their new technology to menace their neighbors. We are seeing Russia build up forces on the Ukrainian border, most likely intended to be used for them to attack. We feel that is what is happening now.

We have seen evidence that China is testing hypersonic missile technology that we don't even have. We don't have hypersonic missile technology like the Chinese have. Those of us who have studied what happened in World War II, we swore we weren't going to let this happen. And for a long period of time, we had the best of everything. In one area where America should have the best of everything, we didn't have the best of everything.

So we have seen threats and are seeing threats now that we haven't seen before. Yes, on the Ukrainian border—we know what is happening there. We know 100,000 people are ready to go in. The Russians are there. Now we are seeing China use things that we don't even have today.

At the same time, following a disastrous withdrawal, terrorist organizations are resurging in Afghanistan. I think we all remember in Afghanistan—what happened when the President went in and we had a withdrawal when we shouldn't have had a withdrawal. Our allies and partners are questioning our credibility and commitment because of that debacle.

Iran continues to expand its nuclear program, and North Korea continues its own provocations.

In short, we have no shortage of challenges to our security and our military supremacy. The security situation with both China and Russia has gotten far worse since the Armed Services Committee first advanced this bill back in July. It has gotten worse over the last few days and certainly every week.

I can't think of a more necessary bill to pass right now, as we are going to do in another short period of minutes. This Defense authorization bill is the most important bill we have. I worked together with Chairman REED, Senator REED, Chairman SMITH, Ranking Member ROGERS, and the Armed Services Committees in both Chambers to build a bill that will help us respond to all these threats. We worked together. We worked together in the committee for a long time.

People think, well, this is only something that we are doing—those of us who are in the position to be providing the leadership in our military—that we do once a year, but I can tell you right now, after we do this—I think it will get passed today and will be signed—we will start again on next year already.

Our final product is a responsible, bipartisan path forward to strengthen the national security and gives our troops the resources, training, equipment, and benefits they deserve. We are talking about our troops. They need it. We don't want them to have close fights out there. We don't want them to have equipment that isn't the best equipment.

I am afraid that we are in a situation right now where that is the case. The first and most important way to do that is by boosting the defense top line by $25 billion. That is what we did. The very first thing that we did was to bring that up to something where it is $25 billion over President Biden's request.

I know defense isn't Biden's top priority, but we showed that it is a bipartisan priority in this Congress. In fact, it was the 2018 NDS. This is the NDS. This is the National Defense System. This is in 2018, and we had six of the smartest Democrats in this field and six of the smartest Republicans. We got together and put together this thing called Providing for the National Defense. This was the Defense Strategy Commission. It is one we have been following since that time, and it shows that we can get things done. This is what we refer to. This is our pattern, and a budget cut like the President wanted isn't going to get us there.

In total, this bill authorizes almost $778 billion for the Department of Defense and for nuclear programs at the Department of Energy. This increase supports many of the military's unfunded priorities, things they need that President Biden's inadequate budget couldn't meet, plus things Congress agrees that the Department must fund in critical areas.

And we provided a 35-percent increase above the President's budget for military construction, the largest MILCON that we have had in over 10 years. We also provided a $4.7 billion increase for shipbuilding, allowing our military to purchase five new battleforce ships, which will be key in our priority theater, in the Indo-Pacific. And I think we know what the Chinese have been doing with their ship program.

We bolstered support to key allies, like Taiwan and Ukraine. This year's NDAA actually increases funding for the Ukrainian Security Assistance Initiative by $50 million, giving Ukraine some $300 million in defense, which is also in our defense too.

And the bill includes strong bipartisan support for our nuclear deterrent, which is the cornerstone of our national security. We fully fund the nuclear modernization, which is a top priority for our military and will solidify support for a key leg of our nuclear triad. Our triad system is one that we have adhered to, and it is something that is working. This actually supports a key leg of that nuclear triad, which is the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent.

The bill works at every turn to maintain our military supremacy and in some areas to spur us to catch up in other areas where we have fallen behind. We have fallen behind China and Russia in certain areas, and we don't like that. And this is what we are trying to correct at the current time.

One area where we do that is in cyber security. We have people, not just experts on the outside. There is one of the members of our Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator MIKE ROUNDS, who probably knows more about cyber security than any one of the advisers that are out there. The bill creates a whole-of-government approach, the public-private partnership to detect and disrupt our adversary's cyber operations.

We also accelerate innovation in key emerging technologies, like artificial intelligence, hypersonic weapons, quantum computing, and 5G. We are doing these things. We are just not doing it as fast as we should, and this is one of the reasons that we are going to pass the most important bill of the year in just a few minutes.

Our bill takes numerous steps to harden our industrial base and remove Russia and China from our national security supply chain.

Of course, our top priority, this year and any year, is our troops, the brave men and women who have volunteered to lay down their lives, on the line, for our country. This year's bill gives them a well-deserved pay raise and improves health. By the way, these are things that people who sometimes talk about the fact that we are spending some money—I don't know how many times I have heard people say: Well, we spend more on defense than China and Russia together.

Well, that is true, but we do something that China and Russia doesn't do. The most expensive item we have is taking care of our troops, making sure that the kids of our troops have schools to go to that are good schools, that we have good housing.

They don't care about things like that, but we do, and we spend more on our military, and people try to use that against us. Well, our people are first, and we are the only country that believes that.

It prevents servicemembers from being dishonorably discharged for refusing the coronavirus vaccine. This is something where we changed a system that otherwise would have offered a dishonorable discharge, and it is in this bill.

So it is a good bill. It is not perfect. No bill is perfect. There are some things I would have had in this bill and I am sure that Senator REED would have had in this bill that didn't make it.

Before we close, I do want to thank the good people who work so hard on this bill on the floor. People don't realize that. You go back to the real world and you talk to real people, as I do when I go back to Oklahoma, and they point out that they don't believe that people are really working. But in the case of the military, they are.

I just have to say the hours that they work. I had occasion to talk to the group about John Wason—John Wason is the minority staff director—and about the number of hours that he works and that his team works. And I am going to read the names of this

team. Senator REED is going to be reading the names of the majority on the team.

But I think it is important that people understand that we have committee staff who work hard, and we are very thankful for the people who provide all that effort.

On his team, John Wason has Rick Berger, Tom Goffus, Scott Richardson, Greg Lilly, Marta Hernandez, Jennie Wright, Adam Barker, Allen Edwards, Katie Magnus, Sean O'Keefe, Brad Patout, Jason Potter, Brian Slatterly, Katie Sutton, Eric Trager, Adam Trull, T.C. Williams, Robert Winkler, and Annie Caputo.

From my staff I had Luke Holland, Dan Hillenbrand, Don Archer, Dan Holder, Sam Trizza, Esther Salters, Jake Johnson, Jake Hinch, Alexandra Slocum, Victor Sarmiento, Dixon Yonan, Leacy Burke—what would we do without Leacy Burke?—Laurie Fitch, and Naomi Walker.

And sometimes we forget about the hard-working floor staff. Nobody ever mentions that. We have a lot of the same people who have been there for a number of years, and we couldn't operate without them. And they were really busy on this bill. And that is Robert Duncan, Chris Tuck, Tony Hanagan, Katherine Foster, Brian Canfield, Max Boyd, and Maddie Sanborn.

I am grateful for all of their services.

And don't forget: This is only half of the battle. After this, we have to go through and after we have made the priorities that we have made, the appropriators will get busy and do what they have done to be a part of this effort, which is the most significant effort that we are having.

So today I encourage all of my colleagues to support this year's National Defense Authorization bill—I know they will—and extend our 60-year track record of getting this bill done. And let's tell the troops that we love them and we support them.

With that, I yield to Chairman JACK REED.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for the fiscal year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act. I am pleased, as we all are, that we will be voting soon on passage.

I would like to thank Ranking Member INHOFE for his leadership and his thoughtfulness on this bill. He has been an excellent partner throughout this whole process.

Our Nation faces an enormous range of security challenges, and it is more important than ever that we provide our military men and women with the support they need to keep Americans safe.

To that end, this bill makes great progress. It addresses a broad range of pressing issues, from strategic competition with China and Russia, to disruptive technologies like hypersonics, AI, and quantum computing, to modernizing our ships, aircraft, and vehicles. It provides our servicemembers with the resources and support they need to defend our Nation, while at the same taking care of their families.

Importantly, this bill authorizes a well-deserved 2.7-percent pay raise for both military members and the DOD civilian workforce. It also increases parental leave to 12 weeks for all servicemembers and creates a new 2-week bereavement leave benefit for both military and Federal civilian employees.

I want to especially note that this bill includes historic, sweeping reforms to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and how the military investigates and prosecutes sexual assault and other offenses, including murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, and many other crimes. Just as my Senate colleagues, the President's Independent Review Commission, and survivors advocate groups have called for, this bill takes prosecutorial power away from the chain of command for these cases. Our bill creates ''special trial counsel,'' highly specialized prosecutors who will have exclusive, binding, and final decision-making authority over whether to prosecute these offenses. This is a sea change for the military justice system, and I am grateful to my colleagues in both Chambers and on both sides of the aisle for working together to achieve this historic reform for the well-being of our military women and men.

Indeed, we listened to survivors, advocates, and experts because we owe it to our servicemembers to get this policy right. The world is as dangerous and complex as it has ever been. We depend on the military to answer the call in these challenging times, and we owe it to them to ensure the policies we enact on this matter and others preserves this Nation's military power and cohesion. I respect those who might see this matter differently, but this bill makes our country and our troops more secure because we listened to advocates and experts to reach a compromise with the House of Representatives.

This year's defense bill also makes excellent progress toward meeting the challenges of long-term strategic competition with China and Russia. It invests in the people, platforms, infrastructure, and game-changing technologies that will define the future. It extends and modifies the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, or PDI, and reiterates the Senate's intent to improve our force posture in the Indo-Pacific, increase readiness and presence, and build the capabilities of our partners and allies to counter the increasing aggression of China.

Similarly, this year's bill authorizes the continuation of the European Deterrence Initiative, or EDI, in recognition of the vital need to support our allies and partners in Europe as we work toward the shared goals of deterring Russian aggression, addressing strategic competition, and mitigating shared security concerns.

With respect to our services, we have taken steps to improve their capabilities and their ability to fight and win. Across the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force, this bill makes significant efforts to improve the readiness of our aircraft, ships, vehicles, missiles, and weapons systems. It authorizes significant increases in military construction projects, modernizing our nuclear triad and missile defense systems, and investing in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, microelectronics, advanced materials, 5G, and biotechnology.

And with regard to our withdrawal from Afghanistan, we must capture the lessons of the last two decades to ensure that our future counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan and elsewhere continue to hold violent extremists at bay. To that end, I am pleased that this bill includes the Afghanistan War Commission Act, an amendment spearheaded by Senator DUCKWORTH.

This bill was originally crafted by the Armed Services Committee after a series of thoughtful hearings, discussions, and debates on both sides of the aisle. Through the committee markup process, we considered more than 300 amendments and ultimately adopted 143 amendments. Senator INHOFE and I introduced this bill to the full Senate with the intent of adding more amendments on the floor. Although we were not able to come to an agreement to debate and vote on several amendments on the floor, we were ultimately able to adopt amendments from Senators on both sides of the aisle in the final legislation.

Over the past several weeks, the Senate and House Armed Services Committees have worked around the clock to come to an agreement on this final version of this bill. I am proud of the improvements we made throughout this process, and I was pleased to see the House vote last week in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion, 363 to 70, to pass the bill. We have produced a strong NDAA that both parties and both chambers can support, and the President will be able to sign.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the phenomenal staff who have made this bill possible. I want to specifically recognize the director for the Democratic staff, Elizabeth King, and the director for the Republican staff, John Wason. They have led their staffs and collaborated admirably with bipartisanship, diligence, and utmost professionalism.

I would also like to thank members of the Armed Services Committee staff: Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jenny Davis, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Creighton Greene, Gary Leeling, Kirk McConnell, Maggie McNamara Cooper, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Andy Scott, Arun Seraphin, Cole Stevens, Soleil Sykes, Keri Lyn Michalke, Hailey Becker, Patrick Shilo, Alison Warner, Leah Brewer, Debbie Chiarello, Joe Gallo,

Leslie Ashton, Cami Pease, Brittany Amador, Griffin Cannon, Nate Green, Brandon Kasprick, Sofia Kamali, Tom Maggiacomo, and, once again, staff director Elizabeth King.

From my personal office, I would like to thank Neil Campbell and Elyse Wasch.

Also, let me thank the floor staff and the leadership staff. Gary Myrick, Tricia Engle, Dan Tinsley, Brad Watt, Stephanie Paone, Nate Oursler, Rachel Jackson, and Liza Patterson. You have been part of this process for the last several weeks, and you have done a remarkable job. We thank you for that very, very much.

I would like to thank Senator INHOFE again for his partnership throughout this process, and I would thank Chairman SMITH and Ranking Member ROGERS from the House Armed Services Committee for their collaboration as well.

Finally, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this excellent bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to concur with amendment No. 4880 is withdrawn.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the yeas and nays are requested.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 499 Leg.]

YEAS—88

Baldwin
Barrasso
Bennet
Blackburn
Blumenthal
Blunt
Boozman
Brown
Burr
Cantwell
Capito
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Cassidy
Collins
Coons
Cornyn
Cortez Masto
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Duckworth
Durbin
Ernst
Feinstein
Fischer
Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hassan
Hawley
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Johnson
Kaine
Kelly
Kennedy
King
Klobuchar
Lankford
Leahy
Luján
Manchin
Marshall
McConnell
Menendez
Moran
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Peters
Portman
Reed
Risch
Romney
Rosen
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Schatz
Schumer
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shaheen
Shelby
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Sullivan
Tester
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Tuberville
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Whitehouse
Wicker
Young

NAYS—11

Booker
Braun
Gillibrand
Lee
Markey
Merkley
Padilla
Paul
Sanders
Warren
Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Lummis

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, on rollcall vote No. 499, I voted aye. It was my intention to vote nay. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to change my vote since it will not affect the outcome.

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

(The foregoing tally has been changed to reflect the above order.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). 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 the nomination of Jennifer Sung, of Oregon, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

VOTE ON SUNG NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sung nomination?

Mr. COONS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have been ordered.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 500 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—49

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

NOT VOTING—1

Lummis

The nomination was confirmed.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the unfinished business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Samantha D. Elliott, of New Hampshire, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to seek unanimous consent to confirm Amanda Howe, President Biden's nominee to be the next Assistant Administrator for Mission Support at the Environmental Protection Agency.

I believe that my friend Senator LEE is going to object to this consent request. I hope when he does that he will explain his objection to this extremely qualified nominee.

I have known the nominee for more than 20 years and can speak directly to her talents and abilities. Amanda held a number of roles in the Commonwealth of Virginia, including serving as my assistant secretary of commerce and trade during my 10 years as Governor.

Amanda also served then-Governor KAINE's administration and Governor MCAULIFFE's administration and has held other leadership positions, including serving as deputy and then acting chief of staff to Mayor Bill de Blasio in New York.

Amanda led the planning and organization of the Queen's visit to Virginia in 2007, when we celebrated 400 years of connection to the UK. She helped plan the first-ever ticker tape parade for the U.S. women's soccer team to celebrate the first World Cup victory. She organized Pope Francis's visit to New York.

Beyond being a talented operator, Amanda also possesses a wealth of knowledge on issues under the EPA's purview, having worked on roles focused on renewable energy.

Amanda has been nominated to lead the EPA's Office of Mission Support, which directs the Agency's efforts to

improve efficiency, coordination, and customer experiences for internal and external stakeholders and the public, including the protection of EPA's facilities and other assets nationwide that are terribly important to our government; IT management, for example, inside the EPA.

It is my strong belief that Amanda has the requisite knowledge, expertise, and experience to carry out these critical functions at EPA.

I am also very proud of the fact—and I thank the chair and ranking member of the EPW committee—that she got passed out on a voice vote.

Now is the time to confirm Amanda so she can begin to oversee these critical management activities at the EPA.

So I, therefore, ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 560, Amanda Howe, of Virginia, to be Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I made communication with the EPA as to how to resolve a concern that I have. It should be an easy thing to resolve. I am waiting to hear back a response from them. In the meantime, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LEE. Sure.

Mr. WARNER. It is my understanding your concern with the nominee is not about the nominee's qualifications.

Mr. LEE. It relates to a matter at the EPA.

Mr. WARNER. Thank you.

I thank the Senator from Utah.

Mr. President, I do hope this matter is resolved. I believe Amanda needs to be installed and doing her job. She has been up for this nomination literally for months.

I also feel this is just one more example—I think probably every Member of the Senate, including the Presiding Officer, has a number of individuals he supports. I know many of my colleagues on the Republican side have nominees they support. The kind of blanket holds that are taking place on way too many of our nominees means that this President can't put in place his team.

The Presiding Officer was a Governor. He is about to be replaced by another Governor. I was a Governor. I can't imagine running an administration a year into my term if I didn't have two-thirds of my appointees serving in office.

The Presiding Officer, I know—I will end very briefly—is an extraordinarily valuable member of the Intelligence Committee. We see America's national security concerns on a daily basis. Those national security concerns will be better met when every major nation in the world has an American Ambassador. It is great that we have State Department personnel, but without that Ambassador in these offices—Amanda is not up for ambassadorship, but there are a host of Ambassadors in critical nations that need to be confirmed.

I hope—as we wind down these last few days of this session before the end of the year, I implore my friends on the Republican side, give these folks who have waited for months and months and months a kind of assurance of their ability to serve, especially when they are noncontroversial. Please remove their objections. Stop objecting. Let's let the government have these people, personnel in place. I hope Amanda Howe will be one of those. I look forward to my friend from Utah resolving this issue.

I thank the Presiding Officer for listening to my extra 5 minutes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Iowa.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we all know that our country is facing a drug crisis. I think it is pretty well known, as the CDC has reported, that over 100,000 Americans died from a drug overdose over a recent 12-month period.

Although fentanyl drugs are heavily responsible for this, we are battling the fight on many fronts. For instance, synthetic drug use is evolving and, of course, very dangerous; same thing for methamphetamine, which is very much on the rise.

Too many lives are being lost. That is why I have been busy working on legislation to stop this epidemic, bills like this title of a bill: Stop the Importation and Manufacturing of Synthetic Analogues Act of 2021.

For too long, criminals have been skirting the law. Do you know how they do it? By changing the chemical makeup of a drug. They keep ahead of regulation-writing. They keep ahead of Congress making laws. Congress is kind of in a situation of playing the deadly game of whack-a-mole as law enforcement tries to keep pace with savvy drug dealers. My bipartisan bill nips this deadly cycle in the bud. This bill would control synthetic substances similar to known drugs while the more time-consuming testing, research, and analysis can be performed.

Also, methamphetamine abuse and use is very concerning. The volume and purity of meth smuggled from Mexico into the United States is at a near all-time high. To address this dire situation, I joined with Senator FEINSTEIN of California to reintroduce the Methamphetamine Response Act. This bill declares meth an emerging threat and requires the Office of National Drug Control Policy to develop and implement a national plan to prevent meth addiction and overdoses. This is a necessary step to combat meth in Iowa and, of course, in the rest of the country.

The Senate passed, very recently, the Meth Response Act. In fact, it was passed this week. The House must act quickly to get the bill to President Biden's desk. Meth is rampant, and action should not be delayed.

I also joined with Senator FEINSTEIN to reintroduce a cannabidiol and marijuana research bill to encourage scientific and medical research on marijuana. Instead of rushing into legalizing or decriminalizing marijuana, we need a better understanding of that plant and its potential benefits but also to know what the side effects are. Let's not put the cart before the horse here in the Senate.

I have also been active as cochairman of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control. Along with the chairman, Senator WHITEHOUSE, we held hearings examining the Federal response to the drug overdose epidemic and the nexus between illicit drug trade and corruption.

I also convened a field hearing in Iowa to hear from grassroots, the experts there and the constituents there, about our own State's efforts—drug control, prevention, and treatment efforts. At that hearing, we had a sad story by a father, Rod Courtney from North Liberty, IA, sharing his story of losing his son Chad 5 years ago due to fentanyl. Rod's powerful testimony is just one instance of the struggles families face from drug abuse.

Stories like Chad's are why I sent multiple letters to the Biden administration to proactively and permanently schedule fentanyl-related substances. We did get a positive response. I am glad to see that the Biden administration has taken my advice and probably the advice of a lot of other Senators as well and recommended permanently scheduling fentanyl drugs.

Yet the administration proposes shielding fentanyl dealers from mandatory minimums. These dealers are potential killers. This watered-down position flies in the face of our current crisis with fentanyl. We have to keep our neighborhoods safe and must hold poison peddlers accountable. That is particularly true with fentanyl offenders.

I am happy to say that, with my support, Congress has extended the life-saving scheduling authority into February, but don't be fooled—we still need a permanent solution.

With the close of 2021 on the horizon, it is natural to reflect. One hundred thousand overdose deaths is an unspeakable tragedy. Each loss is a loved one, a friend, or a neighbor. We must find solutions to this crisis, and I look forward to being part of that solution.

I hope my colleagues will join me in moving those bills.

CROSSFIRE HURRICANE

Mr. President, on another matter, on January 19 of this year, then-President Trump issued a memorandum to the Attorney General, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Director of the Central Intelligent Agency. That memo directed these Agencies to declassify certain Crossfire Hurricane records for public dissemination.

We all know about the fatal defects and political decisions that were made during Crossfire Hurricane. That type of improper government conduct demands maximum transparency. The only way you can trust the government is to make sure that everything that can be made public ought to be made public, and the only exceptions to that would be personal privacy, national security issues, and intelligence matters. Everything else is the public's business and can be made public without hurting people or hurting national security.

On February 25 this year, my staff and Senator JOHNSON's staff requested an update from the Justice Department on what has been declassified. We want to know when a full and complete set of declassified records will be provided to the Congress of the United States.

Since February, our respective staffs have followed up with the Justice Department on countless emails and phone calls. Attorney General Garland has consistently failed to provide a substantive update.

We are now in December, and Attorney General Garland hasn't produced a single declassified record to Congress relating to Crossfire Hurricane. More importantly, Attorney General Garland has kept the American people in the dark.

Now, the Justice Department hasn't claimed that the Durham investigation is a basis for refusing to provide these records, so what is the delay all about? Is the Attorney General trying to shield the Justice Department and the FBI from further embarrassment? Because that is why we don't get a lot of stuff public. It is because some bureaucrat is going to be embarrassed by the information coming out.

The other week, it was reported that an alternative Mueller report has been located at the Justice Department. Now, I don't know what that is all about. Reportedly, DOJ could release it soon. This report, if you want to call it a report, was drafted by Andrew Weissmann's team while he served on Special Counsel Mueller's Trump investigation.

Now, I want you to know this is the same Andrew Weissmann who wiped his government phone while working on that investigation. Many of his colleagues did the same thing to over a dozen phones.

These acts may have deleted Federal records that could be key to better understanding their decision-making process as they pursued their investigation and wrote their report.

On September 11 last year, I wrote to the Justice Department, asking about the potential violation of the Federal recordkeeping laws. I also asked what steps the Justice Department had taken to recover these deleted records.

In response, then, the usual response: The Department failed to answer these questions. Instead, it provided a letter from the inspector general rather than providing a full and complete answer for itself.

The inspector general said that 96 phones were assigned to the Mueller team, but the Justice Department can't locate 59 of those phones. Initially, the Justice Department took possession of 79 of 96 phones.

Based on the information provided to me and Senator JOHNSON from the inspector general, it appears, then, that 74 were reviewed for official recordkeeping purposes; that is, only 74 out of 96 phones.

Accordingly, 22 of Mueller's team's phones weren't reviewed for Federal recordkeeping purposes so we need to know who those phones belong to. This is beyond suspicious, and the Attorney General doesn't seem to have a care in the world.

The inspector general told us there is a document called the SCO Inventory and Property Transfer Document. That would give us a better idea of the Federal recordkeeping process during the Mueller investigation. To date, Attorney General Garland has failed to produce that document.

So what we have here is yet another example of a complete and total Justice Department failure. On the one hand, the Biden Justice Department has no idea what records should be classified—should be declassified pursuant to President Trump's January 2021 declassification order.

The Biden Justice Department has failed to tell Congress what, if anything, it has done to retrieve the missing Mueller phones. The Biden Justice Department has also failed to provide the Mueller team's existing text messages and other records.

Yet, can you believe it, on the other hand, the Justice Department will reportedly soon release an alternative Mueller report because a Federal court made them do it.

Congress has an independent constitutional oversight authority, and that authority requires the executive branch to be responsive to oversight requests, irrespective of any Federal litigation.

The obvious message from the Biden Justice Department is that it will stiff-arm congressional oversight that could prove embarrassing to the Federal Government—or it is like Garland saying: Screw you, Senators.

Our institutions won't survive with that way of doing the people's business. Transparency brings accountability. Probably my colleagues are tired of my saying that—transparency brings accountability. But none of us should stop working to hold government officials accountable for their improper conduct, regardless of their political party.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON THE SUPREME COURT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, 8 months after President Biden asked them to study Supreme Court reform, the Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States has finally released its report.

I want to begin my comments by recalling the backstory behind this group.

The President created this Commission to appease some Members of the Democratic Party. These progressives want to pack the Supreme Court with Justices who will put their agenda before the Constitution.

Not all Democrats belong to that group. I see the Court packers as more of a radical fringe who can't stand the thought that the Court may make decisions that they don't like.

But instead of lending this fringe element the legitimacy they hoped for, the Commission's nearly 300-page report simply lays out the arguments for and against Court packing, and then makes no recommendation.

In fact, the lawyers, professors, and former judges the President appointed were deeply divided on the issue of adding more Justices to our Nation's highest Court.

Twenty-nine of the Commission's 34 members were liberals. But even with this supermajority of left-leaning scholars, the Commissioners still expressed their ''profound disagreement over whether Court expansion at this moment in time would be wise.''

If you can believe it, many Democrats in Congress are fond of saying that expanding the Supreme Court for political reasons is actually unpacking it.

Representative JERRY NADLER, the Democrat from New York who chairs the House Judiciary Committee, has claimed that unpacking the Court by expanding it would ''restore balance'' and that Senate Democrats ''should immediately move to expand the Supreme Court.''

I want to be as clear as I can about this. Adding Justices to the Supreme Court of the United States simply because you don't like some of the decisions they make—that is Court packing.

President Franklin Roosevelt explored this idea in the 1930s, after the Supreme Court struck down key parts of the New Deal.

President Biden's Commission's own report called FDR's attempt to pack the Court a ''needless, futile, and utterly dangerous abandonment of constitutional principle.''

No President has been reckless enough or shortsighted enough to push for it since FDR. President Biden said

he was not a fan of Court packing during his campaign, but then he backtracked and said he was open to the idea.

Giving in to pressure from the far-left wing of his party, he created this Commission instead, leaving the problem of taking a position on this issue for another more politically convenient day.

As the Commission's report details, Court packing is often used as a political weapon in authoritarian regimes, not in the United States of America.

Take Venezuela, where Hugo Chavez cemented support for his socialist policies by expanding the country's Supreme Tribunal of Justice from 20 members to 32 members back in 2004. Look at all the good that did for what was once the wealthiest country in South America.

We need to leave this practice to dictatorships, where it belongs. Republics, like the United States, simply don't engage in this kind of behavior.

As the Commission's report says, stable democracies ''have retained a strong commitment to judicial independence.'' Packing the Supreme Court would take an ax to that tradition of judicial independence.

The United States is the greatest country on Earth because of our respect for the rule of law, not in spite of it.

And in light of this report, a resolution I cosponsored earlier this year that would fix the number of Supreme Court Justices at nine is even more important, and I would like to thank Florida's senior Senator for leading the way on this.

In the American system of separation of powers and checks and balances, our role here in Congress is to make laws, not to interpret them. That is the job of our courts, and their independence in doing that job is absolutely vital.

As the Commissioners write in their report courts ''cannot serve as effective checks on government officials if their personnel can be altered by those same government officials.'' That is a bipartisan group writing that—a bipartisan group where liberals outnumbered conservatives nearly 6 to 1.

We cannot pack the Supreme Court. President Biden needs to put an end to this dangerous idea once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

CAMPUS FREE SPEECH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, many times my fellow Senators have heard me say that my definition of a university is a place where controversy ought to run rampant. The point of going to college is not for all students to come out thinking exactly the same way. College is for ideas to be challenged. To weed out ideas we disagree with, we need open debate, not to shut down the conversation. Students of all stripes should be able to say what is on their mind.

Institutional free speech should not be partisan. You can have partisan discussions, but the merely speaking of it, right or wrong, you agree or disagree, should not be a partisan issue or even be a controversial issue. Everyone is hurt if ideas are not frankly discussed by the next generation.

Thankfully, Iowa has recognized this reality. So this spring, Governor Reynolds signed a bill into law that helps codify free expression in Iowa's public colleges.

Now, it sometimes feels like Washington, DC, can forget common sense on this issue as well as a lot of other issues. But in Des Moines, the bill passed both chambers of the Iowa Legislature with just 1 single ''no'' vote out of 150 senators and representatives.

But here we are nationally. We seem to be heading in the wrong direction in regard to free speech on campus and discussion of some controversial issues. As recent as 2016, majorities of students were confident that the First Amendment was secure, but now it looks like there has been a chilling effect on too many campuses.

According to a more recent poll, 80 percent of the students now say that they self-censor. In other words, 80 percent of the students are afraid to voice and give their support or opposition on certain issues. Hostility to freedom of expression is being heard loud and clear by our students.

But somehow it doesn't seem like the donors seem to be listening to what is happening on these college campuses. I have tried to highlight this overlooked group of donors in the free speech debate. Students and faculty are limited by the threat of getting canceled on campus. But donors have much more sway if they want to take advantage of it.

Now, it seems, unfortunately, these alumnae don't seem to consider free speech when they make a decision to donate, because their donation would have some power behind it if they would take the time to say what they think about how universities ought to be an environment where controversy runs rampant.

We have a poll of donors to one college that found that the vast majority thought that freedom of expression should be a priority on campus, but only 20 percent said it was clear their alma mater protects speech in practice. Now, this is among donors, those who have already given despite their concerns. That is despite donations representing up to 19 percent of college budgets.

There are more examples than I can count of donors withholding contributions and making real concrete change. Donors have stopped speakers from being deplatformed and overrode the veto of the crowd.

It is time to stop pretending that alumni have no say. Earlier this year, I joined the Campus Free Speech Caucus here in the Congress. That caucus tries to preserve this trend. I am also a cosponsor of the Campus Free Speech Resolution, which urges greater First Amendment protection in America's universities.

But this is not a problem that can be solved by any bill in the Senate. Thankfully, that tide is starting to turn. One of the first colleges to make a move was the University of Chicago. In 2015, the university president sent a statement on free expression to the incoming freshmen. He showed in that letter how both sides of the aisle are hurt when campuses clamp down on open debate. He called out what are considered ''trigger warnings'' and ''safe spaces'' while praising academic freedom.

Now other colleges in our country are slowly starting to follow suit. So far, 75 schools have released similar statements, but, of course, 75 schools is only a fraction of all the colleges in the United States.

To continue this progress we need individual Americans to make their voices heard. Ultimately, being a democracy means that we are able to listen to each other and do it civilly. We ought to be able to respectfully talk about where we agree and disagree, not sweep those disagreements under the rug and, in the process, silence those who do have the guts to speak out.

I yield the floor.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO FRANCIS S. COLLINS

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, Dr. Francis Collins, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, will retire this month after serving as the Director since 2009. That will be 12 years in one of the most challenging jobs in Washington, maybe even in the world.

Dr. Collins served under three Presidents in that job. No other person has served under more than one President. During that 12 years, certainly there had been amazing advances in healthcare.

As a Washington Post reporter put it, and this was a quote from his article, ''News that Francis Collins is stepping down as Director of the National Institutes of Health is a bit like hearing that Santa Claus is handing off his reindeer reins.'' This is the time of year to think about that.

When he announced his retirement earlier this year, it was certainly followed by a flood of comments from the scientific community. They used words like ''brilliant,'' ''national treasure,'' ''smartest man in any room,'' ''beloved,'' and ''gentleman.'' I would also echo those words. I think I would add, from the great opportunities I have had to work with him and spend time with him, ''straightforward,'' ''kind,'' ''respected.'' By the way, he never seems

to need to act like the smartest person in any room even if and when he is.

You know, throughout the 12 years he has been Director, he has made countless contributions to biomedical research and public health. Under his leadership, the NIH started groundbreaking research programs like the BRAIN Initiative, which is aimed at revolutionizing our understanding of the human brain, and the All of Us Precision Medicine Initiative, which is a historic effort to try to tailor medical care to the individual, and we see that is where medical care is going.

As the Director of the NIH, Francis presided over the creation of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, which translates basic science discoveries into cures. He started the Cancer Moonshot and the Accelerating Medicines Partnership and increased investment in Alzheimer's and opioid research. He also steered the U.S. Research Enterprise during a once-in-a-lifetime infectious disease pandemic. Without his vision and leadership, we may not have been able to develop and deliver several FDA-approved COVID vaccines, COVID therapies, and diagnostic tests in less than a year.

We wouldn't want to forget that this wasn't the first major health challenge that Dr. Collins navigated us through. He also led the responses to the H1N1 flu outbreak in 2009 and to the 2014 and 2015 Ebola outbreak. It does sort of make you wonder why he was still there when this pandemic came along, but, again, we are fortunate that he was.

His impact on health and healthcare really didn't start when he became the NIH Director. In fact, before becoming Director, he made significant contributions to the research field of genetics. He codiscovered the gene that causes cystic fibrosis, and he found genes for Huntington's disease and type 2 diabetes.

Maybe his most significant scientific contribution was to head the Human Genome Project, which mapped and sequenced the full human genome for the first time. That monumental effort has allowed scientists to unlock some of the great mysteries of human life. It has created the potential to develop treatments and cures for some of our most serious diseases. What it has really done is to have allowed us to begin to think about personalized medicine—realizing that every person is different than every other person and that everybody has the capacity to fight back against any disease that challenges them. Usually, the disease can quickly overwhelm that capacity, which is why the addition of immunotherapy and the addition of personalized medicine are such critical tools for today.

His work had a tremendous impact at the time, and it will have an even greater impact. We can see that impact as we move forward and look at how we need to look at personalized medicine. All of this has been accomplished in a way wherein very few scientists, I think, could have had the articulation of vision that Francis has to share it in a way that people can not only begin to understand these concepts but buy into the concepts.

Certainly, one of the proudest accomplishments I had in the Senate with him was in working to increase NIH funding. When I became chairman of that committee 7 years ago, we had a 10-year stagnation, really, in funding. In working with Senator DURBIN, who was here earlier this morning and talked about Dr. Collins—I tried to grab, to join, that moment but couldn't—and with Senator Alexander and Senator MURRAY on our side of the building and many others and in working with Congressman COLE and now-Chairwoman DELAURO of the Committee on Appropriations on the other side, we just decided we were going to make NIH research a priority and, over the next 7 years, increase funding by 43 percent at a time when so many things were happening so quickly.

Francis Collins, of course, not only was part of sharing that goal but, frankly, was also part of saying: Don't come up with a goal where, when you get there, you are going to stop. Let's keep moving forward as long as we are making the kinds of scientific advances that we know the country needs to make and the world needs to make. And we are doing that.

Finally, he may be remembered the most in many cases for the hope he just has been able to bring to patients and communities. He is a physician. He is a scientist. He has been the Director of NIH, as I said, for 12 years. But part of his real ability is the ability to share who he is and to share the potential of science.

During the time of COVID, we saw Francis coming up with songs and other ways to really focus on the pandemic and the way we need to respond to that pandemic. He is an incredibly skillful person. His legacy, I think, will live through generations of researchers. He has inspired the countless lives he has touched. His impact will be felt for a long time.

I just want to say, on behalf of all of my colleagues—all of whom have been part of that progress of making NIH and health research a priority—thank you, Francis, for your leadership, for your friendship, and for your public service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Madam President, before I start my remarks, I would like to thank the Senator from Missouri and add my thanks to Dr. Francis Collins for his leadership and for his contributions to our country, to our country's future, and for his reassurance during very difficult times.

I thank Senator BLUNT for so eloquently recognizing Dr. Collins.

NOMINATION OF SAMANTHA D. ELLIOTT

Madam President, I also rise today to support Samantha Elliott's nomination to serve on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire.

Our court system was established to serve as an independent arbiter that would deliver equal justice under the law, and our democracy requires an independent and impartial judiciary for us to continue moving forward as a nation. I am confident that, if confirmed, Samantha Elliott will bring the necessary impartiality, experience, and commitment to justice to the Federal bench.

A resident of Concord, NH, Ms. Elliott has spent years representing Granite Staters and has been a leader within the New Hampshire legal community. In her legal practice, she has represented clients at every level of New Hampshire's State court, the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire, and the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

Throughout her career, Ms. Elliott has earned the respect and admiration of those within the legal community. With the support of her peers, she has been selected for inclusion in the ''Best Lawyers in America'' as well as in the ''New England Super Lawyers.'' These awards are a testament to the reputation that she has built in and outside the courtroom.

For this role on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire in particular, members of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee unanimously found Ms. Elliott to be ''well qualified''—a distinction that reflects Ms. Elliott's integrity, professional competence, and temperament.

I also want to note Ms. Elliott's impressive record of using her professional expertise to give back to her community and to our State. She has served on the board of New Hampshire Legal Assistance and with the Legal Advice and Referral Center, which is dedicated to providing legal services to low-income Granite Staters. This year, she became cochair of the founding board of directors for 603 Legal Aid—another critical resource and legal support system for those in need. She has taken on all of these roles while also fulfilling leadership roles within her own firm and tending to a robust legal practice of her own.

Members of New Hampshire's small and tight-knit legal community marvel at Ms. Elliott's time management skills as well as her wide-ranging practice and capacity as an attorney. But what drives her colleagues' respect and admiration is her clear-eyed and passionate commitment to ensuring that everyone in our democracy has access to justice and her understanding that lawyers are privileged to be able to provide it.

Samantha Elliott will be a fair-minded, balanced, and intellectually curious judge who will serve Granite Staters with distinction on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire. I look forward to voting in favor of her nomination, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

I know that my colleague Senator SHAHEEN is here today to speak about Ms. Elliott's experience as well.

I yield the floor to the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes before the vote.

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am really pleased to join my colleague Senator HASSAN to speak in support of Samantha Elliott's nomination to the Federal District Court for the District of New Hampshire.

As we heard from Senator HASSAN, Samantha Elliott has had an amazing public service career. Her professional experience and commitment to ensuring equal access to justice make her eminently qualified to serve on the Federal bench. She will make an excellent addition to the Federal district court in New Hampshire.

Now, Samantha actually came to the practice of law in a less traditional way. She started out first as a writer for magazines before she and her husband flipped a coin to see who would go to law school. After graduating from Columbia Law School—she obviously won the toss—she joined Gallagher, Callahan and Gartrell, a law firm in Concord, our capital city.

Since becoming an attorney, Samantha has litigated before Federal and State courts, handling an impressive collection of matters that involves complex areas of law. She has also served in a variety of leadership positions at her firm, including serving as president for 5 years.

During the selection process, Samantha always came back to the importance of equal access to justice, saying at one point: ''No one closes or opens doors to access to justice like a judge does.'' Samantha knows firsthand, through her extensive work with the New Hampshire legal aid community, just how correct that saying is.

For 9 years, she served on the joint board of the New Hampshire Legal Assistance and the Legal Advice and Referral Center, and she has held various roles on its executive committee. Samantha has also spent more than 2½ years on a special committee that has met every other Monday to revisit the structure of legal aid in New Hampshire. Just think about that—every other Monday for 2½ years to better restructure legal aid in New Hampshire. These tireless efforts culminated in the creation of 603 Legal Aid, which is a new entity that will increase access to justice for New Hampshire's low-income residents.

Samantha has consistently demonstrated her commitment to ensuring that everyone has access to justice no matter what their socioeconomic status. As a result of her commitment, her tenacity, and her respect for the law, Samantha's nomination has garnered widespread support throughout the New Hampshire legal community, including from Chuck Douglas, who is a former Republican Representative to Congress and New Hampshire Supreme Court Justice. Now, he has only ever faced Samantha as an adversary in litigation, but he said she is an ''excellent lawyer who is creative and diligent and exhibits the highest standards of our profession.''

In addition to former Justice Douglas, Samantha's nomination is supported by a diverse collection of attorneys and others in the New Hampshire legal community, including the New Hampshire Women's Bar Association; Judge Gary Hicks, who is a current supreme court justice in New Hampshire, a senior associate; and George Moore, the executive director of the New Hampshire Bar Association, to name just a few of those who have weighed in with letters of support.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have these letters of support printed in the RECORD.

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

NEW HAMPSHIRE WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION,
October 4, 2021.

Re: Nomination of Samantha Elliott to the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND RANKING MEMBER GRASSLEY: On behalf of the unanimous Board of Directors of the New Hampshire Women's Bar Association, and in my personal capacity as her law partner, I write, collectively with the Board, in support of Samantha Elliott's nomination for the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire. We urge the Committee and full Senate to promptly review and confirm her nomination.

Since admission to the bar, Attorney Elliott has spent her entire legal career practicing in New Hampshire. She has represented plaintiffs and defendants, individuals, corporations, and governmental entities. She has handled matters in nearly all areas of civil practice, such as commercial disputes, employment and discrimination, product liability, property rights, and municipal defense in civil rights litigation. She has successfully represented clients in litigation, trials, and appeals in every New Hampshire state court, the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire, and the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

In addition to her legal work, Attorney Elliott has dedicated over a decade towards volunteer board work in service to legal aid, first with New Hampshire Legal Assistance and the Legal Advice and Referral Center, and then 603 Legal Aid. Attorney Elliott frequently speaks on lawyers' continuing legal education panels, including multiple years with the Federal Practice Institute. She is an active member of the American Inns of Court, and has served on both the New Hampshire Court Accreditation Commission and the Federal Court Advisory Committee.

The New Hampshire Women's Bar Association Board of Directors strongly supports Attorney Elliott's nomination to the federal bench. Attorney Elliott is an outstanding member of our legal community. She possesses the mental acumen and temperament to decide matters fairly and impartially. She would be an asset to the federal judiciary, and we strongly recommend her appointment.

Sincerely,

Caroline K. Leonard, NHWBA President 2020–2022; Christina A. Ferrari, Immediate Past President; Katherine E. Hedges, Treasurer; Lyndsay N. Robinson, Networking Chair; Meredith R. Farrell, Public Relations Chair; Christine Hilliard, Public Service Chair; Emily Gray Rice, Member at large; Marrielle B. Van Rossum, Member at large; Lindsey B. Courtney, Vice President; Brooke Lovett Shilo, Secretary; Alexandra S. Cote, Membership Chair; Shauna Segelke, Programming Chair; Terri M. Harrington, Member at large; Courtney G. Tanner, Member at large.

DOUGLAS, LEONARD & GARVEY, P.C.,
October 6, 2021.

Re: Nomination of Samantha Elliott to the District Court of New Hampshire

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND RANKING MEMBER GRASSLEY: I am writing to support the nomination of Samantha Elliott of New Hampshire to be a United States District Judge for the District of New Hampshire.

I served as a judge for over 10 years on the state Superior Court and the state Supreme Court and have practiced in the federal courts since I was admitted to the Bar in 1968. I know what the job entails and that she will perform admirably.

We currently have at least two cases in which Attorney Elliott is on the other side. I have never been in litigation with her other than as adversaries. She is an excellent lawyer who is creative and diligent and exhibits the highest standards of our profession. She is well respected in the New Hampshire Bar and has served our legal aid and legal assistance programs for years.

I have also dealt with her as a lobbyist for a pool of municipal governments. While we were adversaries for years over various immunities and governmental disputes with plaintiffs, she always kept her word and I could trust her to accurately convey our negotiated deals even if I were not present to submit them to a committee. That is an extremely rare quality, and one that is not general currency in our capital or yours.

I have no hesitation supporting her nomination and know she will serve the judiciary well on our bench.

By the way I enjoyed serving with then Congressman Durbin when I was in the House in 1989 and 1990.

Sincerely,

CHARLES G. DOUGLAS, III.

OCTOBER 2, 2021.

Re: Nomination of Samantha D. Elliott to the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND RANKING MEMBER GRASSLEY: We are writing in enthusiastic support of Samantha Elliott's nomination to the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire. Both of us have worked closely with Ms. Elliott over the past ten years to achieve the goal of equal access to justice for all in New Hampshire.

Deborah, a legal aid lawyer in Tennessee and New Hampshire in her early career, served as a judicial officer in New Hampshire's Superior Court and Family Division for 25 years. In 2013, following her retirement from the bench, Deborah joined the overlapping Boards of New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA)and the Legal Advice & Referral Center (LARC) serving as Co-Chair of the Joint Board and then Chair of the LARC Board. Beginning in 2018, Deborah spearheaded the Statewide Planning Committee,

created to improve the delivery of quality legal services to low income and disadvantaged residents of New Hampshire. This three-year effort resulted in the merger of LARC and the NH Bar Association's Pro Bono Program into 603 Legal Aid, collaborating in partnership with NHLA. Ms. Elliott and Deborah have worked closely over the past five years, as Co-Chairs of the overlapping Boards, and during this intense three-year Statewide Planning commitment. Deborah is now a founding member of the 603 Legal Aid Board, of which Ms. Elliott is the founding Co-Chair.

John is currently a legal aid consultant and NH school funding advocate. He worked for 38 years at NHLA New Hampshire Legal Assistance as a staff attorney and managing attorney before serving for 18 years as the program's. Executive Director until his retirement in 2014. During his time at NHLA he played a leadership role in advocacy for equal justice in New Hampshire, in the New England region, and nationally. He was Executive Director of NHLA during the beginning of Ms. Elliott's term on the overlapping Boards of NHLA and the Legal Advice and Referral Center (LARC).

We have observed Ms. Elliott's superior intellect and communication skills, and we have seen how others respond to her measured and perceptive analysis of difficult problems. We know how respected she is among her fellow Board members and the staff of NHLA, LARC, and now 603 Legal Aid, who have relied on her good and ethical judgment in the governance of these organizations. And we have been impressed with her work ethic, her focus, her humanity, and her integrity. She possesses in great abundance the intelligence, ethical grounding, and temperament that are vital to being a fair and effective judge.

While we admire her intellect and her character, from our perspective as legal aid leaders we want to emphasize Ms. Elliott's extraordinary fidelity to the concept of equal justice and her commitment to seeing that everyone has the opportunity to access this basic American value, no matter their position in society. The amount of time and energy that Ms. Elliott has devoted to the cause of equal justice is immeasurable. Despite the demands of a busy law practice, Ms. Elliott has unsparingly committed herself to assuring that New Hampshire's legal aid organizations are well-managed and highly collaborative, so that they can deliver quality legal services to the poor. She has used her stellar reputation in the legal community to recruit prominent lawyers to support access to justice efforts, whether in leadership positions, as advocates, or as donors. She has volunteered her own legal services by assisting the Boards in understanding their fiduciary responsibilities and providing advice on other legal matters. She has developed relationships with the executive leadership of NHLA, LARC, and 603 Legal Aid, nurturing mutual trust and mutual commitment to mission. And she has advocated in multiple forums, including at the NH Supreme Court and in the NH Legislature, in support of everyone's right to justice and dignity in our legal system.

We hope that you will consider this nomination favorably. We are confident that, as a judge, Ms. Elliott will be highly competent and deeply compassionate. We know that she will treat everyone who appears before her with the respect they deserve from our judicial system, regardless of their social status or identity. And, as a member of the federal bench, she will have the opportunity to bring our court system closer to the goal of equal access to justice for all.

Sincerely,

DEBORAH KANE REIN, ESQ.,
Lake Worth, FL (formerly Concord, NH).
JOHN E. TOBIN, Jr., ESQ.,
Concord, NH.

NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR ASSOCIATION,
October 1, 2021.

Re: The nomination of Samantha Elliott to the District Court for the United States District of New Hampshire

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND RANKING MEMBER GRASSLEY: I write in support of the nomination of Samantha Elliott to serve as a judge on the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire. I urge the committee and full Senate to promptly review and confirm her nomination. I have worked with Attorney Elliott on a number of matters over the years and found her to be an exceedingly excellent trial lawyer and advocate for both plaintiffs and defendants. She is extraordinarily bright, personable, and has a great temperament to be on the bench. In the course of her career, she also served as managing partner of her law firm.

In addition, I worked very closely with Attorney Elliott in her capacity as a Board Member for New Hampshire Legal Assistance and Legal Advice and Referral Center. Together, we recently merged the Bar Association's Pro Bono program with the Legal Advice and Referral Center to create a new statewide entity to serve indigent citizens. The new organization's name is 603 Legal Aid, and it was Attorney Elliott's determination, forthrightness, and ability to bring various stakeholders to the table that ensured that our efforts would be successful. There is no doubt that she will bring the same energy, judgment, and intellectual capacity to the federal bench.

In closing, I respectfully submit my strong support for Samantha Elliott and request the committee and full Senate to promptly review and confirm her nomination to this important position.

Very Truly Yours,

GEORGE R. MOORE ESQ.,
Executive Director,
New Hampshire Bar Association.

BACKUS, MEYER & BRANCH, LLP,
ATTORNEYS AT LAW,
Manchester, NH, October 4, 2021.

Re: Samantha Elliott

DEAR SENATOR DURBIN: I welcome this opportunity to support the nomination of Samantha Elliott. I have practiced law in New Hampshire since 1977, first with the New Hampshire Civil Liberties Union, and since 1981 in private practice. My principal areas of work are plaintiff's employment law and civil rights. Attorney Elliott has been defense counsel in several of my cases. In my experience, she is very knowledgeable of the law, has excellent legal skills, and works hard to achieve a fair outcome. Notwithstanding her defense counsel role, she has demonstrated a capacity to empathize with the plaintiff.

She has a strong commitment to securing equal protection and justice. Equally important, at least from my perspective, is her welcoming demeanor which would make her courtroom a great place to practice law.

Please let me know if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

JON MEYER.

BACKUS, MEYER & BRANCH, LLP,
ATTORNEYS AT LAW,
Manchester, NH, October 4, 2021.

Re: Samantha Elliott

DEAR SENATOR GRASSLEY: I welcome this opportunity to support the nomination of Samantha Elliott. I have practiced law in New Hampshire since 1977, first with the New Hampshire Civil Liberties Union, and since 1981 in private practice. My principal areas of work are plaintiff's employment law and civil rights. Attorney Elliott has been defense counsel in several of my cases. In my experience, she is very knowledgeable of the law, has excellent legal skills, and works hard to achieve a fair outcome. Notwithstanding her defense counsel role, she has demonstrated a capacity to empathize with the plaintiff.

She has a strong commitment to securing equal protection and justice. Equally important, at least from my perspective, is her welcoming demeanor which would make her courtroom a great place to practice law.

Please let me know if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

JON MEYER.

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SUPREME COURT,
September 28, 2021.

Re: Nomination of Samantha Elliott to the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND RANKING MEMBER GRASSLEY: It is with much pleasure that I write to you in support of Attorney Samantha Elliott. My knowledge of her qualifications derives from ten years of personal observations including: multiple arguments before our court; active participation in our Daniel Webster Inns of Court; and her remarkable public service.

Attorney Elliott has earned an exalted position among New Hampshire lawyers. She has the wisdom, the patience, and the sense of humor necessary to become one of the finest District Court judges to sit in our lifetime.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any further information.

Very truly yours,

GARY E. HICKS,
Senior Associate Justice.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I am confident that Samantha's passion for the law and dedication to the impartial administration of justice will make her an excellent judge, and I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON ELLIOTT NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Elliott nomination?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 501 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Baldwin	Cantwell	Cortez Masto
Bennet	Cardin	Duckworth
Blumenthal	Carper	Durbin
Blunt	Casey	Feinstein
Booker	Collins	Gillibrand
Brown	Coons	Graham
Burr	Cornyn	Grassley

Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Luján
Manchin
Markey
Menendez
Merkley
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Portman
Reed
Romney
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Tester
Tillis
Toomey
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden
Young

NAYS—37

Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Braun
Capito
Cassidy
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst
Fischer
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Paul
Risch
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shelby
Sullivan
Thune
Tuberville
Wicker

NOT VOTING—1

Lummis

The nomination was confirmed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I come to the floor at a time when, I believe, as of today, there are 72 nominees for State Department and USAID positions here in Washington and overseas pending on the Senate floor.

I am going to make a series of unanimous consent requests. I am first going to proceed to one to which there will likely be one objection. Then I will give a few minutes of remarks and then give additional ones.

I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, if applicable, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 239, Michele Jeanne Sison, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Ambassador, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Organization Affairs); that there be 10 minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form on the nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate; and that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and no further motions be in order on the nomination; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. I object.

Madam President, it is now December. It has been nearly 4 months since the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Thirteen servicemembers lost their lives in the attack on Abbey Gate along with hundreds of civilians. As a result of the botched evacuation operation, hundreds, if not thousands, of American civilians were left behind to the enemy.

We hear from our friends on the other side of the aisle that my insistence that we actually vote on nominees is unprecedented. I would humbly suggest that the crisis into which this President has led this country is unprecedented. In my lifetime, it is unprecedented.

And who has been held accountable for this disaster? No one. Who has the President fired? Who has offered their resignation? Which of the planners at the Department of State or the Department of Defense or the National Security Council have been relieved of duty? No one.

Until there is accountability, I am going to ask that the Senate do the simple task of its job, which is to actually vote on these nominees. The least we could do is observe regular order and vote on these leadership positions at the Department of State and at the Department of Defense.

My colleagues say that we have got to put national security first. I agree with them about that. But I believe that begins at the top, with the President of the United States and the leadership of the Department of Defense and the Department of State. I, for one, am not going to stand by and look the other way while this administration systematically endangers our national security, imperils the American people, and watches the sacrifice of our soldiers go by without any accountability, without any change in direction.

I am not willing to look the other way and just pretend that Afghanistan didn't happen, which seems to be the posture that many in this body have adopted. I am not willing to do that. I can't do that because I promised the parents of the fallen that I wouldn't do that.

I am going to discharge my responsibility. And as long as it takes, I will continue to draw attention to what happened at Abbey Gate and to demand accountability for the disaster that this administration has pushed upon this country and upon the people of my State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, at a time when we need senior people to help our country deter adversaries, advance our interests, and secure our values, it is important that all the nominees currently waiting on this floor be confirmed.

They are well qualified. Eight of them would serve under the jurisdiction of my Subcommittee on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in various multilateral organizations and in economic and energy policy.

I understand and I respect the right of colleagues on both sides of the aisle to seek amendments on votes like the Nord Stream 2 issue. I, for one, would be happy to vote on additional subjects around foreign policy and national security, and I pushed for additional votes during the National Defense Authorization Act floor process.

These national security issues are important, and this Chamber owes to the American people robust debate, but we also need to provide advice and consent on any President's nominees in a purposeful and timely manner.

With that in mind, in a few moments, I will officially ask unanimous consent to confirm the following nominees: Jack A. Markell, of Delaware, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador; R. Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China; Rahm Emanuel, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Japan; Steven C. Bondy, of New Jersey, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Bahrain; Cynthia Ann Telles, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Costa Rica; Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador; Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador; Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform; Lisa A. Carty, of Maryland, to be Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador; Lisa A. Carty, of Maryland, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations; Laura S. H. Holgate, of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador; Laura S. H. Holgate, of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to

the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador; C.S. Eliot Kang, of New Jersey, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Security and Non-Proliferation); Adam Scheinman, of Virginia, to be Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation, with the rank of Ambassador.

I am going to ask unanimous consent for all of these because they are critical to our foreign policy and our national security.

And I must say at the outset, I have appreciated the opportunity to dialogue with my colleagues about a possible path forward, but as of right now, we don't have one, so I am seeking this unanimous consent.

Principal among the many nominees I just spoke about is my dear friend, Jack Markell. I would like to turn to my colleague, also from the State of Delaware, for a few minutes of remarks about this wonderful public servant we have both known for decades.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from the Commonwealth of Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. The Commonwealth of Delaware?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The State of Delaware. I am sorry.

Mr. CARPER. The first State. The first State to ratify the Constitution before anyone else did. It made Delaware the first State and the only State for a whole week.

Jack Markell was a great Governor. I would like to say he is one of the two best Governors we have ever had. As a former Governor, you know what I am talking about.

Madam President, I rise today to ask unanimous consent to confirm Delaware's own Jack Markell as Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development better known as the OECD.

I have had the privilege of knowing Jack for over two decades as a steadfast Governor—a brilliant Governor, actually—of the State of Delaware, chairman of the National Governors Association, and as a prudent State treasurer for our State; someone who had a great career in the world of business, most recently as a compassionate Coordinator for Operation Allies, leading the national effort to resettle Afghan refugees across the United States.

Jack is someone whom I deeply respect as a public servant and whom I admire as a father, as a husband, and as a son.

After being referred out of committee by voice vote, he is someone whom Senators from both sides of the aisle trust to serve as a steward for American interests abroad.

I am confident Jack will serve the United States with great distinction as our top diplomat to the OECD, and I am honored to introduce him, if you will, here today on the Senate floor.

There are some people who might not know just what the OECD does and the important role it plays keeping our world leaders informed and their economies thriving.

Somebody asked me what is my favorite part of my job, and I tell them it is helping people. They ask: How do you like to help people?

I say I like to help make sure they have a job, to make sure people have a job and can support themselves and their family. That is about one of the best things you can do for them.

The predecessor for the OECD—the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation—was founded in the rubble of World War II to help European nations to serve and disburse funds received from the Marshall Plan and to lift up the economies of the world.

A little over a decade later, the organization was restructured. It was restructured to open up beyond the borders of Europe. In 1961, what we now know as the OECD was formed as a ''North Star,'' if you will, for global economic research, publishing data and forecasts for economic stability in this interconnected world that we live in.

Today, some 38 countries—38 democratic nations dedicated to free market principles—send Ambassadors to Paris every year to help lift up the economies of the world once more. It is a gathering place to seek out and to share solutions to economic problems and challenges and to strengthen our global leadership status.

Yet, for the last 4 years, not only have we as a nation withdrawn from our seat at the international table, we stopped looking outward for solutions that can boost our own economy. It has been almost 5 years—in fact, since January 20, 2017—since we had a Senate-confirmed ambassador to the OECD—5 years. Five years away from the table, our eyes closed to new solutions. That is particularly dangerous in the wake of an economic recession. I think it is foolish. It is beyond being foolish.

Right now, the OECD could use someone like Jack Markell. He will do a great job representing our Nation, and he is ready to go to work. When I think of Jack Markell, I think a lot about the successes he had in the State of Delaware, serving three terms as State treasurer, a position I once held, and two as Governor.

I also think of the great adversity he has been through. When he was first elected Governor of Delaware in November 2008, the housing bubble had burst, and our Nation entered the great recession. In an op-ed for the Atlantic in May of 2015, Jack recalled it was immediately clear that his time as Governor would be focused on one thing, and that would be job creation.

And he was right. In the winter of his first year, the great recession brought unemployment in our State to 9 percent—9 percent. In an instant, our economy was in free fall, along with the economies of many other States. The General Motors plant in Wilmington, the Chrysler plant in Newark—both in northern Delaware—the Valero refinery in Delaware City—all of these hubs for good-paying jobs for thousands and thousands of Delaware families shut down just like that. Workers across the State, whether an assembly line worker, a single parent working in the finance industry, or a family farm in our agricultural sector—every family felt the pain of that recession.

But Jack didn't shy away from the moment. He didn't lose sight of what is important in the face of economic uncertainty. Jack Markell knows all too well that in adversity lies opportunity. I think he learned that from Albert Einstein. In the face of great adversity, Jack Markell worked to court companies from all over the world to bring their businesses to Delaware, to bring jobs back, to retrain the employees who lost the jobs they had held for decades. He got Delaware back on the move, and the voters recognized his economic prowess by reelecting him by a wide margin in 2012.

Over his two terms as Governor, Delaware's unemployment rate came down significantly. In fact, Delaware had the best job growth in the region, bringing vital jobs back to Delaware families at places like the Delaware City Refinery, a project that I was proud to work with Jack on, and wages grew to be among the best in our country.

Jack Markell was laser-focused on developing the workforce of our future too. Graduation rates improved, and Delaware launched something called Pathways to Prosperity, an innovative program in schools across America helping to better prepare students for a wide range of careers, whether they go to college or take a different path—a different path but a path to gainful employment.

For 8 years as Governor, Jack worked with both sides of the aisle to get things done and improve the lives of Delawareans, and his legacy as Governor of Delaware will be felt for generations.

I oftentimes like to say that the roles of Presidents, the roles of Senators, Governors, and other elected officials is not to create jobs. Sometimes people talk about the jobs that they created as President, mayor, Senator, whatever. We don't create jobs. What we do is we help create a nurturing environment for job creation.

What Jack Markell has focused on for years—for decades, actually—is how to help many stakeholders in our State create a nurturing environment for job creation and job preservation. Jack understood this, and he will take that with him to Paris, with the memory of what looking to companies and countries across the world for solutions did to help families in Delaware. He will continue to look anywhere and everywhere to help American workers.

Because of Jack's lifelong learning, he spent literally decades thinking about how to bring more Americans into a more equitable, prosperous economy.

He learned the fundamentals of economic development by studying development studies and economics at Brown University and earned his master's of business administration at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

He learned what businesses need to thrive by serving as a senior vice president at Nextel Communications and later in a senior management position at Comcast.

He learned about equity as State treasurer, where he led a campaign to promote the earned income tax credit for families and founded the Delaware Money School to offer free financial literacy classes to empower Delawareans.

He learned about the power of global economic solutions as Governor, bringing vital jobs back to the State literally at the depth of the great recession.

He learned how to lead with empathy. By answering President Biden's call to lead our Nation's Afghan resettlement operation, he embodied the core tenet of Matthew 25, and that is to welcome the stranger in our land and welcome our Afghan allies with open arms and open hearts.

Jack Markell succeeded in no small part because he is a lifelong learner, and every step of the way, he has exceeded expectations for the people of Delaware because he has followed a simple but sacred maxim, and I would quote it: A good job trumps all.

Before any politics in Washington or policy paper in Paris, he is worried about putting food on the table—and not just in Delaware but putting Americans back to work across the country so they can put food on their own tables.

Today, as we continue to build back better in the wake of an economic recession, we need someone who is constantly willing to look out for solutions to help find work for those at home because, after all, a good job trumps all.

So today, the OECD could use someone like Jack Markell, someone to look for and bring with him global solutions to the economic challenges of today.

Before I yield the floor, I am reminded of a story from when Jack's second term as Governor came to an end. He decided he wanted to find a way to raise money for Delaware's children on his way out. He settled on a novel idea—a 3300-mile bike ride across the country, from Astoria, OR, to Rehoboth Beach, DE, and along the way, across 50 days, averaging 80 miles a day. He raised something like $120,000 for groups like the YMCA of Delaware, Special Olympics of Delaware, Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware, and more.

Of course, I worked just as hard as Jack during that trip. I jumped in my car and I drove 2 hours to Rehoboth Beach to meet him as he came across the finish line.

He dipped his bicycle wheel—I think the front wheel—in the Atlantic Ocean, as he had dipped his rear wheel in the Pacific Ocean some, gosh, 50 days before.

But that trip really shows you who Jack Markell is—proactive, thoughtful, and more importantly for the OECD, always willing to look for new, creative ideas to help improve the lives of Americans and always willing to put in the work to get the job done.

We still have a ways to go to get our Nation's economy and the economies of our world where they need to be, where we want them to be, but I am confident that with Jack Markell at the helm at OECD on our behalf, we will be able to get to the finish line, no matter how long it takes.

With that, I urge my colleagues to join my wingman in the Senate, Senator CHRIS COONS, and me in supporting Jack Markell to be our Ambassador to the OECD.

With that, Madam President, I yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from the State of Delaware.

Mr. COONS. I want to thank my colleague, the senior Senator from Delaware. I, too, have known Governor Markell for decades, and I, too, was prepared to make long and fulsome comments about his remarkable record of achievement both as a leader in the private sector, as someone who actually did help create jobs by launching Nextel and by growing it to a remarkable, world-class telecom company, and his leadership as State treasurer, to his leadership as Governor, but that has been covered in wonderful detail.

His Pathways to Prosperity Program in Delaware I have recommended to colleagues of both parties as a model for how we might move forward on apprenticeships and on skilling for the 21st century and his current service as the President's special adviser to lead Operation Allies Welcome. Senator CARPER and I just visited Fort Dix on Friday with Governor Markell to see the tremendous work of our Armed Forces and to visit with Afghan families who have just been relocated to the United States. It is just a reminder of his great heart and his dedication to service. I am confident that he has the experience, intelligence, and character to serve admirably as our Ambassador to the OECD.

All the individuals for whom I will call a unanimous consent request here in just a moment—I am confident that these are individuals nominated for positions critical to our national security interest and our ability to maintain our standing in key international organizations.

Four of these nominees will be responsible for representing the United States at various U.N. bodies and three of them for leading work on nuclear energy nonproliferation, to promote energy security while protecting the American people from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These are diplomats who will help the United States bolster and reform institutions so they can effectively withstand the steady march, the pressures of authoritarianism, and uphold our core values of human rights, labor rights, democracy, and transparent economic practices.

In conclusion, I ask that we confirm these nominees today so they can move forward with representing our Nation, Governor Markell and many others. Several have been pending since April, more than 220 days; others, for 130 days—since July. It is December.

While I am hopeful that we can yet find a path forward towards a resolution of this impasse, today I was committed to coming to the floor and asking unanimous consent. We need to get these folks into their positions as soon as humanly possible.

So I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, if applicable, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar Nos. 318, 319, 442, 446, 460, and 514; that there be 10 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on the nominations en bloc; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that if a nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order on these nominations; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, I thank my friends from Delaware for their eloquent remarks. As both Senators know, I have a deep affinity for the State of Delaware. My mother was born in Wilmington, DE. I have hundreds of cousins in Delaware, who are their constituents.

I would note that the senior Senator from Delaware, Senator CARPER, when I was newly elected, proceeded to welcome me into a caucus I didn't know existed, the TC Caucus. Indeed, he and I both reflected upon this recently when we were both in Oklahoma for the funeral of our former colleague, Senator Tom Coburn, another member of the TC Caucus.

I would note as well that Senator CARPER went so far as to call my mother on her birthday to wish her happy birthday for having been born in Wilmington, and my mother appreciated that.

The junior Senator from Delaware—we served together on multiple committees. We have worked together. We have sparred together. And we may well be able to work together in finding a resolution to this impasse.

Every Senator here knows why I have holds on these nominees. Right now, as we speak, hundreds of thousands of Russian troops are massed on the border of the Ukraine, waiting to invade.

The reason for that is because Joe Biden surrendered to Vladimir Putin on the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. That is the direct cause for the threat of military invasion Ukraine faces right now.

Putin didn't just wake up one day and decide to invade Ukraine. He has wanted to invade Ukraine for years. In fact, he did so in 2014, but he stopped short of a full invasion because he needed to use the Ukrainian energy infrastructure to get Russian natural gas to the European market. Because of that—that is why Putin launched Nord Stream 2, to have a pipeline directly from Russia to Germany going undersea to cut Ukraine out of the transit loop, so then the Russian tanks could invade Ukraine.

This body right now should be talking about the crisis in Ukraine and about how to counter Putin's aggression and expansionism. The best way to do so would be to immediately put sanctions on Nord Stream 2—sanctions that we had in place; bipartisan sanctions that I authored, that both of the Senators from Delaware supported, and that, indeed, had overwhelming bipartisan support from both Houses of Congress, passed into law, and worked.

Now, I have sought to ensure that we have the time, space, and resources to address how we stop Putin from invading Ukraine, and, indeed, I have offered a deal to resolve this impasse. It is a deal that I have offered to Senator SCHUMER that I would lift the hold on a number of nominees in exchange for a vote on sanctions on Nord Stream 2.

I would note that this is a deal Senator SCHUMER accepted 3 weeks ago. Three weeks ago, when we were debating the National Defense Authorization Act, I likewise sought a vote on sanctions on Nord Stream 2. In exchange for that vote, I offered to lift the hold on seven nominees. Senator SCHUMER accepted that deal, and the vote was scheduled. Then, unfortunately, the entire package of amendment votes that had been agreed to on Nord Stream 2 fell down in an unrelated dispute over other matters.

This week, I have offered Senator SCHUMER a similar deal, although a substantially more generous deal. The deal that Senator SCHUMER had accepted was to lift seven holds in exchange for a vote. He said yes to this.

I have now put on the table a deal to lift 16 holds in exchange for a vote on Nord Stream 2 sanctions—more than twice as many holds. Included among those 16 is Governor Markell from Delaware. He is among the holds I have agreed to lift if Senator SCHUMER will agree to schedule the vote that 3 weeks ago he agreed to schedule.

At this point, this deal is a better deal on every metric than the deal SCHUMER already said yes too. Unfortunately, as we stand right now, he has not yet said yes to this better deal.

So at this point, I am going to counter with a request for unanimous consent that we impose sanctions on Nord Stream 2, and I expect my Democratic colleagues will oppose this.

But as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 3322 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. 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 to the modification?

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I object to the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I would note, as I did again, that there is a prospect for a reasonable compromise, and it is a compromise that Senator COONS has been integral in working to seek a resolution, and I thank him for his positive and productive efforts trying to bring the two sides together.

You know, the two sides of the aisle often distrust each other. It is the nature of a two-party system. But we have a path forward that can confirm a substantial number of nominees in these final 2 weeks of this year and can also schedule a vote on an issue that previous to this administration commanded virtual unanimous, bipartisan support.

Among those who would be cleared is Governor Markell, and so I would encourage my friends from Delaware, given the eloquence with which you advocated his confirmation, I would suggest you direct that eloquence to your own party's leader, who has the ability to accept this deal and see Governor Markell confirmed to the new position to which he has been nominated this week. But since that deal has not yet been accepted, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, if I might, just in concluding this particular exchange, several things are also important to make clear.

First, I think every Member of this Congress is concerned about the security, the independence, the safety of Ukraine and about aggressive actions by Putin's Russia.

Second, earlier today, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate majority leader urged that all holds on ambassadorial nominees be waived. In the interest of America's security, our place in the world, our ability to do the job that we have to do here in this body of advocating for and representing the interests of the United States by confirming qualified and competent nominees, they have urged that every hold be lifted. That is the current position of the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and the majority leader.

Hearing the objection of my colleague from Texas, I understand there is a significant gap. I commit to working to trying to resolve this in a responsible way, but, in my view, the right lies on the side of those who are saying we should not have holds on Ambassadors.

I also agree that there should be consideration of the issue of whether or not sanctions appropriately should be imposed on the Nord Stream pipeline going forward.

It is my hope that, working together and listening to each other, we can yet find a way forward.

One last comment and concern: At the end of this calendar year, every nominee will return to the White House and need to be renominated. It is my hope that we will also come to an understanding that every nominee for an ambassadorship who has already been heard by the Foreign Relations Committee and advanced to this floor will not be returned and there be a requirement that they be reheard in front of our committee.

We can find a fast path forward. I dedicate myself to finding it and working with any colleague interested in working with me to close this gap in the days that remain.

With that, Madam President, I would like to thank you and my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about our Nation's economy.

We have come to the end of another calendar year. The American people are asking themselves a simple question: Are we better off now, today, than we were 1 year ago?

For most Americans, the answer is no. In fact, a new survey from the New York Federal Reserve says just that. Most of the people surveyed say they are worse off now than they were 1 year ago.

Most also said, very concerning, that they expect to be worse off a year from now than they are today, and it is easy to see why. Shelves are empty, we have the worst labor shortage ever recorded, and prices are rising at the fastest rate in 40 years.

Joe Biden is breaking records, but not the good kind. Joe Biden is about to enter his second year in office with record-high inflation and record-low approval.

Since Joe Biden took office, prices have gone up much faster than wages. As a result, the typical American family can purchase less today than they could a year ago. People have had to change the way they drive, they shop, and they eat.

By one estimate, families are paying $175 more every month because of inflation since Joe Biden took office. This works out to be $2,000 a year—a bite out of the paychecks of the American people equivalent to a loss of $2,000.

Now, some estimates are even higher. Harvard Professor Jason Furman was a

top adviser to President Obama. His estimate is that it is double that number. He said there have been $4,000 more in expenses for the American families this year than there was last year.

Of course, the biggest increase that we see is in energy. Gas prices are up. They are up by more than a dollar a gallon. Now, this is just in the 10 months since Joe Biden took office. It costs $20 to $30 more to fill the tank. Today, they are at a 7-year high.

Natural gas prices are also at a 7-year high, while half the families in America heat their homes with natural gas. One in five American families has already been cutting expenses in other places to pay for their energy bill for the year.

Last month was the biggest jump in energy prices, amazingly, in an entire decade, and winter is almost here. Some people may have to choose between whether they can afford to eat or whether they can afford to heat their homes.

It is hard to believe that in just 10 full months in the White House, Joe Biden could have taken inflation to this very high level.

The supply chain crisis, the worker shortage, the inflation crisis are all the direct results of the policies of the Biden administration and the Democrats in Washington.

Why are the shelves empty? Well, because we don't have enough workers. More than 11 million jobs today are unfilled. We have broken new records for unfilled jobs in 5 of the first 10 months that Joe Biden has been in office. And no matter where you go, there are ''help wanted'' signs in the windows.

This is no coincidence. In March, President Biden extended a bonus payment to people who stayed home from work. Millions of people made more money by not going to work than they would by going to work. Well, in September, that bonus payment ran out.

Then Joe Biden announced a nationwide vaccine mandate on the American people. This mandate took a sledge hammer to our Nation's workforce. The President must have known that people would lose their jobs. It seems he didn't care because he imposed the mandate anyway.

These are people who worked every day during the pandemic, showing up no matter the weather, no matter the situation. They showed up to do the job to help the people in their communities and in their States and in this country.

Now, under Joe Biden, people are losing their jobs, shelves are empty, prices continue to rise.

In March, Democrats made things worse by putting $2 trillion on the Nation's credit card. That bill sent inflation into overdrive.

The San Francisco Federal Reserve says the Democrats' spending increased inflation.

Democrats made lavish promises about their last spending bill. They said the bill would create millions of jobs. NANCY PELOSI said 4 million jobs. Joe Biden upped the ante and said 7 million new jobs.

How did the predictions turn out? Not so well for the predictions of NANCY PELOSI or Joe Biden. Joe Biden was off by the full 7 million jobs.

The most recent jobs report shows we created fewer jobs than were predicted even without the Democrats' spending bill. Those 7 million jobs Joe promised are nowhere to be found.

Last month, we created less than half the number of jobs the experts predicted.

Now Democrats want to do the same thing all over again. They want another multitrillion-dollar spending spree. This spending spree would cause the largest tax increase in half a century, trillions more in debt, and even higher prices.

Speaking of rising prices, the price of this spending bill keeps going up. For months, Democrats claimed that they wouldn't add to the debt. Then they said the total bill would cost less than $2 trillion.

Last Friday, we found out the real price tag. The Congressional Budget Office took all the accounting gimmicks, the budgets tricks—took it all out of the bill—and they told us that the real cost of the bill is nearly triple the price that the Democrats said.

The real pricetag is close to $5 trillion. It would be the largest spending bill in history. The Democrats' spending spree would add $3 trillion to the national debt.

And, just yesterday, the Democrats voted—every Democrat voted—to raise the debt ceiling in the United States by $2.5 trillion. Every Republican voted against it.

If you think about how much money this is, it is almost the size of the entire economy of the United Kingdom.

You know, all of this spending would bring the Democrats' total to $5 trillion in new debt in just 10 months.

And what does all of this spending get you?

Well, the most expensive thing in the bill is something that some refer to as the Green New Deal, which is billions of dollars in new taxes on America's natural gas production. It includes an army of climate activists paid to protest American energy projects.

The second most expensive part of the bill is the blue State billionaire bailout. It is a tax break for people in high-tax States. I look at it as specifically California, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey. The vast majority of Americans would get no tax break at all. Almost all of that benefit would go to the wealthy.

Don't take my word for it. Here is what the Democrat chairman of the Budget Committee, the junior Senator from Vermont, had to say about it.

He said:

> The last thing we should be doing is giving more tax breaks to the very rich. It sends a terrible, terrible message.

But that is what the Democrats in the House under NANCY PELOSI passed and sent to the Senate for consideration and passage.

The junior Senator from Vermont, the chairman of the Budget Committee, also said: ''The hypocrisy is too strong.''

Well, the chairman is absolutely right. Even by the standards of Democrats in Washington, this hypocrisy is too strong.

If Democrats pass this bill, it will mean tax cuts for billionaires and tax audits for working families. It will mean higher taxes, more debt, higher prices, the highest inflation in 40 years, and it will go even higher.

When the American people ask themselves, ''Are we better off today than we were a year ago?'' we know what the answer is going to be: a resounding no. If Democrats pass this bill, it will be no for years and years to come.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Ms. SMITH assumed the Chair.)

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

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

KENTUCKY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I see my colleague from Kentucky on the floor, and I want to take this opportunity to express to him and to Senator MCCONNELL my condolences for what the people of Kentucky have endured with this catastrophic devastation. I know he has been a strong advocate for his State, and I fully support a swift, strong Federal response to alleviating the suffering and assisting in rebuilding. In times of tragedy, our Nation comes together to support all who are in this kind of need.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5323

Mr. President, I also express my strong support—and it is the reason I am here—for $1 billion of supplemental security assistance to replenish Israel's Iron Dome Supplemental Appropriations Act. The Senate must pass H.R. 5323 as quickly as possible. The Iron Dome has widespread, bipartisan support in Congress—as well it should. It has the administration's support, which it richly deserves.

During the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Iron Dome defense system intercepted about 90 percent of the missiles that were targeting populated civilians in Israel. In total, 4,400 rockets were launched by Hamas. If the Iron Dome had failed, countless Israeli civilians would have been killed. The system performed exceptionally well, and it showed its necessity for both humanitarian and strategic defensive purposes.

I am very concerned that one of my colleagues previously blocked the passage of this bill in the Senate. I hope provisions of this year's Defense Authorization Act, specifically sections

1213 and 1214 and section 9021 of last year's Defense appropriations bill, assuage any ongoing concern about transferring funds to the Taliban. No funds—none—zero—will be used to help or support or enable, in any way, the Taliban. Funds previously appropriated for the Afghanistan National Security Forces are deeply needed to terminate contracts that are already in place. These funds will not go to the Taliban but to those who supported the U.S. mission in Afghanistan.

If any Pentagon employee breaks the law—if any one of them makes funds available to the Taliban—that individual could and should face criminal penalties, including jail time under the Antideficiency Act. We cannot continue to use the U.S.-Israeli relationship as a political football. It is against our own strategic interests; it violates our humanitarian values; and it is a security problem.

I am a strong, strong supporter of Israel, but I often say that friends can disagree, and friends can criticize each other. I have been critical at times of my friends in the Israeli Government. I am standing again on the floor of the U.S. Senate, being, arguably, critical of one of my colleagues, and I ask: Where are my colleagues across the aisle when one of their own Members is actively impeding Israel's ability to defend itself from Hamas? It is a cause they say they support. Where is their concern? Where is the outrage?

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this critical funding.

So, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 140, H.R. 5323; that there be up to 2 hours of debate; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill be considered read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have consistently opposed spending outside of the budget unless it is offset by spending cuts elsewhere. It is not only an opinion I hold, it is actually the law. It is called pay as you go.

We passed the law many years ago—more than a decade ago—to try to balance our books by having people come forward with things that sound good, want to spend it but not offset it by spending cuts elsewhere.

There is no question that the United States has been a very good ally of Israel. Over time, probably funds exceeding $80 to $100 billion have been expended to Israel over the last four decades. Just on missile defense, the United States has given Israel $7 billion: $1.6 billion for Iron Dome, $2 billion for David's Sling, and $3.7 billion for Arrow. In fact, the NDAA that just passed this week gives them another $100 million for this.

I am not disputing whether or not the extra billion dollars would help them. I will vote for the extra billion dollars, and that is what I will propose today. But it should be offset with spending cuts elsewhere.

There is a $3 billion fund that is left over from money we were giving to the Afghan national government. There is no Afghan national government. There is a bunch of hoodlums, the Taliban, who have taken over.

I asked Secretary Blinken: Can you assure me you are not going to give these funds to the Taliban?

He says: It depends on how they behave.

So it isn't so certain that this money is not going to go to the Taliban. The current law may say future money goes, but this old money, and we don't want it going to the Taliban. We think it should be better spent.

It is money that can be reclaimed. Why wouldn't it be a good thing to take money that might go to our enemy and actually give it to our ally? It makes perfect sense. Why would we be so obstinate that we are unwilling to take a pay-for? It is a pay-for that is sitting there waiting for us to use.

Three billion dollars is supposed to be given to the Afghan national government. It no longer exists. Let's take a billion of that, let's give it for Iron Dome; let's give $2 billion back to the Treasury. It sounds like a win-win-win all around.

Why can't we, for once in our lives, spend money on something good and take away money from something where we shouldn't be spending it? This money was never intended to go to anything but the Afghan national government. They don't exist anymore. We should reclaim that money, spend a billion on the Iron Dome, and put $2 billion back in the Treasury. It might be the first time in decades that we actually did something fiscally responsible around here. But that is a problem. I don't understand why we can't do it.

So I would—rather than just give another billion dollars out of the Treasury that actually makes us weaker, makes us more in debt, let's offset it by taking money that is in a fund for an entity that no longer exists.

So, Mr. President, I, therefore, ask the Senator to modify his request so that instead of his proposal, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 140, H.R. 5323; further, that the only amendment in order be my substitute amendment, which is at the desk. I further ask that there be 2 hours of debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; and that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Paul substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, my colleague from Kentucky talks about money as though it were going to go to the Taliban, as if it were going to an entity that no longer exists. In fact, that money is necessary to terminate contracts, to fulfill obligations, not only under the contracts but to our allies, the Afghan at-risk allies who sought to fulfill our mission. We have a moral imperative, and we have, arguably, a legal obligation.

That money is not just sitting there. It is not fungible. But put aside the merits of that argument, we have also a moral and strategic interest to our ally Israel to replenish its defenses at a time when it depends on our assistance to defend itself, to provide that Iron Dome that saves lives of innocent civilians who otherwise would have perished as a result of those 4,400 rockets launched by Hamas and possibly led to escalating contention and conflict in that region.

So it is a win-win, in fact, for us to replenish the Iron Dome without conditioning it in any way on other funds. Therefore, I will not modify my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection to the modification is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, I think it is very important that the American people know and those who support Israel know that we can get this done today. We can get a billion dollars additional, in addition to the $100 million, in addition to the $7 billion we have already given to Israel, in addition to the $80 to $100 billion we have given to them over the decades—we can do an extra billion today. All I am asking is that it is paid for.

The objections coming from Democrats is that they are unwilling to pay for the Iron Dome spending so, in reality, the funding won't happen today because of Democrat opposition to Iron Dome being paid for. It can happen right now. All you got to do is agree to take money from a defunct fund to a defunct entity. Three billion dollars is in a fund to an entity that no longer exists. The Afghan national government no longer exists. This is such an easy pay-for. This one is dangling low fruit that we can pay for. You can get exactly what we want to do, that is a billion dollars extra, in addition to the money we already have given Israel for Iron Dome, but pay for it. That is a responsible way. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, if I may just finish.

We are here again. I will come back again to the floor to seek this Iron Dome money.

Many of us are absolutely determined that the United States fulfill this moral, humanitarian, and foreign policy obligation. It is in our strategic interest.

This obligation is paid for; it is not debt; and it will incur no obligations that are unpaid for. So I regret that my colleague, again, has blocked this from proceeding.

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

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

NOMINATION OF MARIA L. PAGAN

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in a few minutes, I will be putting forward a unanimous consent request asking the Senate to take up and approve a highly qualified and noncontroversial nominee.

I will just take a couple of minutes to talk about Maria Pagan, nominated to be the next Deputy U.S. Trade Representative in Geneva. There are a few key points to make about the nominee, as well as the critical role she will serve representing the United States at the World Trade Organization to get a better deal for American workers, farmers, and businesses.

To start, Ms. Pagan isn't new to high-pressure, high-profile negotiations. She is currently deputy general counsel at the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, the person called in when issues are particularly challenging. She has taken on these difficult issues during numerous trade agreement negotiations, including the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement. She was in lockstep with Members of Congress who pushed hard to guarantee that the commitments laid out in the USMCA were fully and quickly enforceable, a key priority for protecting American jobs.

She has been a longtime public servant, spending 30 years in government. She has served both Republican and Democratic administrations at the Department of Commerce and at USTR. She is an expert on a host of issues from trade in services to government procurement, and she has litigated several disputes before the WTO.

She is highly qualified. She is a nominee who brings the two sides of the Senate together. The Finance Committee vote on her nomination was 27 to 1.

I would just say, at this point in time, that is about as good as it gets.

Colleagues, I have said before that it is crucial to get qualified people to the office representing the United States around the world. It is important to have these skilled individuals working on behalf of our workers, our businesses, and our interests. This nomination is particularly important to me.

It is no secret that the World Trade Organization, which can be a valuable institution, is not today functioning as it needs to. The rules that underpin the WTO were crafted more than two decades ago. These 20th century rules have simply not kept up with 21st century technology.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Government has learned to game the system. It does so routinely at the expense of hard-working American families.

As a result, the process of leveling the playing field with trade rules based on fairness have been overtaken by the exploitation of loopholes and rip-offs. In many cases, that comes at the direct expense of American workers and American businesses.

With her decades of experience, Ms. Pagan understands these challenges as well as anyone. From day one after her confirmation, she will hit the ground running to lead our allies in fighting back.

For example, one area that I feel particularly strongly about is that new rules are desperately needed to deal with subsidized fisheries. Harmful subsidies are allowing fleets to reach distant shores of less developed countries like Ecuador and Ghana. They are stripping the ocean of fish without regard to species or regulations or basic decency. These highly subsidized, poorly regulated fleets rely on abhorrent labor practices—including forced labor. Worst of all, their catch ends up in American supermarkets and on American tables.

Oregon fishing families who trade in fairly and sustainably caught U.S. salmon, pollack, and other fish simply should not be asked to compete against that kind of horrendous cheating.

Negotiations on this issue have been dragging on for over 20 years, and I can tell you, the 20 years have not improved the situation for our oceans and for our families.

The 12th Ministerial Conference, which was delayed last week due to the new COVID variant, is another really important chance to get these negotiations finally done. The outcome has to be strong. It can't open, once again, harmful new loopholes.

These meetings have been rescheduled to the spring. The United States needs tough, smart leadership at the table. Ms. Pagan, with her years of negotiation, is just the closer, just the kind of person the United States needs.

There are no shortages of other issues that Ms. Pagan will have to tackle at the World Trade Organization, from institutional reform to dispute settlement, to e-commerce. The United States needs a leader who can work with our allies to get it all done. She is the right woman for the job.

Maria Pagan is a highly qualified, experienced nominee. She is a proven negotiator, a strong advocate for workers, farmers, and businesses. She comes, as I have indicated, with strong, 27-to-1, bipartisan support in the Senate Finance Committee. There is just no justification for any delay in moving this nomination forward.

I will have more to say when I ask unanimous consent, briefly, in a bit.

And, at this moment, 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO DR. FRANCIS COLLINS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is a curious thing about tipping points in the quest for progress. Very often, the events that cleave history into ''before'' and ''after'' can seem insignificant when they happen. That might have been true 29 years ago, when the National Institutes of Health named a 42-year-old professor from the University of Michigan to direct one of NIH's newest cutting-edge institutes.

The professor's name was Francis Collins. The New York Times' account of his arrival ran 117 words.

His mission at NIH was to lead what we called then the Human Genome Project, an international quest to discover the genetic blueprint for human life. It was the scientific equivalent of the search for the Holy Grail. There were just as many skeptics as believers in that undertaking.

But less than 6 years later, in June 2000, the first mapping of the human genome was complete. Overnight, that obscure professor from Michigan, Francis Collins, became one of the most famous scientists in the world.

The decoding of the human genome was the achievement of a historic public-private partnership between the NIH's genome lab, headed by Dr. Collins and a private firm—a rival turned partner—founded by the genetic pioneer, Craig Venter. It involved hundreds of scientists from six nations. It remains one of the greatest advances in scientific knowledge in all of recorded history.

In a White House ceremony announcing the first sequencing of the human genome, Dr. Collins said he was humbled and awed by the discovery. In his words: ''We have caught the first glimpses of our instruction book, previously known only to God.''

Cracking the genetic code of human life has revolutionized science and medicine. It continues to yield profound medical discoveries all the time.

That historic discovery could have been the capstone of any career in science, but for Francis Collins, there was an amazing second act to follow.

In 2009, President Obama chose Francis Collins to lead the entire National Institutes of Health, the largest

biomedical research agency in the world. In that capacity, Dr. Collins routinely works 100-hour weeks, oversees 18,000 Federal employees spread across 27 Institutes and Centers in 75 buildings—mainly in Bethesda, MD, but also in Baltimore, North Carolina, Arizona, and Montana.

Those numbers only quantify the NIH infrastructure. Their actual work is even more impressive. In fiscal year 2020, the NIH awarded more than 50,000 grants to more than 300,000 researchers working in universities and laboratories outside the NIH—in Illinois, in Minnesota, in Colorado, and virtually every State in the Nation.

At the end of this month, after 12 years, Francis Collins is stepping down as NIH Director. Thankfully, he is not stepping away from science. In a signature Collins move, the doctor is going back to his research roots, back to head a laboratory at the NIH's Human Genome Institute, where he hopes to find treatments and cures for cystic fibrosis, diabetes, and other devastating illnesses.

He has led NIH for 12 years under three Presidents, Democrat and Republican, making him the longest tenured head of the Agency since Presidents began selecting NIH heads 50 years ago.

What distinguishes Francis Collins' tenure as NIH Director, however, is not its length but his extraordinary ambition and record of achievement. My friend former Senator Barbara Mikulski, who chaired once the Senate Appropriations Committee, famously said that the initials NIH should stand for the ''National Institutes of Hope.''

As NIH Director, Francis Collins has worked tirelessly to live up to that ideal.

As the Washington Post wrote, ''He brought together scientists across disciplines and championed the hunt for biomedical advances in troves of data. He gave meaning to the promise of big science.''

He embraced ambitious projects such as the BRAIN Initiative, a collaborative effort to map the most complex organism on Earth, the human brain. It engaged engineers who had never worked on life sciences before, and it just might help unlock the mysteries of ALS, Alzheimer's, and other diseases of the brain.

He launched the Cancer Moonshot with then-Vice President Joe Biden and played an integral role in helping to make now-President Joe Biden's dream of an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health a reality.

He created the ''All of Us'' Research Program, an effort to collect data about the genomic basis of disease from 1 million volunteers to advance our knowledge on how to cure it.

He has been equally passionate about supporting the work of young scientists, including women and scientists of color. The absence of women researchers used to jokingly be referred to on research panels as ''manels.'' In 2017, Francis Collins said that he would no longer speak at any conference in which women researchers were not featured.

He made it a priority to minority scientists and to make sure NIH-funded research addressed the health needs and historic concerns of communities of color.

Nearly 7 years ago, I asked Dr. Collins: ''What does NIH need from Congress to continue to achieve breakthroughs you envision?''

At that point, the NIH had seen flat funding for several years. Inflation had eroded the number of research ideas they could support, and many young researchers were really questioning whether they had any future at the Institution.

Dr. Collins said simply: ''If you can provide steady, predictable increases to our budget of 5 percent real growth each year, we can light up the scoreboard.''

I thought that sounded like a worthy goal so I enlisted my Senate friends ROY BLUNT of Missouri, PATTY MURRAY of Washington, and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee as partners. Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I came together and formed the bipartisan Senate NIH Caucus.

With the determined leadership of Francis Collins and support of Senators from both sides of the aisle—listen to this—we have been able to increase funding for NIH by more than 40 percent over the last 6 years.

Some people say: Why should the taxpayers be paying for this research? Why not leave it to the free market; they make the money out of it.

The answer is: The NIH funds the kinds of basic science that costs too much and takes too long for private companies driven by need for quarterly profits.

One timely example: Years ago, a Hungarian-born American biochemist named Katalin Kariko had a hunch that messenger RNA—mRNA—could be used to instruct cells to make their own medicines or vaccines. The NIH funded this early research of this immigrant superstar when nobody else would. Last year, that research became the backbone of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccines.

One year ago yesterday, the first vaccine was administered, and more than 450 million shots have followed in America since then. The majority were mRNA vaccines.

According to a new study released by the Commonwealth Fund, the American vaccination program prevented 1.1 million COVID deaths and prevented 10.3 million COVID hospitalizations last year. Vaccines save lives, and NIH taxpayer-funded research made these vaccines possible.

There are millions of people who have never heard of Francis Collins, but they are alive and healthy today because of the Human Genome Project and his ambitious agenda at NIH as well as the talented scientists he nurtured.

He is an American treasure, one of the most important scientists of our time. As Dr. Collins prepares to end his historic tenure as NIH Director and return to his lab, I want to thank him for his tireless work, his good humor, his good advice, and great friendship.

I also want to thank his family, especially his wife Diane Baker, a genetic counselor herself, who volunteers at the NIH Children's Inn, where families stay while their sick kids are participating in clinical trials.

And thanks to the thousands and thousands of dedicated researchers who have worked with Dr. Collins to realize his noble ambitions.

Dr. Francis Collins, America is a better place thanks to your singular contribution to spare suffering and to cure the illnesses we face. I wish you many more happy years of discovery.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LEE. If confirmed as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, Maria Pagan would be responsible for negotiating details of any waiver of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights agreement, also known as the TRIPS Agreement.

I have concerns with Ms. Pagan's nomination. Therefore, I intend to object to that until the Biden administration has given me some basic commitments regarding the administration's position on waiving the TRIPS Agreement, particularly related to some of the proposals being pushed by various countries.

As a quick recap, the TRIPS Agreement represents a vital element of international trade law protecting the intellectual property rights of U.S. businesses, individuals, and entrepreneurs. Waiving the protection of these rights for COVID–19 drugs, vaccines, and treatments under the notion of some sense of international altruism will not advance a universal solution to the COVID–19 pandemic.

Instead, any proposal to waive IP protections would create a disincentive for continued research, development, and distribution of the COVID–19 treatments or drugs. That could mean fewer healthcare options and advancements as the virus continues to mutate into new variants with degrees of resistance to existing remedies.

As always, anytime you weaken one property right, it spills over into other areas. We wouldn't expect this to become contained to the COVID–19 universe.

Additionally, U.S. companies would be less likely to introduce their product to WTO-member countries not enforcing IP protections. That could mean fewer options and less access for our neighbors, not more.

Intellectual property rights provide the grounds for businesses to take risks in turning novel ideas into concrete goods and services. A business

that knows its property is secure and will not be surreptitiously confiscated by government action can fully engage in developing the innovation that drives markets.

Today, in stating my objections, this is all I am asking for. I have no concerns with this individual in particular; rather, with the authority that she might wield and the assurances I am wanting to receive from the administration on that authority, some assurance that this administration will not unilaterally wipe out intellectual property protections that have resulted in the vast majority of COVID–19 remedies the U.S. currently enjoys and have also served millions of others globally. These are the things that are on the table. All I want is some assurance from the administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent, notwithstanding rule XXII, if applicable, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 547, Maria L. Pagan, of Puerto Rico, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative (Geneva Office), with the rank of Ambassador; that there be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form on the nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with to intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, there has been an objection. Let me be very brief. We have a lot to do still tonight.

As the new COVID variant surges around the globe and threatens Americans here at home and millions around the world, the United States needs to do everything possible to get shots in arms, including having the right people in Geneva to find solutions to the availability and distribution of vaccines.

COVID continues to be a deadly crisis, and we should be working in every way possible to make sure that the Biden team has a group that can reach agreement on a TRIPS waiver and any other trade-based solutions.

I look forward to continuing efforts to talk with my colleague from Utah. This is urgent business. We have to get it worked out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. To reiterate here, all I want is some assurance. I appreciate my friend and colleague from Oregon understanding my basic concern here. It is not an unreasonable concern. All I want is some assurance from the administration that it is not going to wipe out intellectual property protections. That wouldn't be right. They know it is not right. They give me those assurances, we can move on.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. 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. RUBIO. Madam 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—H.R. 6256

Mr. RUBIO. I think this is an issue that has been talked about. There is a lot of interest in it and rightfully so.

In China, even as I speak to you now, human beings working as slaves because of their ethnicity and their religion, Uighur Muslims, are in factories making products that people will buy this holiday season and throughout the year.

I think it would be shocking to most Americans. I think it would be shocking to all of us to know that even as I stand here now, there are products in this very Chamber in the Senate that were touched by and made by the hands of slaves. It is a horrifying, horrifying human rights situation—fully sanctioned, as we now know, by the Government of China, the Communist Party of China.

We know this, by the way. The New York Times had access to these documents for a long time—and they were finally revealed—that show that this plan to use slave labor went to the highest levels of that Communist Party.

I think it is also appalling that it reveals the level of dependence this country has and the need we have to rebuild our industrial base in this country and in allied nations. It is appalling because it is a fact that we are so dependent on China in our supply chain, that many have asked us to look the other way, to not complain about this, to not pass a bill about this because it would disrupt supply chains, when what they really mean is it would disrupt the bottom line, their profits.

I don't need to explain to anybody how this works. You can make a lot of money if you don't have to pay your workers or you pay them very little. It allows you to undercut your competition.

So the fact that we have major American corporations and, for that matter, national corporations and multinational corporations that are making money, whose profits are driven by the fact that slaves are building and making the materials they sell to us, is a horrifying reality.

We have worked on this in a bipartisan way for 2 years, and we have, fortunately, now reached a point—and, as you recall, I was here 2 weeks ago objecting to an amendment package on the NDAA to force action. I want to recognize Congressman MCGOVERN, our House counterpart, and, obviously, the junior Senator from Oregon, who is going to speak in a moment here in the Senate. It has been a bipartisan effort.

We passed legislation on this last year. Differences between the House and Senate kept it from becoming law. We passed it unanimously out of the Senate earlier this year, but there were differences between our approaches. And since that time, where the amendment packet was objected to on the Defense bill, the House has passed not one but two versions of this bill.

We are now in possession of one of those two versions, and it is a version that doesn't have any objections here in the Senate either.

I wish we didn't have to pass this bill. There have been some in the hallway who have suggested—I don't know if the right word is congratulations, but commenting on how far we have come. And my argument is that this is nothing to be happy about because, even when we pass this bill, there will still be people working as slaves.

I wish that this did not even exist, but it does, and we must address it. So we are now virtually just a couple of moves away, and it may not happen today, unfortunately, for reasons you are about to learn unrelated to this. But we are a couple of moves away from being able to send this to the White House for the President to sign and for it to become law.

I think it would be a powerful statement to make but also impactful. A bill that says if you make things—if you are a company that makes things or sources material—from these parts of China, you are going to have to prove that slaves didn't make it before you can bring it into this country. And I hope that if we can do that here, that other countries around the world will follow suit.

If I may, Madam President, I wanted to yield to the junior Senator from Oregon, who has worked side by side with us on this and has been a key part of this, to issue his comments on it as well.

Mr. MERKLEY. I join with my colleague from Florida, Senator RUBIO, in calling out genocide in China. It is a terrible term describing horrific acts in which humanity assaults humanity.

Just 7 weeks from now—7 weeks from this Friday—there is going to be the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in China, and there is going to be fancy dances by minorities from across the country. And China will be saying to the world: See what a beautiful country we have, with all this diversity, including people from Xinjiang Province, the Uighurs.

Behind those fancy performances in the opening ceremonies, there is a very, very ugly truth. That ugly truth is that the Chinese Government is committing genocide against the Uighur population. More than a million Uighurs are enslaved, and they are enslaved to produce products for the world for the profit of China.

And I don't think anyone in America wants us to be complicit in genocide by buying these products. That is what this bill is all about.

It is to say: Companies, when you produce things in Xinjiang, make sure that the supply chain is investigated and is untainted by these horrific acts.

This is bipartisan. This is bicameral. This is the best of the American spirit. And so I strongly, strongly support passage of this act. We passed it before. As my colleague just mentioned, we passed it unanimously. And now we have a version that has been worked out with the House version. It is ready to roll.

So, colleagues, let's get this done as a powerful statement of where America stands on human rights, a powerful statement that we are against genocide, a powerful statement that, when it comes to these human rights principles, we stand together—Democrat and Republican, House and Senate.

I extend my appreciation to our colleagues in the House, Congressman SMITH and Congressman MCGOVERN. We all worked together on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. We held a series of hearings to understand better not just the horrific acts that are occurring in Xinjiang but also horrific acts that are happening in Tibet and Hong Kong. But this bill focuses on the genocide against the Uighurs. Let's get this done. It matters. Let's act now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6256, which was received from the House; 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. MURPHY. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, first, let me thank the Senator from Florida and the Senator from Oregon for the really important work that they have done on the underlying legislation.

It is of critical importance that this Senate stand together, Republicans and Democrats, against the ongoing genocide that is occurring in China today.

And I will say that, despite all the news about division in this Chamber, the coming together around China policies, the coming together between parties over the course of 2021 with respect to the threat that China presents to the United States and the global world order and the threat they present to human rights, both domestically and externally, I think, is important.

I support the underlying legislation, but I also want to make sure that we have the personnel in place that can effectuate the policy. Good policy occurs when the Congress steps up and hands the executive branch a tool that they can use, but we need craftsmen who can effectuate that tool set.

Pending on the calendar today, I would argue, are over a dozen nominees who would be in charge of implementing policy in and around China: the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations; the Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs; the Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration; Ambassadors to Bangladesh, Brunei, Japan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam—all pending on the calendar today.

But perhaps the three most important nominees who will implement the policy that Senator RUBIO and Senator WYDEN are bringing forward today are these: first, the nominee to be the Ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns; the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, who would oversee this new policy, Ramin Toloui; and, lastly, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, obviously critical to the plight of the Uighurs, Rashad Hussain.

In particular, Ambassador Burns is uniquely qualified for this post, having been Ambassador to NATO and Ambassador to Greece. At his hearing, he made clear how he would view the Chinese behavior in Xinjiang Province. He said the PRC's genocide, its abuse in Tibet, its smothering of Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms, and its bullying of Taiwan are unjust and must stop.

Having an ambassador in China in place, having an Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, and having an ambassador working every single day on international religious freedom, hand in hand with this new legislation, gives the tools and the legislative authority necessary to get the United States moving toward the right side of human rights in China.

So with that, I would ask the Senator from Florida to modify his request to include the following request.

I would ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding rule XXII, if applicable, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Executive Calendar No. 525, Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China; Calendar No. 626, Ramin Toloui, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs); Calendar No. 619 Rashad Hussain, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom; that there be 10 minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form on the nominations en bloc; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that if a nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Reserving the right to object, as modified, that would mean the passage of the Uighur slave labor measure, which has unanimous support, and would put us on the precipice and on track to confirm nominees—Ambassadors to China and important Secretary of State posts and also the Ambassador for International Religious Freedom—I would have no objection to that modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request has been modified.

Is there objection to the request as modified?

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, let me just say at the outset, I strongly, strongly, strongly agree with my colleagues—Senator RUBIO and my friend from Oregon Senator MERKLEY—that the United States has to fight genocide and the scourge of forced labor taking place in Western China and elsewhere around the world.

As the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, one of my special priorities—one that we worked on for quite some time—has been to tackle this issue of forced labor. It goes back to work that Senator BROWN and I did in 2015 to close an unjustifiable loophole that allowed an exception to the ban on products made with forced labor. Not only is it morally abhorrent, it is also a major trade rip-off that undermines American workers.

On the Finance Committee, we believe that the Senate needs to look at every opportunity to protect good-paying American jobs and help workers and their families get ahead. That means that the Senate has got to be prepared to tackle multiple challenges at once.

Right now, the urgent issue for so many American families is the potential expiration of child tax credit payments on January 1. Families received their sixth child tax credit payment today. It could be the last if this body does not act.

Families have come to depend on these payments to cover the essentials like rent, groceries, heat, and clothing for their kids.

Just recently, I was home in Oregon, and I asked people what they spend the child tax credit on, and they said: ''Ron, we spend it on things like shoes.''

And in our part of the world, it gets cold; it gets wet. We are not talking about luxury; we are talking about shoes for children.

Food insecurity among families dropped by about 25 percent since these child tax credit payments began. Child poverty has been cut nearly in half.

This program, in my view, is like Social Security for kids and vulnerable families. We never let Social Security checks for vulnerable seniors lapse.

For anybody who questions how valuable this program has been to American families, I want to just very briefly touch on a few messages that we have gotten from parents in a cross-section of communities across the country about how the child tax credit has helped them:

A parent in Kentucky: ''It helped me with fuel for my car and provided me enough to buy my daughter a few things she needed.''

A parent in New York: ''It's helped take the burden off our family. My husband lost his job during COVID but since found another job, but the gap of the job loss was heavy.''

A parent in Alabama: ''I was able to buy my daughter her school clothes.''

A parent in New Hampshire: ''It has helped me tremendously especially when school was starting.''

So the message from American parents, from sea to shining sea, is the child tax credit has been vital to so many American families and lowering the cost of raising a family, ensuring they can provide that basic level of security all children deserve.

So at this point, I would ask, would the Senator from Florida modify his request to include the adoption of my amendment that is at the desk to extend the child tax credit for 1 year and pass the bill as amended?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the further modification?

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Reserving the right to object, as I understand this further modification, it would say let's take a bill that is meaningful on an important global issue, something—an important human rights issue that everyone here supports, that we can pass right now, today, and send it to the President and he can sign it tonight or tomorrow morning and it becomes law because everyone supports it, using this process we are using here, and in addition to that, set up votes on two nominees and an Assistant Secretary, at a time when speech after speech out here has been about how we are not getting to these nominees and Assistant Secretaries—so we can do all that but only if we add to it something that has bipartisan opposition; that, no matter what, at least 50 people here are against. It cannot pass unanimously, and even if it could and it did pass, we would have to send it back over to the House, not to the President, and the House isn't even in session until January 10.

That doesn't sound like a good arrangement to me, and it is something that I would have to object to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I listened carefully to my colleague from Florida, and because of his objection, there isn't going to be an opportunity for the Senate to take two bold steps tonight.

I already indicated—made it very clear—that I am completely sympathetic to my colleague from Florida, my colleague from Oregon, to the fight against genocide and forced labor. They got me at ''hello'' on their proposition.

I also feel incredibly strongly—incredibly strongly—about our vulnerable children and our vulnerable families who are going to be cut off from an essential lifeline unless the U.S. Senate acts.

And, unfortunately, because of the objection from my colleague from Florida, we are not going to have a chance to take two bold steps tonight. That is what I am for. That is what I believe the American people are for.

You bet we are against forced labor. You bet we are against genocide. But we also have had a long tradition of standing up for vulnerable kids, vulnerable families, and tonight we could have obtained two bold objectives here in the U.S. Senate.

I think it is unfortunate that my colleague from Florida is unwilling to do that. Vulnerable families are going to be hurt as a result of the objection. I just want the Senate to know there was another way. There was another way we could have stood with the effort to deal with genocide and forced labor and protected families. They weren't mutually exclusive. We could have done both. I think it is unfortunate the Senate is not doing it.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CHINESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, in 1948, the world came together to adopt the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to declare with one voice that every single person on Earth is ''born free and equal in dignity and rights.'' They declared that ''no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile''; that ''everyone has the right to freedom of thought'' and everyone has a right to ''freedom of opinion and expression.''

This is Yu Wensheng, a human rights lawyer based in Beijing. His rights are being denied to him because he is arbitrarily detained after being arrested for exercising freedom of expression and freedom of opinion.

Yu has a history of ruffling feathers in Beijing. He is known for criticizing the Communist Party, for supporting the ''Yellow Umbrella'' movement for rights in Hong Kong, and for taking on politically sensitive cases. Beijing has retaliated by destroying his legal career and making it impossible for him to practice law.

Yu Wensheng has been in Chinese custody since January of 2018 because he dared to publish an open letter calling for political reforms, such as holding fair elections.

The day after he published that letter calling for fair elections, law enforcement officers, including police and armored vehicles, confronted him while he was walking his son to school and forced him into a police vehicle on suspicion of ''picking quarrels and provoking troubles.'' Police had no regard for his son's safety at that moment. Authorities later added the charge of ''inciting subversion,'' a charge often used against human rights advocates and typically carrying a sentence of up to 5 years.

Two years would go by before Yu was allowed to speak to his wife; 2 years before he was allowed to speak to his son; 2 years before he was allowed to meet with his defense lawyers. During those 2 years, he was secretly tried and convicted. In June of 2020, he was sentenced to 4 years in prison—all without any defense lawyers present, without his family being even informed.

He suffered greatly during this incarceration. He was beaten up by a group of inmates and sustained injuries to his head. His right hand suffered nerve damage—damage that occurred in a previous detention—and is now shaking so violently, he can barely use it. He has had to learn to write with his left hand.

His appeals have been denied. He was sent to serve his sentence in a prison 600 miles away from Beijing despite repeated requests from his wife that he serve out his sentence closer to home so his family could visit.

That type of action is the exact opposite of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, that declaration that no one should be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile. This man was subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, and exile simply for expressing the opinion that there should be fair elections. He is not alone.

Today, I will also highlight a Chinese journalist. Her name is Haze Fan. She worked in Beijing for Bloomberg, covering global business issues. Before

working with Bloomberg in 2017, she worked for other major international outlets, household names like Reuters, CNBC, CBS, and Al Jazeera.

On December 7, 2020, just over a year ago, Ms. Fan was being escorted from her apartment by security officials. She was detained on suspicion of endangering China's national security, although a year later, the investigation into Ms. Fan is still ongoing, with no details of what she is accused of or even where she is held. She was a journalist, and a message is being sent.

Certainly, this is not consistent with the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights that says that everyone has the right to freedom of thought and to freedom of opinion and expression because for being a journalist, she is being detained.

As I stand here at this moment, 127 journalists like Haze Fan are detained in China, according to the statistics compiled by Reporters Without Borders. It is no wonder that China is at the very bottom of Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, right there with North Korea, Turkmenistan, and Eritrea.

This is what is happening in a country that just 7 weeks from now will be hosting the Olympic Games—Games meant to be a celebration of camaraderie, physical achievement, and lifting up the human spirit. But it is Yu Wensheng and Haze Fan and all others like them detained by the Chinese Government for demanding the recognition that all are ''born free and equal in dignity and rights'' who deserve to have their spirits lifted up. They deserve to know where the world stands. Does the world stand with them?

Now, the United States and the United Kingdom, joined by Canada and joined by Australia—they have declared diplomatic boycotts of February's Games. I am very proud that the Government of the United States has declared this boycott. They said that they will not join the fanfare of the Games, helping China to disguise the egregious human rights abuses against individuals like these; that we will not stand with our diplomats at those opening ceremonies when China has stripped the political rights of every single citizen in Hong Kong. We will not have our diplomats there in opening celebrations, helping China cover up its genocide against the Uighur people. But tonight, I am wondering where the rest of the free world is.

You know, I was thinking a little bit about the history of France—the history of France being very engaged in human rights issues. France stood with the United States as an ally when we fought for our freedom. France gifted our Nation with the symbol of freedom, the Statue of Liberty, whose torch is held up to the world. France authored the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen not in 1990 but in 1789—one of the very first documents laying out the foundations of human rights, defining individual and collective rights. Where is France tonight—standing with the United States and Canada and Australia? They are not there.

I am really disappointed to hear President Macron saying that any such boycott would be ''insignificant.'' Do you know what is significant? Going to the opening celebrations and helping China cover up genocide and stripping Hong Kong of political rights. It is not just significant and substantial, it is wrong.

France, we call on you to continue the tradition of fighting for freedom, the tradition that led you to stand with us, that led you to send us the Statue of Liberty, that led you to craft one of the first documents in the world for human rights in 1789.

The Education Minister of France argued that sport should be separate from political interference. When you put the Games in a nation engaged in genocide, you put the athletes in the middle of the worst of world horrors and ask them to be complicit in covering up by engaging in the Games as if nothing else was going on.

You know, it was 1936 that the Olympic Games were held in Hitler's Germany. He was already engaged in serious human rights violations. He turned down those violations during the Games, and the world said: Germany is coming back into the family of nations. We did not as a world highlight his ongoing crimes at that time, which emboldened him to horrific acts that followed soon upon the close of those Games. That was a mistake, to help Hitler cover up the human rights abuses of the Nazis, and it is a mistake for us now to help China cover up its horrific human rights abuses.

So I call on France to join us in this boycott, this diplomatic boycott, to say: Yes, it is too late for the Games to move. I regret that. I called on them to be moved. But it is not too late to strip away the pomp and circumstance of the opening Games. It is not too late to call out the serious, egregious conduct occurring in China—not some petty serious problem but genocide and the crushing of the entire state of Hong Kong, the entire entity of Hong Kong, in terms of their political rights.

France, join us, as you have over time, in standing for human rights.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as the Senate's schedule for this calendar year begins to wind down, hopefully with the anticipation of spending time with our friends and families during this holiday season, I want to look back over some of the deadlines that the majority leader, the Senator from New York, has set for Senate action and to ask whether these sort of arbitrary deadlines and attempts to do legislation essentially along party lines is the right way to actually get things done in the Senate.

We have excellent examples of how to get things done. Today, we passed the Defense authorization bill with a strong bipartisan vote. But we know that when either political party decides to do things unilaterally, especially in a 50–50 Senate, it makes the work immeasurably harder, and that is for a good reason.

The Founders of this country and our Constitution and the creators of this Senate looked to the Senate to be a deliberative body and looked for us to do what sometimes doesn't come naturally, which is to work together to build consensus. But, as I said, when one party or the other attempts to do things unilaterally, it usually means what you see here, which is one blown self-imposed deadline after another.

First of all, the majority leader set a July 21 target for Senate action on a budget resolution.

He laid out an August deadline for a partisan election takeover bill, which would have preempted State and local laws, which are responsible, under our division of responsibility in the Constitution, under our Federal system, for conducting elections.

Then he proudly announced his goal to get two bills to President Biden's desk by the end of October. He said those would be joined together—a bipartisan infrastructure bill that is the exception to the rule—actually like the Defense authorization bill that actually enjoyed broad bipartisan support—but the hangup was the other part of that proposition, which was the Democrats' multitrillion-dollar partisan spending bill.

Of course, not one single one of these deadlines was met—again, because it is hard to do things in a 50–50 Senate when you try to do it unilaterally without doing the hard work of building consensus, which is the way the Founders wanted this institution to work.

So our colleague from New York kept setting deadlines and blowing right past them, and it looks like he is about to add another one to the list. Senator SCHUMER's latest deadline for the ''Build Back Bankrupt'' bill is December 25. That is Christmas. While he has yet to make an official announcement, news reports are starting to confirm what we have known all along—that the Senate will not vote on this bill by Christmas because it is just not ready for prime time.

Before our colleagues can bend the rules of the Senate to pass their partisan, multitrillion-dollar spending bill, they have got a lot of roadblocks to overcome. The most obvious is they need a bill to vote on. This bill is not even in final form yet. As a matter of fact, the Senate Finance Committee, on which I have the pleasure of serving, released about 1,100 pages of new text on Saturday, and there are at least 20 different issues that have been raised with the Parliamentarian which need to be litigated in a deliberative process, but the version of the legislation

that passed the House started getting picked apart even before reaching this side of the Capitol. The committee chairmen here were still deciding which provisions to keep, which ones to alter, and which ones to throw away.

It is tough to know how things are progressing because all of these conversations happen not here on the Senate floor, with open debate, but behind closed doors, completely out of view of the American people. That is dangerous because this bill will touch virtually every aspect of Americans' daily lives and stick them with a massive invoice—without any visibility into the process.

We are told that the Build Back Better bill is immensely popular. Well, that may be true until you start looking at the details, at the fine print. Right now, we have to rely on vague statements from our Democratic colleagues to understand where things stand, and I will tell you, right now, it doesn't sound too promising.

Following severe blowback from the American people after the details of this bill began to become public, Finance Committee Democrats began making changes to one extremely controversial part of the bill. The Washington Post headline says it all: ''The second-biggest program in the Democrats' spending plan gives billions to the rich.''

No wonder they went back to the drawing board. After all, there is a sharp contrast from how our colleagues have tried to sell this bill—really, an effort of false advertising. They have harped previously—or some sections of the Democratic caucus—on the need to stick it to the rich, to tax the rich, but when given the opportunity, they hand out massive tax breaks for the rich.

It is unclear how long it will take our colleagues to finalize changes to the millionaires' tax breaks and the countless other provisions that are being retooled, but once they lay down their pens, the work is not done. As I suggested, they have the substantial and difficult process of vetting a number of the provisions with the Senate Parliamentarian to determine whether these provisions can pass the Byrd rule.

The Byrd rule is simply the name given to the process to see whether it complies with the 1974 Budget Act, which provides for an expedited process and 51 votes for passage because it is limited strictly to budgetary matters. When our colleagues try to stick into the bill other substantive law changes which require a 60-vote requirement, that is where the Byrd rule comes in, and that is where these provisions get kicked out.

According to the chairman of the Finance Committee, the Finance Committee's proposal alone has more than 20 different issues to resolve with the Parliamentarian in the so-called Byrd bath, and that is just one committee. Our colleagues on various other committees are presenting arguments on provisions of all sizes. We have heard that our Democratic colleagues are trying to make massive changes in our immigration law on a party-line vote at 51 votes—50 votes plus the Vice President. Well, that has not succeeded on two previous occasions for good reason, and now we are awaiting the verdict of the Parliamentarian on those immigration proposals on the third try.

But we know that this massive legislation, once it is written, presumably, will go from everything from technical changes to major issues like whether the budget rule can be used to legalize millions of undocumented immigrants. Again, these conversations are happening not out here in the Senate, with an opportunity for full debate and amendment; they are happening behind closed doors. So we really don't have a good sense—nor do the American people—of what has been decided or how long it will take to resolve pending disputes.

If our Democratic colleagues receive adverse guidance from the Parliamentarian, it is still unclear whether they will accept the outcome or light the rule book on fire, as some have suggested, and try to overrule her. It is tough to imagine a world in which our Democrat colleagues would put this Frankenstein's monster on the Senate floor before Christmas. Christmas is, in fact, 10 days away. Even if our colleagues were able to iron out every issue with the Parliamentarian and were able to present finalized text and receive a score on the final legislation at that time, Senator SCHUMER doesn't have the votes to pass it. Again, we are an evenly divided Senate, with the Vice President casting the tie-breaking vote.

Colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not on board entirely with this proposed massive spending-and-tax bill. Unlike the majority of our colleagues who have blindly fallen in line or aired their concerns in private, we know that the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. MANCHIN, has consistently expressed his reservations about the bill.

In September, for example, he wrote an op-ed, titled: ''Why I Won't Support Spending Another $3.5 Trillion.'' He has hardly been quiet or hidden his concerns. He shared his concerns in that op-ed about the scale and scope of this legislation, and he encouraged his colleagues in his own political party to take a strategic pause.

Some of the reasons he cited included the growing threat of inflation, which has only increased since September. Inflation, in fact, has now reached a 40-year high—just last month. He warned about the possibility that the virus might mutate and take a new turn and that we ought to really save our powder in case we had to address either the public health or economic consequences flowing from a new variant. Well, today, all of our eyes are on the Omicron variant, and we have yet to know how that will play out. He asked how we could respond to another financial crisis like we experienced in 2008 during the great recession or, heaven forbid, a terrorist attack or a major international conflict.

If we spend trillions of dollars on unnecessary programs today, we will hardly have those reserves available to us should we need them. I think the questions and issues raised by the Senator from West Virginia were valid then, and they are even more pressing now.

Over the last several months, the winds haven't shifted in favor of this massive tax-and-spending bill. In fact, we now have more reason to believe this legislation would add to, not solve, the problems that the American people are facing. The Senator from West Virginia told one of our Republican colleagues that the score proposed by his own political party—$1.75 trillion—is full of gimmicks, and he even acknowledged that that pricetag is a form of deceptive advertising.

We now have an honest score, one that acknowledges that massive programs cannot be started and stopped on a dime and that, if you are really going to be honest about the cost of the bill, you need to look at a score that spans the full 10-year budget window. We now have that score, one that avoids the gimmicks that are meant to disguise the true cost of the bill. Now we can quantify how disingenuous this so-called $1.75 trillion pricetag really is, and it is about as disingenuous as the President's claim that the bill costs zero. Nobody believes that. It really undermines the President's credibility when he says something like that.

The Congressional Budget Office now says this legislation, if in place for a full 10 years, would cost $4.9 trillion. That is on top of the almost $2 trillion our colleagues spent unilaterally earlier this year. Well, that is certainly higher than the $3.5 trillion redline that Senator MANCHIN drew earlier this year, and it is a whole lot more than the $1.75 trillion pricetag that our Democratic colleagues are claiming. It makes the repeated claim that this bill costs zero seem even more bizarre and out of touch.

Under this bill, as it is shaping up, we know deficits would increase by a staggering $3 trillion over the next decade. Now, last year, when we passed COVID–19 relief bills with huge bipartisan majorities, we did so because it was a public health emergency and an economic emergency, and we did it together. Yet, on top of all of that necessary spending, our colleagues are insisting on spending another $4.9 trillion—adding another $3 trillion to the debt over the next decade. Our children and grandchildren would never have a chance to dig out of the hole that our Democratic colleagues are now drilling.

This legislation doesn't just fall short of solving problems; it actually makes them worse. This bill would fuel

the red-hot inflation that is already burning up the paychecks of the American people. People who are on fixed incomes are finding their purchasing power shrinking by the day because of the threat of inflation. We know this bill would also hurt our energy security. It would give massive tax breaks to the wealthy while increasing taxes on the middle class. It would literally cut funding for safety net hospitals and drive the national debt to unimaginable heights. Finally, and maybe most importantly, it would hand to the Federal Government decisions that should be made by families.

I hope our colleague from West Virginia will continue to hold strong against the dangers of this bill. At a minimum, we need to tap the brakes and take what he called a ''strategic pause.''

So it seems the Democratic leader is on track to miss yet another deadline. For the country's sake, I hope this bill does not arrive after Christmas. I hope it never comes at all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I appreciate my friend from Texas and his comments, but I have trouble following some of them.

When he came to the floor after the deserved credit for the Trump 2017–2018 tax cut for the rich—70 percent of the benefits went to the 1 percent—he did take credit for his work in the Finance Committee. He should take credit for that, but that is what drove this hole in the deficit where the rich got richer.

I remember during that—and the Presiding Officer was not here at the time, but he can still see it here.

You can look out the window, and you can see Senator MCCONNELL's office there and the lobbyists lined up. You should have seen it back when Senator CORNYN was talking about this tax cut—this tax cut for the rich—when they made these promises: You know, if you give tax cuts to really rich people and corporations, it will trickle down, and we will all do better. They will hire more people, and they will raise wages.

Well, we know what they did. In fact, they just announced another round of it—a whole bunch of stock buybacks for the executives. So we know what happened during those years. Profits went up for corporations, and stock markets soared. Executive compensation exploded through the roof, and wages for most people in Mansfield, GA, and Mansfield, OH, and Marietta, GA, and Marietta, OH, stayed flat. We know that. That is why Build Back Better makes sense. It begins to put money in people's pockets.

And what my friend from Texas—and we sit across from each other in the Finance Committee and work together on some issues, and I appreciate what he has done on some other bills. But what he didn't explain is why every one of them opposes the child tax credit. On the child tax credit, we know a number of things. I have been working on this since 2013. It started with not a lot of support, but it built huge support by this year, early this year. Sitting at this desk, on March 6, I voted—as did the Presiding Officer from Georgia in the first really big vote he cast as a Member of the Senate, in the majority—for the child tax credit.

Two different times, every single Republican voted no. Every single Democrat voted yes. Do you know what that meant? It meant that starting in July, when we got it set up, 90 percent of the families in Georgia, 90 percent of the families in Ohio who have children under the age of 18 got at least a $3,000-a-year tax cut.

Think about that. There are families who struggle with paying rent. Twenty-five percent of renters in this country before the pandemic paid more than half their income in rent. Think of the pressure those families are under if, at the end of every month, they cobble together $700 to pay their rent. They get a $3,000 tax cut. The family who is struggling to pay for diapers or childcare, especially—the cost of childcare has exploded.

Whether it is Metro Atlanta or Metro Columbus, OH, or whether it is smalltown Milledgeville or smalltown Shelby, OH, families struggle with childcare, and this $300 a month per child—or $250, depending on the age of the children—makes a huge difference in those families.

One father said: You know, for the first time, I have money now to buy my daughter fast-pitch softball equipment.

A mother said to me: I have money now. For the first time, I can send my son for a week to summer camp and buy school supplies in the fall.

And, as I said, for diapers and other expenses for infants, it makes all the difference in the world.

I expect the Presiding Officer, I hope, has a long career in this body. I don't know if he will ever get the opportunity to vote on anything as big as what we did in March with the recovery act and what we are about to do with Build Back Better. For me, they are the highlights of my career.

I hope the Presiding Officer has a lot of years in front of him, but this is the most consequential thing this Congress has done, not just to fight poverty, lift poor kids and struggling parents who are working so hard to raise kids and balance two jobs and all that, not just to help kids get out of poverty but to make life easier.

As I said, 90 percent of the families who have children under 18 in Georgia, in Ohio, and every State in between are going to get a $3,000-a-year tax cut. That alone is so important.

I wish my colleague from Texas would address why they all vote no. They have had two chances. It sounds like they are going to take their third chance and vote no again.

I don't understand it. Is it that the lobbyists who line up in Senator MCCONNELL's office have some weird philosophy that markets always know better? Is it just that they don't really care about helping kids? I don't know what their logic is. I just know what our logic is, and it will make our country better.

TRIBUTE TO ALYSSA BROCKINGTON

Mr. President, I would like to honor a member of my staff who has been such a valuable part of our office, Alyssa Brockington. She is joining us in the Chamber today.

She has done such important work on healthcare and on economic justice. She is moving on to a new opportunity—again, to fight for a lot of the people whom we fight for in our office. She is moving on at the end of the year.

She has been with our office for 5 years, working to expand access to healthcare for Ohioans, for people around the country and to bring down drug prices and healthcare costs, one of the major goals of Build Back Better. She has worked to make sure that not only can families afford to see a doctor but that the care they get actually makes them healthier and serves their needs. We know that so often that isn't the case for too many people, especially the most vulnerable.

Last year, Ms. Brockington led efforts in the Senate, with me, to introduce a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. And this is an effort, but what I love about this effort is that, in the first place, it really kind of happened. It started at the community level, in Hamilton County, Ohio, in the Cincinnati area. Other communities in the State began to pass resolutions to declare racism a public health crisis.

She worked with leaders. She worked with advocates in these communities. She worked with organizations like the National Urban League and the YWCA and other Senate offices to introduce a resolution. It acknowledges the systemic barriers that people of color, especially Black Americans, continue to face in our healthcare system.

The first step to solving this problem is recognizing its existence and understanding it. Some of us in this Chamber have read the 1619 Project. It has just come out. It came out of a New York Times very lengthy, very detailed series of articles. This is what Ms. Brockington is helping to address, some of these endemic problems we face. She has always pushed our office to recognize the issues and the people that too often get overlooked in this town.

Ms. Brockington led efforts in our office to work to prevent maternal mortality, working on bills like the Healthy Moms Act and the Supporting Best Practices for Healthy Moms Act.

Mothers—we know especially young mothers of color—are dying at an alarming rate in this country. It is pretty unbelievable that so many women still die in childbirth in the richest country in the world. We have the best healthcare, to be sure, but it

doesn't, let's say, trickle down to everybody in this country.

Despite having the best hospitals and the best doctors in the world, deaths are going up, not down. The legislation Alyssa has championed would help expand coverage options for pregnant mothers so they can get the care they need to have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.

Thanks to her hard work and thanks to my colleague and my friend Senator WYDEN, we included a provision from the Healthy Moms Act that would provide postpartum women with 12 months of Medicaid coverage in the Build Back Better bill.

I mean, think about that—these women now who give birth will have 12 months of Medicaid coverage—what that can mean, actually having insurance, not having to worry as your colicky baby at several weeks old is keeping you awake at night and suffering, and you are thinking also in your mind: How am I going to pay if I take her to the doctor? How am I going to pay? How am I going to afford this coverage?

This does that.

Another major contribution Alyssa has made to our office is her leadership informing and guiding our Economic Justice Task Force. Economic justice is central to everything we do for the people of Ohio.

I would notice—and I know I am not allowed to wear this on the floor. So I will just hold it up, if that doesn't violate the rules.

I ran in today and I met briefly with one of the workers who makes food in this building. They just joined and formed Local 23 of UNITE HERE. What that is going to mean for her life, what that is going to mean for workers, that they have somebody now representing them, bargaining for better wages, better benefits—we know the cafeteria workers here, the people who work to serve us, were making as little as $11 and $12 an hour.

This Economic Justice Task Force will mean our office will do better to engage communities that are overlooked, to discuss and champion issues that are central to Ohio communities and to the workers here and all over the country, communities that don't often have much of a voice in the government.

She has been the driving force behind this task force for 2 full years now, organizing meetings, facilitating discussions, encouraging colleagues to get involved and speak up. She coordinates with other staff. She plans quarterly events. She circulates ideas for feedback.

One colleague said: All around, she is so inclusive and empathetic. As you work in this job and work in these jobs, having staff that is kind and inclusive and empathetic is sort of everything because they will treat the citizens of Alaska or Georgia or Ohio with that empathy and with that kindness. She has been that kind of asset to our office and to our work for the people of Ohio.

We will miss her dearly. I know she will continue to do wonderful things to ensure more Americans get the compassionate and affordable and effective healthcare they need.

I am excited. We hate to lose her, but we like her next challenge, and we are excited to see how far she will go.

Thank you, Alyssa, for your service to Ohio and to our country. We will miss you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to come down to the Senate floor and commend a number of Senators, but I want to particularly commend the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator REED, and the ranking member, Senator INHOFE, and their staff, and all the staff on the Armed Services Committee for the exceptional work they have done over the last several months to produce the strong National Defense Authorization Act that just passed in a very strong bipartisan vote here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

That vote was 88 to 11. I think it is a prime example of something that I mention a lot back home; and that is that there is a lot more bipartisan work that gets done here in the Senate that isn't often recognized, and there is nothing more important than having Senators from both sides of the aisle come together with regard to national defense and supporting our troops and their families.

We have been doing that over 60 years in a row, where we have passed the National Defense Authorization Act—one of the most important bills that comes to the floor of the Senate and the House and the Congress. And, once again, we have passed it. And I think Chairman REED and Senator INHOFE—Ranking Member INHOFE—deserve a lot of the credit.

So I just want to touch on a couple of the key provisions here, a lot of what was in it, and then mention a few things. A lot of times it is important to recognize, actually, what is not in a bill because that can be just as important as what is in it.

But I would start with the No. 1 issue here, and it is the top-line budget increase for the Department of Defense.

I have been outspoken on the disappointment and damage that President Biden's budget, which he proposed, with regard to the Pentagon, supported, unfortunately, by many here—the majority leader, the budget chairman—that that was unacceptable—unacceptable. Why was it unacceptable? Because our Nation is facing many threats right now. Just read the paper every day—China, Russia, Iran. Yet that budget that was actually provided by the White House was a cut—a pretty dramatic cut—if you look at it as adjusted for inflation.

The Armed Services Committees in the Senate and in the House thoroughly rejected the Biden budget to cut defense spending.

We have in this bill a 3-percent real increase. That is a little over $25 billion. This amendment, which I cosponsored with Senator INHOFE and others, to increase our defense spending, when it came to a vote in the committee, every Senator on the Armed Services Committee voted for it, with the exception of one. That is about as bipartisan as it gets.

There are many important things in this bill in terms of the significant increase to the top-line budget, but readiness, in my view, of our military is one of the most important things we do here as U.S. Senators, and now is certainly not the time to cut defense spending. I think today's vote was a strong bipartisan showing that this body does not agree with the Biden budget, and that was one really important aspect of today's NDAA.

Second, I want to talk a little bit about the great State of Alaska and its role in our military and some of the provisions in this bill that relate to Arctic security.

I like to say that Alaska constitutes three pillars of America's military might. We are the cornerstone of missile defense. Almost all the radar systems and all the ground-based missile interceptors protecting the whole country are located in Alaska.

We are the hub of air combat power for the Arctic and Asia Pacific. By the end of this year, we will have over 100 fifth-generation fighters—combat-coded, fifth-gen fighters. That is F–35s, F–22s, stationed in Alaska—over 100. There is no place on the planet Earth that has over 100 fifth-generation fighters. Supersonic stealth can get anywhere—anywhere—very quickly: Russia, China, Taiwan. That is another area of Alaska's pillars of military might.

And, finally, we are a platform for expeditionary forces, the 4–25, the only airborne brigade combat team in the entire Asia Pacific; the First Striker Brigade; and many others that can get to places all over the world, because of our strategic location, very quickly, and also because of our strategic airlift in Alaska.

But this NDAA is going to add another element of Alaska's military might to our Nation, and that is the center of gravity for America's Arctic security operations.

Last year in the NDAA, we were able to get the first and only and much needed Department of Defense Center for Arctic Security. The Department of Defense named it the Ted Stevens, after the great, late Senator. The Center for Arctic Security is going to be in Anchorage, AK.

And now, in this year's NDAA, we have what is called the Arctic Security Initiative. I was honored to cosponsor that with my good friend Senator KING

from Maine. And this gets the Pentagon to focus on a 5-year strengthening of our national security in the Arctic region.

As you know, that is becoming an area of great power competition, and America has very strong, strategic national security and economic security interests in the Arctic. And this NDAA will cement not just the Arctic as an important national security imperative of our country but Alaska as the focal point for Arctic security endeavors for the United States and our allies.

The other element here in the NDAA which is so important, of course, is taking care of our troops and their families. This bill authorizes a pay raise of almost 3 percent for both military members and Department of Defense civilians. It has numerous initiatives relating to military health and housing leave policies. One that I was proud to get into this bill is an important provision that allows the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration to do facility sharing.

What does that mean? It enables both the Pentagon and the VA to work on agreements to plan, design, and construct facilities to operate as VA and DOD shared medical facilities. That is going to help with readiness. That is going to help train our young Active-Duty medical forces. It is going to help with taking care of our veterans. And it is going to save money.

These are the kinds of provisions that we need. They are win-win-win between the VA and our veterans and the Active-Duty and Reserve forces that also need healthcare. And we are looking forward to taking advantage of that in Alaska and in other places in the country.

As I said at the outset, oftentimes what is not in a bill is as important as what is in a bill, and some of our Members—some of the far-left Members of the House—tried to plug into the NDAA—and they did so over in the House—a number of bills that really didn't have a lot to do with the military, but they were trying to move forward on a far-left agenda that they tried to attach in the NDAA.

Ironically, many of these Members really have no intention of ever voting for a strong NDAA, but they tried to plug things in, in the House bill. They did that in the House bill, but we were able to get rid of pretty much all of those—again, things like redflag laws that would confiscate firearms without due process.

There is another provision that I am really glad was not in there. There has been this narrative on the far left that somehow the men and women of our military—that our military institutions—are filled with a bunch of extremists. There are news reports that say this. None of it is based on data. None of it is based on data. And I have been pressing officials, saying: Give me data. You make these charges, which I dislike. I happen to know many, many members of the military. They are some of the finest people in the country.

So we were able to get rid of some of the provisions in the House bill that—one was going to set up an office in the Pentagon on essentially trying to, in my view, do witch hunts on so-called extremists. It is an issue that the Pentagon needs to come up with data on and not make these false charges.

So, overall, this is a good day for our troops, for their families, for the Senate. It is a very bipartisan bill, with people coming together—Democrats and Republicans—on, in my view, one of the most important issues, if not the most important issue, we deal with here in the Congress: the national security of our Nation; keeping a strong, lethal military.

And when we do that, like we did today, that also sends a message to our adversaries: The United States, despite some challenges, still has the best, most lethal military force in the world, the most professional military force in the world. And this bill is going to help enhance that, and our adversaries need to take notice.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

ENERGY SAVINGS AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am really pleased to be on the floor this afternoon with my friend and colleague Senator ROB PORTMAN to talk about an issue that we have been working on, literally, for a decade, and it has been a bipartisan effort to focus on energy efficiency as a response to the energy needs in this country.

In 2011, Senator PORTMAN and I introduced S. 1000, which was the first version of the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act. Over the years, it has been known as Shaheen-Portman, when we were in the majority on the Democratic side, or Portman-Shaheen, when the Republicans were in the majority.

But it doesn't matter what you call it. Our bill has proposed substantial investments in energy efficiency in this country, and what we did in the bill was to focus on the most energy-intensive sectors in our economy: buildings, residential and commercial, which is about a third of our energy use; the industrial sector; and the Federal Government. And, in the United States, the biggest user of energy is the Federal Government.

In a Congress that is divided along partisan lines on so many issues, energy efficiency is one priority that can bring us together on a bipartisan, bicameral basis to get things done. I always like to say that energy efficiency is one of those energy sources that you can support whether you are from New England or Ohio or Wyoming. Whether you support oil and gas or wind and solar, energy efficiency is the fastest, cheapest way to meet our energy needs.

Our legislation has always focused on low-cost tools and adoption of off-the-shelf technologies to save money for consumers and businesses, to make America more energy independent, and to reduce emissions.

And over the years, over the last decade, we have had some big wins. In 2015, President Obama signed a targeted version of Shaheen-Portman, the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act, into law. That bill helped align the interests of commercial building owners and their tenants to reduce energy consumption, and it allowed certain water heaters to help with demand response programs in rural areas.

Now, we have also made great strides through annual appropriations and administrative actions on things like energy efficiency standards for appliances.

Of course, we have also had some real defeats. But, though frustrating, as those defeats were, our resolve on this bill has never wavered, and when we reintroduced Portman-Shaheen last Congress, we worked to again incorporate feedback from stakeholders. For 7 months, our staffs held back-to-back meetings with constituents, stakeholders, and committee staff to ensure the bill addressed the energy needs in New Hampshire, Ohio, and the rest of the country.

Improving the efficiency of residential and commercial buildings through energy-saving building codes remained central to our bill, as did industrial energy efficiency provisions and improvements to Federal energy efficiency programs.

We also, again, included energy efficiency bills from our colleagues. So in that piece of legislation, we included Senators MURKOWSKI and MANCHIN's Federal Energy and Water Management Performance Act. We included Senators HOEVEN and MANCHIN's All-of-the-Above Federal Building Energy Conservation Act. And we included Senator COLLINS and WARNER's legislation coordinating the energy retrofitting for schools. Finally, as part of that, we included Senator BENNET and Senator ISAKSON's Sensible Accounting to Value Energy Act, or the SAVE Act.

So there were a lot of reasons why a number of Members of this body were interested in that legislation. But it was also a real savings because, according to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, the policies from that bill would save consumers over $51 billion on their energy bills. It would reduce carbon emissions by 1.3 billion metric tons, which is the equivalent of taking 280 million cars off the road for a year. And it would save 32 quadrillion Btus of energy, which is nearly the total energy use of all U.S. industries for 1 year.

Now, a previous study from ACEEE also estimated that the legislation would add more than 100,000 jobs to the economy. That bill passed the Energy and Natural Resources Committee by a vote of 14 to 6, and it was the fifth

time—fifth time—the bill passed in committee on a bipartisan basis.

Now, I am proud to say that the Energy Policy Act of 2020 that was signed into law by President Trump at the end of last year had several provisions from that Shaheen-Portman legislation that would streamline efficiency for schools, increase energy efficiency for Federal data centers, provide rebates for energy-efficient electric motors and transformers, and support Federal energy efficiency programs. But, of course, a piece of that bill was left on the cutting room floor, with the voluntary building codes, where so much of the savings was really incorporated.

But despite the success and the defeat in the last Congress, we came into this year as determined as ever. And as part of the original Gang of 10, Senator PORTMAN and I teamed up to ensure that energy efficiency was a big part of the bipartisan infrastructure framework.

We worked with Senator MANCHIN and our bipartisan colleagues to incorporate much of Shaheen-Portman with funding in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

I am going to turn it over to Senator PORTMAN for a few minutes so my voice can recover, and then I will pick it up when he finishes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, first of all, it is great to be on the floor with my friend JEANNE SHAHEEN and talk about something positive, something that we have been able to accomplish over the years—as she said, we have been at this over a decade—which is to encourage more energy efficiency. This is the ability for us to save energy by not using it. It is, therefore, sort of energy found. It is also an ability to improve the economy because it creates more jobs and makes us more competitive globally by having lower energy costs.

Think about the businesses in your State. The competitive nature of business today is that you are really competing with the Europeans and the Japanese and the Chinese and so on, and if you have higher energy costs and you are not energy efficient, you are not going to be competitive.

But if you are competitive, it adds jobs and makes the economy stronger. So the way I look at it, if you are interested in lower emissions and a better environment and, at the same time, you are interested in a better economy and creating jobs, then energy efficiency is the low-hanging fruit. That is the thing we can all agree with.

I applaud Senator SHAHEEN because she has been patient. We have both been patient, as our staffs have been, over the years, in getting pieces of our legislation in various bills that have passed this U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives and been signed into law by President Obama, President Trump, and now President Biden.

The most recent one was the infrastructure bill, and it is exciting what we were able to get in there in terms of encouraging a better, more sustainable use of our energy resources in both the public sector and in the private sector.

Importantly, energy efficiency is also a part of a more reliable and resilient grid, which was part of our legislation: improving the electrical grid.

We have had some pretty severe weather events over the last year, as you know. I was just in Kentucky over the weekend, my neighboring State, helping out on the cleanup there. And, boy, electricity was out everywhere.

By improving energy efficiency, we can reduce demand, taking pressure off our power grids, and help create more stability.

These are some of the reasons why, since 2011, we have worked together to promote this energy efficiency bill called the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act. Senator SHAHEEN called it Portman-Shaheen. I call it Shaheen-Portman because she is in charge now. The Senate is in the Democrats' majority, not ours. But we have worked together seamlessly. It has really been nonpartisan.

And, again, our goal has been, really, three different areas. One is residential and commercial buildings, because that is where we use a lot of energy. About 40 percent of the energy used in this country is used there.

Also, to ensure that the Federal Government does a better job. The Federal Government uses more energy than any other entity in the entire economy. By the way, it uses more energy than anybody in the world. And they don't do it very efficiently. In fact, there is a lot of energy inefficiency in our Federal Government.

So practice what you preach, right? So you have the government telling everybody else they have got to be green, but the government itself is not green. So our legislation requires that the Federal Government take steps to make it more energy efficient as well.

And then, finally, the manufacturing sector. Here is where there is a great opportunity, and manufacturers are really excited about it because we can provide some incentives, some best practices, and so on to make them more competitive globally by improving their energy efficiency.

We have created a big tent through this process, joining forces with our colleagues over the years for the purpose of supporting these kind of commonsense energy efficiency measures. A number of Senators who have had important parts of our legislation include Senator WICKER, Senator BENNET, Senator COLLINS, Senator MANCHIN, Senator HOEVEN, and others—Senator MURKOWSKI.

Our legislation has been voted on by this body before. In 2016, it passed the U.S. Senate. It also passed out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee five separate times with bipartisan support.

By the way, in 2016, the vote was 85 to 12. Now, it was part of a larger energy package, but that was a pretty strong sign of bipartisan support for this. And it improved energy efficiency, in that case, in leased office space and improved energy savings from water heaters, as an example.

However, we have long recognized we need to do more to be able to save energy and save money. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, residential and commercial buildings accounted for 40 percent of total energy consumption. In addition, reports from the U.S. Department of Energy have found that the Federal Government, again, is the single largest energy consumer in the country. And those studies have shown that our legislation as a whole would save consumers $51 billion on energy bills, reduce carbon emissions by 1.3 billion tons—not by hurting jobs—by creating more jobs because it would add more than 100,000 jobs to the economy.

Over the years, our legislation has gained the support of industry, such as the National Association of Manufacturers, American Chemistry Council, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce. It has the support of commercial and real estate developers like BOMA and the Real Estate Roundtable, as well as from efficiency advocates and the environmental community like the Alliance to Save Energy, called ACEEE.

There is not a lot in Washington these days that has such a broad group of stakeholders supporting it. But there is a reason this legislation has received such broad support. It reduces emissions by reducing energy consumption. It also creates new jobs and lowers energy bills for consumers. And it does all this without putting any new mandates on the private sector. Particularly now, at a time of record inflation and rising energy costs, investing and improving energy efficiency is a smart way to help support hard-working families in Ohio and around the country.

The good news is that now, with the bipartisan infrastructure bill signed into law, we are much closer to seeing the benefits for the American people become a reality. The infrastructure bill, which we coauthored along with a bunch of our colleagues, included a total of $2.5 billion for various energy efficiency projects. Included in these critical investments are a number of our provisions from Shaheen-Portman.

For example, we were able to include and fund programs to help incentivize contractors, homebuilders, and others to adapt and implement updated building codes. We were also able to fund programs that will help career skills development to help us train a workforce able to develop and install important new energy efficiency technologies. That has been one of our challenges.

For example, we include funding to enhance the Industrial Assessment Centers Program at the Department of Energy. This program allows students from around the country to conduct

energy assessments and small- and medium-sized manufacturers to improve their competitiveness, reduce waste, save energy, while at the same time training students in the field.

By the way, it is these kinds of small changes and upgrades that can result in big emissions and cost savings for businesses all around the country. So I am truly proud of what we have accomplished, including the infrastructure bill most recently.

Again, I want to thank my colleague Senator SHAHEEN for her tireless work to get this legislation across the finish line—again, energy efficiency, the low-hanging fruit. I look forward to continuing our partnership on these important issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and partner in this effort, Senator PORTMAN. And as he pointed out, on November 15, President Biden became the third President to sign energy efficiency provisions from our bill into law.

Now, we still have a lot of work to do. But I just want to recognize current and former Shaheen-Portman staff who have helped us shepherd this bill through its many obstacles.

From my staff, I want to thank Trent Bauserman, Robert Diznoff, Ariel Marshall, Drew Story, and Janelle DiLuccia.

From Senator PORTMAN's staff, I want to thank Pam Thiessen, Steve Kittredge, Pat Orth, Sarah Peery, and Lydia Denis.

I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter the names of these current and former staff into the RECORD.

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

Energy and Natural Resources Committee staff who have played a pivotal role in the advancement of the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act over the years:

Brie Van Cleve, Adam Berry, Al Stayman, Sam Fowler, Renae Black, Sarah Venuto, Angela Becker Dippman, Mary Louise Wagoner, Joshua Sheinkman, Colin Hayes, and Brian Hughes.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Finally, I want to thank the chairs and ranking members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee who have played such a pivotal role over the years: Senators MANCHIN, MURKOWSKI, CANTWELL and WYDEN and their staffs.

Senator PORTMAN talked about all of the various groups who have been involved in helping to move this legislation where we are today. So I won't go back over those. But I will say, again, energy efficiency is a win, win, win. It create jobs; it reduces cost to consumers; and it lowers emissions.

And as our economy recovers and grows, the investments in energy efficiency from our bipartisan infrastructure package are going to make sure that we use energy smarter. And I am going continue to partner with Senator PORTMAN and others so we can unlock the full potential of energy efficiency for our growing economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for such time as I shall consume.

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

ETHIOPIA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I think, with Christmas right around the corner, I can't think of a more appropriate time to deliver a short message here.

I have spoken several times about the situation in Ethiopia this year. It is a nation that is close to my heart for a lot of good reasons. It is close to other hearts around here. And if you are trying to understand the politics behind what is happening on the ground, it is very complicated.

But what is not complicated is that human suffering happens, and it is heartbreaking. We are talking about women and children and the elderly people. And they are dying every day. And it is totally unnecessary. I pray the violence stops very quickly and call on those who feel the same way to join me if they agree with this.

One of my big criticisms of our State Department is that they tend to go around the world telling other countries what they need to do instead of focusing on building lasting friendships and alliances.

This pushes countries away from us instead of bringing them toward us. And we can't afford to do that anymore with the rising problems that we are having right now—we have been talking on the floor—with both China and Russia. And those countries are all too eager to pick up the pieces that we leave behind. And this is happening right now. We are faced with a situation where we have countries that are out there that have actually better resources than we do in many areas.

Unfortunately, this is exactly what the Biden administration is doing in Ethiopia. Because Ethiopia has been unable to resolve its internal challenges quick enough for the administration, they are punishing Ethiopia. They are really punishing their own people here.

Most recently, this has been in the form of announcing that they plan to remove Ethiopia from the African Growth and Opportunity Act. The African Growth and Opportunity Act is known as AGOA. And it is something that is very significant. It is one that all of those in Africa and other countries are trying to get behind them.

And I think it is particularly significant right now that Christmas is upon us. It means Ethiopia would no longer have preferential trade capabilities with the United States for both import and export.

Now, this is devastating to a nation that has been such a great partner over the years. Ethiopia has always—ever since it came back during the Meles administration, and we kicked communists out with the help of that administration, it has been our friend ever since then. Ethiopia has long been one of our last trading partners in Africa, in part, because its airline has a majority Boeing fleet. And because of that, many planes across the continent are being maintained in Ethiopia.

This flippant action makes our other partners doubt our commitment and pulls the rug out from many American business that have decided to make investments in Ethiopia instead of other countries in places around the world like Southeast Asia.

If we are willing to arbitrarily kick countries out of the agreement, other countries and American companies might not see participation in AGOA as worth the hassle you have to go through to get that. Every time we do something like this, we leave a vacuum that China is only too eager to fill.

Just after the Biden administration announced their plan to punish Ethiopia, the Chinese Government announced their own plan to purchase $300 billion worth of goods from Africa over the next 3 years and to invest nearly $10 billion.

The Chinese Foreign Minister promptly visited the principals in Ethiopia to support Prime Minister Abiy. Prime Minister Abiy, whom you might remember, has been a Prime Minister in Ethiopia for a long period of time. I can remember standing many years ago on this floor and lauding the virtues of him and what he has done for this country and the fact that he probably could be arguably the best educated Prime Minister in that country at any time. He didn't mention a word about the international challenges that he faces. They were there to support him, the democratically—we are talking about the Chinese now—democratically elected leader in Ethiopia. That is exactly what we should be doing. But we aren't—and China is.

We know that China and Russia are encroaching throughout Africa. They want nothing more than to create a division between the United States and Ethiopia and in countries across the continent.

And the good news is—if you can call it that—there is time before the Biden administration cancels AGOA benefits, and that would be for Ethiopia on January 1. But the door is closing. And January 1 is on us now.

So the Biden administration should take real steps to undoing the sanctions against the democratically elected government of Ethiopia and roll back the termination of AGOA benefits. And that would make a much happier Christmas for us and for Ethiopia.

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

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

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 528.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Atul Atmaram Gawande, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 528, Atul Atmaram Gawande, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 577.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative read the nomination of Linda Lopez, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

SENATOR. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 577, Linda Lopez, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sheldon Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher A. Coons, Christopher Murphy, Jeff Merkley, Patty Murray, Ron Wyden, Tina Smith, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Cory A. Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Martin Heinrich.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 579.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jinsook Ohta, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 579, Jinsook Ohta, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sheldon Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher A. Coons, Christopher Murphy, Jeff Merkley, Patty Murray, Ron Wyden, Tina Smith, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Cory A. Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Martin Heinrich.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 580.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Herrera Urias, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 580, David Herrera Urias, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 574.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Maame Ewusi-Mensah Frimpong, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 574, Maame Ewusi-Mensah Frimpong, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 487.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jane M. Beckering, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Michigan.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 487, Jane M. Beckering, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Michigan.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie K. Hirono, Tammy Duckworth, Jon Tester, Patty Murray, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Mark R. Warner, Catherine Cortez Masto, Cory A. Booker, Tammy Baldwin, Elizabeth Warren, Bernard Sanders, Gary C. Peters.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 488.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Shalina D. Kumar, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 488, Shalina D. Kumar, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie K. Hirono, Tammy Duckworth, Jon Tester, Patty Murray, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Mark R. Warner, Catherine Cortez Masto, Cory A. Booker, Tammy Baldwin, Elizabeth Warren, Bernard Sanders, Gary C. Peters.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 575.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jennifer L. Thurston, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 575, Jennifer L. Thurston, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sheldon Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher A. Coons, Christopher Murphy, Jeff Merkley, Patty Murray, Ron Wyden, Tina Smith, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Cory A. Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Martin Heinrich.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 578.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Katherine Marie Menendez, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 578, Katherine Marie Menendez, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sheldon Whitehouse, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher A. Coons, Christopher Murphy, Jeff Merkley, Patty Mrray, Ron Wyden, Tina Smith, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Cory A. Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Martin Heinrich.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 573.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mary Katherine Dimke, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 573, Mary Katherine Dimke, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 519.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Spain, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Andorra.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 519, Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Spain, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Andorra.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 526.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rahm Emanuel, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Japan.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 526, Rahm Emanuel, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Japan.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 446.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jack A. Markell, of Delaware, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 446, Jack A. Markell, of Delaware, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Angus S. King, Jr., Richard Blumenthal, Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 442.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 442, Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 454.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mark Gitenstein, of Washington, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 454, Mark Gitenstein, of Washington, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 447.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Denise Campbell Bauer, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the French Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Monaco.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 447, Denise Campbell Bauer, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the French Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Monaco.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Michael F. Bennet, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 525.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of R. Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 525, R. Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 440.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Claire D. Cronin, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 440, Claire D. Cronin, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Angus S. King, Jr., Richard Blumenthal, Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 323.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Marcela Escobari, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 323, Marcela Escobari, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell, Sheldon Whitehouse, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher A. Coons, Ron Wyden, Margaret Wood Hassan, Edward J. Markey, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Elizabeth Warren, Angus S. King.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 317.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Marc Evans Knapper, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 317, Marc Evans Knapper, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Angus S. King, Jr., Richard Blumenthal, Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 320.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rufus Gifford, of Massachusetts, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 320, Rufus Gifford, of Massachusetts, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Dianne Feinstein, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Angus S. King, Jr., Jon Ossoff, Bernard Sanders, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Christopher A. Coons.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally—No. 22—I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 572.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Gabriel P. Sanchez, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 572, Gabriel P. Sanchez, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Debbie Stabenow, Chris Van Hollen, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Patty Murray, Alex Padilla, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Luján, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Elizabeth Warren, Jeff Merkley, Cory A. Booker, Brian Schatz.

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

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

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

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 539 and 540; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Rostin Behnam, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission; and Rostin Behnam, of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring June 19, 2026 (Reappointment), en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. 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.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 606, Dawn N. Ison, of Michigan, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan for the term of four years.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF S. RES. 268

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to take note of the enduring support by the American people and by this body for the cause of democracy and human rights in Poland.

It is difficult to acknowledge so much time has passed, but it was 40 years ago this week, on December 13, 1981, that the Soviet-backed communist government and General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared a state of war in Poland. People called it ''martial law;'' in fact, it was quite literally a war declared by a government on its own people.

The U.S. Senate, led by the late statesman and Senator from New York, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, acted quickly to adopt S. Res. 268. On December 15, on the last day of the first session of the 97th Congress, this body adopted by vote of 95 to 0, S. Res. 268, ''on the imposition of martial law in Poland.''

The resolution declared that:

''it is the clear and unassailable right of the Polish people collectively to determine their own future''

It also directed that:

''the President and his Administration should consult intensively with our allies to develop a concerted and sustained response to the threat to the democratization process in Poland.''

By 1989, thanks to continuing support for the people of Poland that this Senate expressed 40 years ago today, democracy prevailed in Poland.

Only two Members of today's Senate were present and voting on December 15, 1981, and I want to express my appreciation, these many years later, for their support for the resolution: Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY of Iowa, then in his very first year in the Senate, and Senator PATRICK LEAHY, then already in his second term in the Senate.

The trade union Solidarity had emerged on August 31, 1980, at the Gdansk Shipyard when the communist government of Poland signed the agreement allowing for its existence. Lech Walesa and others soon formed a broad anti-Soviet social movement ranging from people associated with the Catholic Church to members of the anti-Soviet left. Polish nationalism, together with pro-American liberalism, played an important part in the development of Solidarity in the 1980s. Solidarity advocated nonviolence in its members' activities. In September 1981, Solidarity's first national congress elected Walesa as its president and adopted a republican program, the ''Self-governing Republic''.

The first resolution adopted by Solidarnosc, at its First Congress in 1981, expressed a vision for the world, one based on the principle of its name. It stated:

The ultimate goal of Solidarity is to create dignified conditions of life in an economically and politically sovereign Poland. By this, we mean a life free from poverty, exploitation, fear and lies, in a democratically and legally organized society.

By December, the government in Warsaw and its backers in Moscow decided that they had enough of an assertive civil society. And so martial law was declared and the repression commenced, 40 years ago this week.

The terrible repression next door in Belarus today compares, but even it does not match the brute force of the war against the people of Poland declared by General Jaruzelski, the simultaneous deployment of hundreds of thousands of riot police, soldiers, armed vehicles, and tanks to occupy all workplaces and cities and to crush the resistance of an entire society organized in independent, self-governing unions. Yet Solidarity lived.

A democratic movement in Belarus also lives today. It is not inevitable, however, that it will win, just as it was not inevitable that Solidarity would win. Much depended on the indomitable will of the Polish people—and also on the actions of Western democracies.

The first people in the United States to stand up on behalf of the people of Poland were writers and intellectuals who formed the Committee in Support

of Solidarity, including Susan Sontag, Adam Ulam, Czeslaw Milosz, and others. An energetic young man named Eric Chenowith and wise strategist named Irena Lasoda soon became familiar faces in the Halls of Congress, circulating information about the struggle of solidarity and people in Poland to endure the repression they confronted.

The political force that kept the democratic world focused on support for the people of Poland then was the American labor movement, led by its president Lane Kirkland and his secretary-treasurer Tom Donahue. They immediately established the AFL–CIO's Polish Workers Aid Fund and put Tom Kahn, the international affairs director of the AFL–CIO, at its helm. They persisted in making the steady argument, even after December 1981, that in Solidarnosc lay the potential for a new, more democratic, more just, and more peaceful world.

It was the AFL–CIO, representing 16 million people, that gave voice and strength to the free trade union Solidarity in the United States. We forget how many were willing to forsake Solidarity in the period of martial law. Indeed, only the AFL–CIO, backed by the committee, pressured President Reagan and his administration to adopt stronger sanctions in response to the state of war. As importantly, it was the AFL–CIO that made sure Solidarity was sustained through financial and material help, some of which was supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, after its creation in 1984.

Thanks to that support and steadfastness, eventually the government relented, especially once Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in the USSR and began to pull back the support for the repressive policies in Poland and elsewhere in the Warsaw Pact.

Roundtable Talks between the government and Solidarity-led opposition led to semi-free elections in June of 1989. In an arrangement that was similar in some ways to what transpired more recently in Burma, partially free elections were organized in which a large block of seats in the legislature were reserved—in the case of Burma for the military and in the case of Poland, in 1989, for the Communist party and its allies.

All seats in the newly recreated Senate of Poland were to be elected democratically, as were 161 seats—35 percent of the total—in Sejm. The remaining 65 percent of the seats in the Sejm were reserved for the Polish United Workers' Party—the Communist Party—and its satellite parties. These seats were still technically elected, but only government-sponsored candidates were allowed to compete for them. In addition, all 35 seats elected via the countrywide list were reserved for the Communist Party's candidates to ensure that the most notable leaders of the Polish United Workers Party were elected.

But in the June elections, the people of Poland voted so overwhelmingly for the representatives nominated by Solidarity that the Communists and the military lost all credibility. By the end of August, a Solidarity-led coalition government was formed, and in December, Tadeusz Mazowiecki was elected Prime Minister.

Poland has since then developed into such a strong democracy and economically liberal country that it has led its neighbors into joining the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It has become in every sense an ally of the United States. And in the past 2 years, it has again been true to the heritage of Solidarity by providing safe haven for many political refugees from Belarus and elsewhere.

While many of us continue to have concerns about some aspects of Polish Government policy, its treatment of certain media outlets, and the fate of the rule-of-law in the country, the government of Poland is a friend with whom we can have honest conversations. Indeed, I am sitting down later this afternoon with the newly arrived Polish ambassador to Washington, Marek Magierowsk, to continue these conversations. This is especially important at this time because Poland will become the chairman-in-office next month of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—the OSCE—and will play a major role in shaping the OSCE's response to efforts by Russia and others to undermine the work of the organization and stability in the region.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full text of S. Res. 268 from the 97th Congress, as adopted on December 15, 1981, be printed in the RECORD at this point, along with the announcement of December 15, 1981, of the creation of the Committee in support of Solidarity.

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

S. RES. 268

Whereas the American and Polish peoples share a deep and abiding friendship;

Whereas the imposition of martial law, and the suspension of workers' rights in Poland on December 13, 1981, constitute grave abridgements of the human rights and civil liberties of the Polish people;

Whereas it is the clear and unassailable right of the Polish people collectively to determine their own future: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the Sense of the Senate that—

(1) the American people desire an early and peaceful and popularly supported resolution of the issues which have led to the imposition of martial law in Poland;

(2) the American people deplore the imposition of martial law in Poland, the suspension of the rights of workers to organize and peaceably to defend their interests, and the arrests of leaders of Solidarity; the free trade union;

(3) recent events call into question the suitability of the further provision of assistance to the government of Poland except for humanitarian programs;

(4) it is the right of the Polish people to resolve their own problems without outside interference of any kind;

(5) the support of the American people for continued United States dealings with the present government of Poland will relate directly to the degree to which the Polish government avoids violence and bloodshed, and demonstrate by its actions its respect for a full and legitimate role for the Solidarity labor union and its commitment to the continuation of Poland's reforms;

(6) the President and the Secretary of State should continue to stress this United States position in all dealings with Polish officials;

(7) the President and his Administration should consult intensively with our allies to develop a concerted and sustained response to the threat to the democratization process in Poland.

COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF SOLIDARITY,
New York, NY, December 15, 1981.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, DECLARE: At midnight on December 13, 1981, the Polish army and police raided the offices of the Independent Trade Union ''Solidarity''; thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of people were arrested in their homes. The Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party in one person, General Jaruzelski, declared martial law.

Polish society, in whose overwhelming support Solidarity has its strength, has exercised the utmost restraint in the face of countless acts of provocation on the part of the government. In the sixteen months of its existence, Solidarity has committed no illegal acts; it has rigorously respected the Polish constitution and all the forms of political life accepted in civilized societies. Each and every voice from Solidarity, even if termed ''radical'' by the Communist Party or the western media, has been no more than the exercise of that right to free and open discussion of national affairs which is guaranteed by the constitution. The party and the government, on the other hand, have violated almost every agreement they have signed; they have also violated the basic right of all citizens to freedom of expression.

The present events are not the ''internal affairs of Poland.'' The Soviet Union has been intervening in Polish internal affairs since 1944. The Junta of General Jaruzelski, by linking the arrests of Solidarity members to those of former party officials, is clearly attempting to blame Solidarity for the thirty-six years of indolent and devastating communist rule that have brought Poland to economic collapse. The strikes called by Solidarity have resulted in the loss of one day's work in sixteen months; mismanagement and lack of supplies have resulted in the loss of over twenty work days.

We appeal to every democratic government, and to all those who believe in the Polish people's right to basic freedoms, to immediately halt all economic and other transactions with Poland, until every member of Solidarity is freed.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK.
JOSIF BRODSKY.
LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI.
CZESLAW MILOSZ.
SUSAN SONTAG.
ADAM ULAM.
STANISLAW WELLISZ.
THOMAS WENZLOWA.

GAO DECISION B–33501

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the attached issuance of the Government Accountability Office's Decision B–33501 printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

DECISION

Matter of: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Applicability of Congressional Review Act to Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs

File: B–333501

Date: December 14, 2021

DIGEST

On February 3, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a document in the Federal Register entitled Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs, 86 Fed. Reg. 8025 (Mask Requirement). Under the CDC's Mask Requirement all persons using public conveyances such as planes, trains, and buses must wear facial coverings while on the conveyance and at transportation hubs such as airports and bus stations. CDC did not submit a CRA report to Congress or the Comptroller General on the Mask Requirement.

The Congressional Review Act (CRA) requires that before a rule can take effect, an agency must submit the rule to both the House of Representatives and the Senate as well as the Comptroller General, and provides procedures for congressional review where Congress may disapprove of rules. We conclude that the Mask Requirement meets the definition of a rule for purposes of CRA and, therefore, is subject to CRA's requirements for submission and congressional review. With this decision, we are not taking a position on the policy of imposing a mask requirement or what steps the agency or Congress may take next; our decision only addresses CDC's compliance with CRA's procedures for congressional review.

DECISION

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), issued a document entitled Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs, 86 Fed. Reg. 8025 (Mask Requirement) that was published in the Federal Register on February 3, 2021. Senator Rand Paul, M.D., subsequently requested our legal decision as to whether the Mask Requirement is a rule for purposes of the Congressional Review Act (CRA). Letter from Senator Rand Paul, M.D., to Comptroller General (Aug. 9, 2021). For the reasons explained below, we conclude that it is.

Our practice when rendering decisions is to contact the relevant agencies to obtain their legal views on the subject of the request. GAO, Procedures and Practices for Legal Decisions and Opinions, GA0–06–1064SP (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 2006), available at https://www.gao.gov/products/gao–06–1064sp. Accordingly, we reached out to HHS to obtain the agency's legal views. Letter from Managing Associate General Counsel, GAO, to Acting General Counsel, HHS (Aug. 12, 2021). We received HHS's response on September 28, 2021. Letter from Acting General Counsel, HHS, to Managing Associate General Counsel, GAO (Sept. 28, 2021).

BACKGROUND

CDC Mask Requirement

On January 31, 2020, in response to confirmed cases of Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19), the Secretary of HHS declared a public health emergency under the Public Health Service Act. The Secretary has renewed that declaration, most recently on October 15, 2021. Subsequently, the President declared that the COVID–19 outbreak constitutes a national emergency under the National Emergencies Act. Proclamation No. 9994, 85 Fed. Reg. 15,337 (Mar. 18, 2020). The national emergency declaration was continued on February 24, 2021. 86 Fed. Reg. 11,599 (Feb. 26, 2021).

On January 29, 2021, CDC issued the Mask Requirement pursuant to its regulatory authorities under the Public Service Health Act with an effective date of February 1, 2021. Mask Requirement, at 8025–26. It was published in the Federal Register on February 3, 3021.

The Mask Requirement states that masks help prevent the spread of COVID–19. Mask Requirement at 8028. The stated intent of the Mask Requirement is to preserve human life; maintain a safe and secure operating transportation system; mitigate further introduction, transmission, and spread of COVID–19 into and within the United States; and support response efforts. Id. at 8027 (statement of intent).

Under the Mask Requirement, a person must wear a mask while boarding, disembarking, and traveling on any conveyance (such as an aircraft, train, road vehicle, or vessel) into or within the United States. Id. at 8026, 8029. A person also must wear a mask while at a transportation hub (such as an airport, bus terminal, port, or subway station) that provides transportation within the United States. Id. It also requires conveyance operators to only provide service to masked passengers and to use best efforts to ensure passengers stay masked during the entire trip. Id at 8029.

The Mask Requirement provides several exemptions based on the characteristics of a passenger or the travel scenario. Id. at 8027–28. For instance, passengers under the age of two are exempt, as is travel by private conveyance for personal, noncommercial use. Id. at 8027, 8029. Other federal agencies are required to take additional steps to enforce the Mask Requirement. Id. at 8028, 8030. The Mask Requirement will remain in effect until rescinded by CDC or the public health emergency is ended by the Secretary of HHS. Id. at 8026.

Congressional Review Act

CRA, enacted in 1996 to strengthen congressional oversight of agency rulemaking, requires federal agencies to submit a report on each new rule to both Houses of Congress and to the Comptroller General for review before a rule can take effect. 5 U.S.C. 801 (a)(1)(A). The report must contain a copy of the rule, ''a concise general statement relating to the rule,'' and the rule's proposed effective date. Id. Each House of Congress is to provide the report on the rule to the chairman and ranking member of each standing committee with jurisdiction. 5 U.S.C. 801 (a)(1)(C). The CRA allows Congress to review and disapprove rules issued by federal agencies for a period of 60 days using special procedures. 5 U.S.C. 802. If a resolution of disapproval is enacted, then the new rule has no force or effect. Id.

CRA adopts the definition of rule under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. §§551(4), which states that a rule is ''the whole or a part of an agency statement of general or particular applicability and future effect designed to implement, interpret, or prescribe law or policy or describing the organization, procedure, or practice requirements of an agency.'' 5 U.S.C. 804(3). CRA excludes three categories of rules from coverage: (1) rules of particular applicability; (2) rules relating to agency management or personnel; and (3) rules of agency organization, procedure, or practice that do not substantially affect the rights or obligations of nonagency parties. Id.

CDC did not submit a CRA report to Congress or the Comptroller General on the Mask Requirement. In its response to us, CDC stated the Mask Requirement was not subject to the CRA because it was an emergency action under CDC's regulatory authorities and that any delays could result in serious harms. Response Letter, at 1.

DISCUSSION

The issue here is whether the CDC Mask Requirement is a rule under CRA. Applying the statutory framework of CRA, we first address whether the Mask Requirement meets the definition of a rule under APA. We conclude that it does. Second, we address whether any of the CRA exceptions apply. We conclude they do not. Therefore, we conclude the Mask Requirement is a rule for purposes of CRA.

CDC considers the Mask Requirement to be an order issued under its regulatory authorities implementing the Public Health Service Act. See Response Letter, at 1–2 (''[t]he mask order is an emergency action taken under 42 C.F.R. §§70.2, 71.31 (b), and 71.32 (b) . . . implementing regulations of 42 U.S.C. §264''). Although an agency's characterization should be considered in deciding whether its action is a rule under the APA definition (and whether, for example, it is subject to notice and comment rulemaking requirements), ''[an] agency's own label . . . [is] not dispositive.'' *Chamber of Commerce of the U.S.* v. *OSHA*, 636 F.2d 464,468 (D.C. Cir. 1980); B–329272, Oct. 19, 2017.

The APA defines a rule as ''the whole or a part of an agency statement of general or particular applicability and future effect designed to implement, interpret, or prescribe law or policy or describing the organization, procedure, or practice requirements of an agency. . . .'' 5 U.S.C. §551(4). By contrast, the APA defines an order to be ''the whole or a part of a final disposition, whether affirmative, negative, injunctive, or declaratory in form, of an agency in a matter other than rule making but including licensing.'' 5 U.S.C. §551(6). As we have noted in our prior decisions, these two definitions make rules and orders mutually exclusive categories. *See* B–332233, Aug. 13, 2020, at 3.

Here the Mask Requirement meets the APA definition of a rule rather than an order. Regarding the first element of a rule, the Mask Requirement is an agency statement because it is an official document published in the Federal Register by CDC. Mask Requirement at 8025–26. It is of future effect, satisfying the second element, because the order states that it remains in place until rescinded or the public health emergency is terminated. Id. at 8026. Third, it implements and prescribes law or policy as it requires all travelers to wear a mask where previously they were not required to do so. Id. at 8028–29. Thus, the Mask Requirement falls within the APA's definition of rule.

Conversely, despite its label, the Mask Requirement is not an order for purposes of the APA because it is not the result of an adjudicatory process. *See Coalition for Common Sense in Gov't Procurement* v. *Sec'y for Veterans Affairs*, 464 F.3d 1306, 1316–17 (Fed. Cir. 2006). As noted previously, an order is defined as ''the whole or a part of a final disposition, whether affirmative, negative, injunctive, or declaratory in form.'' 5 U.S.C. §551(6). Thus, an order results from an adjudicatory process. *See Coalition for Common Sense in Gov't Procurement*, 463 F.3d at 1316–17. Here, the Mask Requirement was not the result of an adjudicatory process but a prospective requirement setting process. In its response to us, CDC described its process for drafting the Mask Requirement. ''[It] was drafted and cleared by the CDC program (Division of Global Migration and Quarantine), Center (National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases), and CDC's Office of the Director before it was provided to HHS for Departmental review. Following HHS review and clearance, it was provided to OMB.'' Response Letter at 2. This is a process used to draft rules, not an adjudicatory proceeding.

In support of its position that the agency action here is an order not a rule, CDC asserted that its long-standing regulations permit it to act quickly to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and any delay in issuance of the Mask Requirement ''could result in serious harm.'' Response Letter, at 1. CDC further stated that the order was an emergency action and requiring the order to go through notice and comment before taking effect ''would exacerbate the substantial harm that the order was intended to mitigate.'' Id.

While CRA does not provide an emergency exception from its procedural requirements to submit rules for congressional review, CRA and APA address an agency's need to take emergency action without delay. Agencies can waive the required delay in effective date requirement when an agency for ''good cause'' finds (and incorporates the finding and a brief statement of reasons in the rule issued) that notice and public procedure are ''impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.'' 5 U.S.C §§553(b), 808(2). Therefore, an agency can provide for a rule to take effect immediately while still complying with the agency's statutory obligation to submit the rule to Congress for review.

Having determined the Mask Requirement meets the definition of a rule, we must determine if any of the CRA exceptions apply. We conclude they do not. First, it is not a rule of particular applicability as it applies to all travelers using public conveyances and is not limited to specific parties. Mask Requirement, at 8028–29. Second, it does not deal with agency management or personnel but with travelers and conveyance operators. Id. at 8026. Finally, it is not a rule of agency organization, procedure, or practice that does not substantially affect the rights or obligations of non-agency parties as it imposes new requirements on people who are traveling to wear masks while in transit and at transportation hubs. Id. at 8028–29. It also requires operators to only provide service to masked passengers. Id. Thus, no exception applies.

CONCLUSION

The Mask Requirement is a rule for purposes of CRA because it meets the APA definition of a rule and no CRA exception applies. Accordingly, before it can take effect, the Mask Requirement is subject to the requirement that it be submitted to both Houses of Congress and the Comptroller General for review, which provides Congress a period of 60 days in which it may disapprove the rule using special procedures in accordance with the CRA. While CDC asserted the need to act quickly as its justification for not submitting the Mask Requirement for congressional review, there is not an emergency exception under CRA. An agency may, however, invoke the CRA's good cause exception and provide for a rule to take effect immediately while still complying with the agency's statutory obligation to submit the rule to Congress for review. With this decision, we are not taking a position on the policy of imposing a mask requirement or what steps the agency or Congress may take next; our decision only addresses CDC's compliance with CRA's procedures for congressional review.

EDDA EMMANUELLI PEREZ,
General Counsel.

RECOGNIZING THE COAST GUARD PAY AND PERSONNEL CENTER

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center in Topeka, KS. The Pay and Personnel Center was first established in 1979 in the suburb area of Washington, DC. In 1982, with the help of Senator Bob Dole, the center permanently moved to the Frank Carlson Federal Building in Topeka. It is a true honor that I and my staff have the pleasure of working with this devoted lineup of leaders on a routine basis.

The Pay and Personnel Center offers a focused and essential service to more than 142,000 men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard. Their mission is to provide caring and responsive personnel and compensation services for each of their military members, retirees, annuitants, and other customers in support of the Department of Homeland Security missions. The Pay and Personnel Center has continued to operate with superb attention to detail without much attention publicly. They carry out the passionate mission of providing the compensation and services necessary to keep our Coast Guard focused, secure, and dedicated. These men and women truly go above and beyond to help our Coast Guard members.

I offer congratulations and accolades to the Pay and Personnel Center on 40 years of hard work and superior service to our men and women in the U.S. Coast Guard. The center is an illustrious example of the Coast Guard motto, Semper Paratus, Always Ready. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this milestone.

RECOGNIZING THE 117TH ARW OF THE ALABAMA NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, today I rise to highlight the 100th anniversary of the 117th Air Refueling Wing based in Birmingham, AL, and to honor the patriotic men and women, past and present, of this storied National Guard unit. For a century, the 117th has defended our freedoms by providing worldwide air refueling, airlift, logistics, intelligence, and medical services. It is a profound honor to represent these great Americans in their nation's capital.

The United States hosts the world's most powerful Air Force, which gives our country the ability to project strength and defend freedom around the globe. This capability is made possible by a heavy reliance on our air refueling tankers that create bridges across the sky for our fighters and bombers. Since October 1994, the 117th Air Refueling Wing has proudly and effectively performed this critical air refueling mission with the KC–135 Stratotanker, a mainstay of our tanker fleet.

The 117th Air Refueling Wing is heavily utilized and often deployed. Their reliability and dedication has led them to take part in some of the most consequential military actions of our time.

During the Kosovo conflict of 1999, the wing flew operational missions over the Balkans following its deployment of six KC–135 aircraft to Brize-Norton Royal Air Force Base, England, in support of Operation Allied Force.

After the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the 117th deployed to MacDill Air Force Base, FL, as part of Operation Noble Eagle to refuel F–15 and F–16 aircraft that were flying around-the-clock protective combat air patrol missions over major cities in the United States.

The wing deployed KC–135 aircraft to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, to fly operational missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and later played a key role in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Each of these deployments supported and directly contributed to the success of our air operations, keeping Americans in the air and on the ground safer while imposing our will on the enemy.

But, even decades before taking on the air refueling mission, the wing had a storied beginning and a long history of service to our country.

In 1918, Major James A. Meissner, a World War I flying ace, returned home to Birmingham to lead the formation of a flying unit based at Roberts Field. As a result of his efforts, on January 21, 1922, the U.S. Department of War identified the Birmingham Aero Club as the first Air National Guard Unit in Alabama.

The unit was originally designated as the 135th Observation Squadron, Alabama National Guard, and received Federal recognition as a Corps Aviation unit. The flying squadron was nicknamed the ''Birmingham Escadrille's,'' and Major Meissner served as the first commander.

On January 30, 1944, the unit, by then redesignated to the 106th Reconnaissance Squadron, flew its first combat sorties in B–25 Mitchell aircraft against the Japanese from Sterling Island in the South Pacific.

In 1961, the unit was federalized in support of the Berlin Crisis. For 10 months, 20 RF–84F Thunderstreak aircraft flew missions from Dreux Air Base, France.

Also in 1961, roughly 80 members of the Alabama Air National Guard secretly took part in the operation to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. These individuals bravely defended the U.S. and Cuban people against the communist regime and were sworn to secrecy until the declassification of the mission in 1998.

In November 1971, the unit was selected to be the first Air National Guard unit to receive the RF–4C Phantom II aircraft, redesignated as the 117th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, and assigned to the U.S. Air Force's Tactical Air Command.

Following Saddam Hussein's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent U.S. military buildup in the Middle East, six Alabama National Guard RF–4C aircraft equipped with special long-range cameras deployed on August 24, 1990, to Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates. Their mission was to obtain high-resolution images of

objects 100 miles away to aid prewar surveillance and photo-reconnaissance mapping of Iraqi forces in occupied Kuwait and along the Saudi Arabia-Iraq border.

Though the missions and the aircraft have changed over the 100-year history of the flying squadron, one thing has remained constant: The men and women of the 117th have always answered the call to service. That tradition has been proudly carried on by the nearly 1,000 men and women who comprise the 117th Air Refueling Wing.

Today, we honor the airmen and women, maintainers, medical crews, and support staff of the 117th Air Refueling Wing on this important anniversary and remember those that have given their lives as part of the wing's operations. I salute them for their sacrifice and service to the great State of Alabama and the United States of America.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. BARBARA DAMRON

● Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, it is my honor to recognize Dr. Barbara Damron's countless contributions in service to New Mexico over the course of her career as she transitions from her position as the chief government relations officer for the University of New Mexico, including the central campus, the health sciences center, and all branch campuses.

For more than three decades, Dr. Damron has built an impressive resume of experiences as an education leader, a healthcare executive, a college professor, an international consultant, an advanced practice nurse, and a cancer scientist. In addition to her work at the University of New Mexico, she has served as the New Mexico Higher Education Department Cabinet Secretary and as the State Higher Education Executive Officer, where she oversaw all of our State's 28 institutions of higher education, 4 Tribal colleges, and over 190 private and proprietary postsecondary schools.

Dr. Damron led the Common Course Numbering System, which aligned all lower division courses among institutions of higher education throughout New Mexico. As cabinet secretary, Dr. Damron demonstrated her responsiveness to and collaboration with communities in our State. Dr. Damron has also chaired the New Mexico Education Trust Board and New Mexico's 529 college savings plan and served as a commissioner of the Western Interstate Commission and of the Education Commission of the States.

I appreciate Dr. Damron's deep engagement with my office as she worked to help bring the University of New Mexico's impressive talent and resources to bear against the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic on our communities. I will always be grateful for both Dr. Damron's incredible management skills and the sense of humor she has always brought to her work.

I am pleased that Dr. Damron will keep serving New Mexicans as an educator by continuing to teach students in the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center's College of Nursing. I am confident that her commitment to the success of our State's students and educators will never end. And I congratulate her on this next chapter of her career.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 3377. An act to empower the Chief of the United States Capitol Police to unilaterally request the assistance of the DC National Guard or Federal law enforcement agencies in emergencies without prior approval of the Capitol Police Board.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, without amendment:

S.J. Res. 33. A joint resolution joint resolution relating to increasing the debt limit.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 5665. An act to establish in the Department of State the Office to Monitor and Combat lslamophobia, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6256. An act 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.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION AND BILLS SIGNED

At 10:26 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled joint resolution and bills:

S.J. Res. 33. A joint resolution joint resolution relating to increasing the debt limit.

H.R. 390. An act to redesignate the Federal building located at 167 North Main Street in Memphis, Tennessee as the ''Odell Horton Federal Building''.

H.R. 4660. An act to designate the Federal Building and United States Courthouse located at 1125 Chapline Street in Wheeling, West Virginia, as the ''Frederick P. Stamp, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

The enrolled joint resolution and bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 5665. An act to establish in the Department of State the Office to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, December 15, 2021, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled joint resolution:

S.J. Res. 33. A joint resolution joint resolution relating to increasing the debt limit.

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–2829. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Vaccine and Mask Requirements to Mitigate the Spread of COVID–19 in Head Start Programs'' (RIN0970–AC90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 8, 2021; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2830. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Prescription Drug and Health Care Spending'' (RIN0938–AU66) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2021; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2831. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Community Services Block Grant Report for Fiscal Year 2016''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2832. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Summary of Review and Recommendations for the Medicare and Medicaid Programs to Prevent Opioid Addictions and Enhance Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Chantale Yokmin Wong, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Director of the Asian Development Bank, with the rank of Ambassador.

Nominee: Chantale Yokmin Wong.

Post: U.S. Executive Director to the Asian Development Bank.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate)

Contributions, amount, date, donee:

Self: $6, 2018, Andrew Yang, $25, 2018, AAPI Victory Alliance, $50, 2018, Barbara Kanninen, $12, 2019, Andrew Yang, $25, 2019, AAPI Victory Alliance, $1,000, 2020, ASIAN AMERICAN ACTION FUND, $25, 2020, AAPI Victory Alliance, $250, 2020, AAPI VICTORY FUND, INC, $1, 2020, Andrew Yang, $5, 2020, Biden Victory Fund, $500, 2020, Daniel Blackman, $7, 2020, Democratic National Committee, $300, 2020, FRIENDS OF LUCY MCBATH, $50, 2020, Godfrey Santos Plata, $25, 2020, Joe Biden, $10, 2020 LGBTQ Victory Institute, $1,500, 2020, Robert A. Underwood, $50, 2020, Samuel Park, $100, 2021, ASPIRE PAC, $100, 2021, AAPI Victory Alliance, $101, 2021, Bee Nguyen, $750, 2021, Duckworth Victory Fund, $500, 2021, Kathy Tran, $500, 2021, ASIAN AMERICAN ACTION FUND, $1,040.22, 2021, Tammy for Illinois.

2. Spouse: none.

3. Children and Spouses: Sara Rose Lamb Wong, none.

4 Parents: Father: Frank Yaoyun Wong (Deceased 2/3/2019). Mother: Rebecca Wenchi Wong, none. Grandparents: Long deceased in China.

5. Brothers and Spouses: Yuqing Wong, none.

6. Sisters and Spouses: none.

Jamie L. Harpootlian, of South Carolina, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

Nominee: Jamie Lindler Harpootlian.

Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Slovenia.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee.

1. Self: $4,300.00, 10/14/2020, New Hampshire Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 9/9/2020, Michigan Democratic State Central Committee; $2,800.00, 8/11/2020, Josh Gottheimer for Congress; $250.00, 8/3/2020, Moe Brown for Congress; $1,000.00, 7/29/2020, Adair for Congress; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Nevada State Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Texas Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Texas Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Ohio Democratic Party; $35,500.00, 5/8/2020, DNC Services Corp/Democratic National Committee, $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Nebraska Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Democratic Executive Committee of Florida; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Georgia Federal Elections Committee; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Democratic Party of Wisconsin; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Arizona Democratic Party; $100,000.00, 5/8/2020, Biden Victory Fund; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Pennsylvania Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Colorado Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, North Carolina Democratic Party—Federal $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party; $4,300.00, 5/8/2020, Democratic Party of Virginia; $2,800.00, 3/31/2020, Biden for President; $2,800.00, 12/6/2019, Finkenauer for Congress; $2,800.00, 9/6/2019, Adair for Congress; $2,800.00, 4/23/2019, Biden for President; $2,800.00, 3/31/2019, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $5,000.00, 3/5/2019, American Possibilities PAC; $2,800.00, 2/19/2019, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $500.00, 11/26/2018, Mike Espy for Senate Campaign Committee; $500.00, 11/18/2018, Mike Espy Victory Fund; $2,700.00, 3/30/2018, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $5,000.00, 1/30/2018, American Possibilities PAC.

2. Spouse: Richard Harpootlian: $1,000.00, 2/8/2021, Fetterman for PA; $1,000.00, 2/8/2021, Fetterman for PA; $4,300.00, 10/20/2020, New Hampshire Democratic Party; $133.34, 9/15/2020, Michigan Democratic State Central Committee; $4,300.00, 9/15/2020, Michigan Democratic State Central Committee; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Texas Democratic Party; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Ohio Democratic Party; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Nebraska Democratic Party; $133.34, 9/13/2020, Georgia Federal Elections Committee; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Democratic Party of Wisconsin; $133.34, 9/13/2020, Colorado Democratic Party; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Pennsylvania Democratic Party; $133.33, 9/13/2020, North Carolina Democratic Party—Federal; $133.34, 9/13/2020, Arizona Democratic Party; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Democratic Party of Virginia; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party; $2,000.00, 9/13/2020, Biden Victory Fund; $133.33, 9/13/2020, Nevada State Democratic Party; $133.34, 9/13/2020, Democratic Executive Committee of Florida; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Ohio Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Nebraska Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Democratic Executive Committee of Florida; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Georgia Federal Elections Committee; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Democratic Party of Wisconsin; $2,800.00, 8/11/2020, Josh Gottheimer for Congress; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Arizona Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Pennsylvania Democratic Party; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, North Carolina Democratic Party—Federal; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Democratic Party of Virginia; $35,500.00, 8/11/2020, DNC Services Corp/Democratic National Committee; $100,000.00, 8/11/2020, Biden Victory Fund; $4,300.00, 8/11/2020, Nevada State Demographic Party; $2,800.00, 7/17/2020, Friends of Jim Clyburn; $2,800.00, 3/31/2020, Biden for President; $2,800.00, 1/22/2020; Doug Jones for Senate Commitee*; $800.00, 12/8/2019, Democratic Party of South Carolina; $10,000.00, 12/4/2020, Cunningham Victory Fund; $2,800.00, 12/2/2019, Finkenauer for Congress*; $100,000.00, 11/12/2019; Unite the Country; 2,800.00, 11/7/2019, Adair for Congress; $2,000.00, 10/9/2019, Democratic Executive Committee of Florida; $2,800.00, 8/23/2019, 314 Action Fund*; $2,800.00, 8/23/2019, Hickenlooper for Colorado*; $2,800.00, 6/9/2019, Friends of Jim Clyburn; $4,200.00, 5/24/2019, Democratic Party of South Carolina; $2,800.00, 4/23/2019, Biden for President; $2,800.00, 4/5/2019, Adair for Congress; $100.00, 3/28/2019, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $2,800.00, 3/28/2019, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $5,000.00, 1/31/2019, American Possibilities PAC; $2,700.00, 1/18/2019, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $2,700.00, 9/28/2018, Carrigan for Congress; $2,200.00, 9/21/2018, Friends of Jim Clyburn; $2,700.00, 7/13/2018, Joe Kennedy for Congress; $2,000.00, 6/30/2018, Democratice Party of Virginia; $700.00, 6/12/2018, Kaine for Virginia; $2,700.00, 5/30/2018; Kaine Victory Fund; $2,000.00, 5/23/2018, Kaine for Virginia; $700.00, 5/23/2018, Kaine for Virginia; $2,700.00, 5/17/2018, Kaine Victory Fund; $5,400.00, 5/16/2018, Ohio Democratic Party; $5,400.00, 5/16/2018, Ohio Grassroots Victory Fund; $1,000.00, 3/24/2018, Kaine for Virginia; $1,000.00, 3/15/2018, Kaine Victory Fund; $1,000.00, 3/9/2018, Andrew Janz for Congress; $2,700.00, 3/6/2018, Bill Hopkins for Congress*; $1,000.00, 2/11/2018, Friends of Jim Clyburn; $5,000.00, 1/30/2018, American Possibilities PAC; $2,700.00, 1/19/2018, Tammy Baldwin for Senate*; $2,700.00, 1/12/2018, Klobuchar for Minnesota; $2,700.00, 12/29/2017, Donnelly for Indiana*; $2,700.00, 12/19/2017, Archie Parnell for Congress; $2,700.00, 12/3/2017, Friends of Sherrod Brown; ($2,700.00), 12/3/2017, Friends of Sherrod Brown; $5,400.00, 11/28/2017, Friends of Sherrod Brown; $2,700.00, 9/25/2017, Bill Nelson for US Senate; $2,700.00, 9/10/2017, Friends of Jim Clyburn; $1,000.00, 8/7/2017, Greg Pilkington for Congress; $2,700.00, 7/27/2017, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $2,700.00, 7/27/2017, Beto for Texas; $5,000.00, 7/27/2017, Team Graham Inc; $5,000.00, 6/2/2017, American Possibilities PAC; $2,700.00, 5/1/2017, Archie Parnell for Congress; $1,000.00, 2/13/2017, Kaine for Virginia; $2,700.00, 2/6/2017, Bob Casey for Senate Inc.

* FEC.gov incorrectly reports this contribution twice.

** FEC.gov incorrectly reports this contribution four times.

Mark Brzezinski, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Poland.

Nominee: Mark Francis Brzezinski.

Post: U.S. Ambassador to Poland.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.

2. Spouse: Legally and formally separated.

Rashad Hussain, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

Nominee: Rashad Hussain.

Post: Ambassador at Large International Religious Freedom.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions Self, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: $250, 9/9/2020, Biden for President; $250, 9/9/2020, Biden Victory Fund; $50, 6/19/2020, ACTBLUE; $250, 12/26/2017, Lauren Baer for Congress.

2. Spouse: $50, 09/26/2019, ACTBLUE.

Marc R. Stanley, of Texas, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Argentine Republic.

Nominee: Marc R. Stanley.

Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Argentine Republic.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: $400.00, 3/22/17, Blue Senate 2018; $1,333.33, 3/22/17, Sherrod Brown Senate; $1,333.33, 3/22/17, Bill Nelson Senate; $2,700.00, 3/31/17, Beto for Texas; $1,333.33, 3/31/17, Bob Casey for Senate; $1,333.33, 3/31/17, Bob Casey for Senate; $5,000.00, 5/30/17, DCCC; $500.00, 6/1/17, Lindsey for Congress; $900.00, 6/11/17, Klobuchar for Minnesota; $900.00, 6/11/17, Heidi for Senate; $2,700.00, 6/11/17, Blue Senate 2018; $900.00, 6/11/17, Montanans for Tester; $900.00, 6/11/17, Montanans for Tester; $100.00, 8/19/17, Actblue; $675.00, 9/24/17, Tammy Baldwin Senate; $675.00, 9/24/17, Donnelly for Indiana; $675.00, 9/24/17, Tammy Baldwin Senate; $675.00, 9/24/17, Friends of Chris Murphy; $675.00, 9/24/17, Martin Heinrich Senate; $250.00, 11/12/17, Sam Johnson

Congress; $625.00, 12/10/17, Stabenow for US Senate; $2,500.00, 12/10/17, Blue Senate 2018; $625.00, 12/10/17, Rosen for Nevada; $625.00, 12/10/17, Rosen for Nevada; $625.00, 12/10/17, Kaine for Virginia; $1,000.00, 12/22/17, Debbie Wasserman Schultz for Congress; $625.00, 12/29/17, Manchin for West Virginia; $10,000.00, 1/17/18, FTC PAC; $500.00, 1/29/18, Jay for Texas; $3,000.00, 2/22/18, Blue Senate 2018; $750.00, 2/25/18, Friends of Maria; $750.00, 2/25/18, Sinema for Arizona; $750.00, 2/25/18, Angus King Senate; $750.00, 2/25/18, Gillibrand for Senate; $50.00, 4/17/18, FTC PAC; $50.00, 4/17/18, Actblue; $10,000.00, 5/11/18, Massachusetts Senate Victory; $4,600.00, 5/11/18, DSCC; $2,700.00, 5/11/18, Elizabeth for MA, Inc; $2,700.00, 5/11/18, Elizabeth for MA, Inc; $10,000.00, 5/12/18, DCCC; $2,700.00, 5/29/18, Menendez for Senate; $1,000.00, 6/6/18, Colin Allred Congress; $500.00, 6/7/18, Heidi for Senate; $3,000.00, 6/15/18, Blue Senate 2018; $750.00, 6/17/18, Ben Cardin Senate; $750.00, 6/17/18, Whitehouse for Senate; $750.00, 6/17/18, Friends of Mazie Hirono; $750.00, 6/17/18, McCaskill for Missouri; $1,700.00, 7/18/18, Debbie Wasserman Schultz Congress; $100.00, 8/19/18, Actblue; $1,000.00, 8/27/18, Bredesen for Senate; $2,000.00, 9/4/18, Blue Senate 2018; $666.67, 9/9/18, Menendez for Senate; $666.67, 9/9/18, Donnelly for Indiana; $666.67, 9/9/18, Bill Nelson for US Senate; $500.00, 9/12/18, Kathy Manning Congress; $100.00, 9/12/18, Actblue; $50.00, 10/4/18, Actblue; $50.00, 10/11/18, Actblue; $1,000.00, 11/8/18, Bill Nelson Senate; $500.00, 11/12/18, Mike Espy for Senate; $5,000.00, 12/14/18, America Works State & Local PAC; $5,000.00, 1/10/19, America Works State & Local PAC; $2,600.00, 2/6/19, Mark Kelly for Senate; $2,800.00, 2/6/19, Mark Kelly for Senate; $17,500.00, 3/10/19, Nancy Pelosi Victory Fund; $2,800.00, 3/10/19, Nancy Pelosi Congress; $2,800.00, 3/10/19, Nancy Pelosi Congress; $3,150.00, 3/10/19, PAC to the Future; $3,000.00, 3/19/19, Blue Senate 2020; $1,000.00, 3/19/19, AAJ PAC; $1,000.00, 3/24/19, Chris Coons Delaware; $1,000.00, 3/24/19, Peters for Michigan; $1,000.00, 3/29/19, Doug Jones for Senate; $8,750.00, 3/31/19, DCCC; $250.00, 4/23/19, MJ for Texas; $2,800.00, 4/25/19, Biden for President; $500.00, 5/28/19, Teresa Tomlinson Senate; $500.00, 5/30/19, Mike Johnston Senate; $4,000.00, 6/11/19, Blue Senate 2020; $1,333.33, 6/16/19, Tina Smith for Minnesota; $1,333.33, 6/16/19, Friends of Dick Durbin; $1,333.33, 6/16/19, Shaheen for Senate; $500.00, 6/21/19, Sara Gideon for Maine; $500.00, 6/30/19, Marc Veasey Congress; $500.00, 7/10/19, Amy McGrath Senate, Inc.; $25.00, 7/12/19, Actblue; $1,000.00, 8/2/19, Debbie Wasserman Schultz Congress; $500.00, 8/7/19, Royce West Senate; $500.00, 8/7/19, Chris Bell Senate; $250.00, 9/5/19, Gina Ortiz Jones Congress; $3,000.00, 9/17/19, Blue Senate 2020; $250.00, 9/20/19, Andy Levin for Congress; $1,000.00, 9/22/19, The Markey Committee; $1,400.00, 9/22/19, Friends of Mark Warner; $200.00, 9/22/19, Mark Kelly for Senate; $250.00, 11/4/19, McCaffity for Congress; $100.00, 11/17/19, Actblue; $100.00, 11/18/19, Actblue; $1,000.00, 11/21/19, Peters for Michigan; $3,000.00, 12/4/19, Blue Senate 2020; $1,000.00, 12/8/19, Jeff Merkley for Oregon; $1,000.00, 12/8/19, The Reed Committee; $1,000.00, 12/16/19, Mark Kelly Victory Fund; $1,000.00, 12/16/19, Kennedy for Massachusetts; $1,000.00, 12/18/19, Colin Allred Congress; $2,800.00, 12/19/19, Biden for President; $1,000.00, 12/31/19, Arizona Democratic Party; $250.00, 1/2/20, James Mackler Senate; $100.00, 1/7/20, Actblue; $100.00, 1/24/20, Actblue; $100.00, 1/24/20, Actblue; $10,000.00, 2/18/20, DSCC; $17,500.00, 2/23/20, Nancy Pelosi Victory Fund; $17,500.00, 2/23/20, DCCC; $3,000.00, 3/4/20, Blue Senate 2020; $112.32, 3/5/20, Biden for President; $1,000.00, 3/8/20, Cory Booker for Senate; $250.00, 3/8/20, Friends of Jim Clyburn; $1,000.00, 3/8/20, Sara Gideon for Maine; $1,000.00, 3/8/20, Cal for NC; $5,000.00, 3/9/20, Truth and Justice Fund; $250.00, 3/18/20, Becky Grossman Congress; $35,500.00, 4/27/20, DNC Services Corp; $35,500.00, 4/27/20, Biden Victory Fund; $2,500.00, 4/30/20, Follow the North Star Fund; $3,000.00, 5/28/20, Blue Senate 2020; $1,000.00, 5/31/20, Montanans for Bullock; $1,000.00, 5/31/20, Hickenlooper for Colorado; $1,000.00, 5/31/20, Warnock for Georgia; $1,000.00, 6/10/20, Kennedy for Massachusetts; $250.00, 6/10/20, Engel for Congress; $1,000.00, 6/12/20, Sima for Texas; $1,800.00, 6/16/20, Debbie Wasserman Schultz Congress; $1,500.00, 6/17/20, Blue Texas 2020; $250.00, 6/19/20, The Lincoln Project; $500.00, 6/21/20, Gina Ortiz Jones Congress; $500.00, 6/21/20, Elizabeth Pannill Fletcher Congress; $500.00, 6/21/20, Colin Allred Congress; $500.00, 6/30/20, Royce West for Senate; $500.00, 7/1/20, Stephen Daniel Congress; $500.00, 7/22/20, Candace for 24; $100.00, 8/2/20, Actblue; $8.46, 8/5/20, North Carolina Democratic Party Federal; $8.46, 8/5/20, Nebraska Democratic Party; $8.46, 8/5/20, Texas Democratic Party; $8.46, 8/5/20, Ohio Democratic Party; $8.46, 8/5/20, Texas Democratic Party; $8.46, 8/5/20, Texas Democratic Party, $126.94, 8/5/20, Biden Victory Fund; $8.46, 8/5/20, Democratic Party of Wisconsin; $8.46, 8/5/20, Nevada State Democratic Party; $8.47, 8/5/20, Arizona Democratic Party; $8.46, 8/5/20, Pennsylvania Democratic Party; $100.00, 8/16/20, Actblue; $800.00, 8/20/20, Kennedy for Massachusetts; $500.00, 8/22/20, Sima for Texas; $500.00, 8/22/20, Elizabeth Pannill Fletcher Congress; $500.00, 8/22/20, Candace for 24; $500.00, 8/22/20, Colin Allred Congress; $500.00, 8/22/20, Wendy Davis Congress; $500.00, 8/22/20, Sri for Congress; $500.00, 8/23/20, Gina Ortiz Jones Congress; $250.00, 8/27/20, Becky Grossman Congress; $250.00, 9/29/20, Jeffries for Congress; $500.00, 10/3/20, Dr. Al Gross Senate; $250.00, 10/5/20, Jaime Harrison Senate; $1,000.00, 10/10/20, Powered by People; $500.00, 10/23/20, Texas Democratic Party; $100.00, 10/27/20, Actblue; $5,600.00, 12/3/20, Blue Senate 2020; $2,800.00, 12/6/20, Warnock for Georgia; $2,800.00, 12/6/20, Jon Ossoff for Senate; $27,600.00, 2/7/21, DCCC; $35,500.00, 2/7/21, Nancy Pelosi Victory Fund; $2,900.00, 2/7/21, Nancy Pelosi Congress; $5,000.00, 2/7/21, PAC to the Future; $2,900.00, 2/18/21, Mark Kelly for Senate; $2,900.00, 2/19/21, Wyden for Senate; $10,000.00, 2/24/21, Ohio Grassroots Victory; $3,000.00, 3/23/21, Blue Senate 2022; $1,000.00, 3/28/21, Warnock for Georgia; $1,000.00, 3/28/21, Maggie for NH; $1,000.00, 3/28/21, Friends of Schumer; $1,000.00, 3/28/21, Hassan for NH; $1,000.00, 3/28/21, Warnock for Georgia; $1,000.00, 4/18/21, Colin Allred Congress; $1,800.00, 4/28/21, Jaime Raskin Congress; $1,000.00, 5/2/21, Omari Hardy Congress.

2. Stanley, Wendy: $1,000.00, 4/11/17, Team Graham Inc; $2,700.00, 9/19/17, Beto for Texas; $1,000.00, 12/5/17, Kevin Roberts Congress; $50.00, 4/11/18, Actblue; $500.00, 4/13/18, Sara Jacobs Congress; $2,700.00, 9/26/18, Friends of Sherrod Brown; $5,000.00, 12/14/18, America Works State & Local PAC; $5,000.00, 1/10/19, America Works State & Local PAC; $2,800.00, 4/25/19, Biden for President; $2,800.00, 12/19/19, Biden for President; $2,900.00, 2/19/21, Wyden for Senate; $10,000.00, 3/2/21, Ohio Grassroots Victory; $1,000.00, 5/2/21, Omari Hardy Congress.

Scott Miller, of Colorado, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Swiss Confederation, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Nominee: Scott C. Miller.

Post: Bern.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self: 2,700, 2/14/17, Tammy Baldwin for Senate; 2,700, 2/14/17, Tammy Baldwin for Senate; 5,000, 8/7/17, American Possibilities PAC; 2,700, 7/26/18, Tom Niermann for Congress; 5,000, 7/26/18, American Possibilities PAC; 1,000, 9/17/18, Beto for Texas; 2,700, 10/4/18, Linda Coleman for Congress; 5,000, 1/30/19, American Possibilities PAC; 20, 1/30/19, Actblue; 5, 4/25/19, Actblue; 2,800, 4/25/19, Biden for President; 2,800, 9/9/19, Hickenlooper for Colorado; 10,000, 9/30/19, Iowa Democratic Party; 2,800, 11/27/19, Deval for All; 10, 4/22/20, Actblue; 2,800, 4/22/20, Montanans for Bullock; 2,800, 4/24/20, Biden for President; 5,600, 6/23/20, Booker Victory Fund; 5,000, 10/23/20, Biden Action Fund.

2. Spouse: Tim Gill: 5,000, 6/26/17, American Possibilities PAC; 5,000, 7/26/18, American Possibilities PAC; 2,700, 7/27/18, Tom Niermann for Congress; 270, 7/27/18, Actblue; 5,000, 1/30/19, American Possibilities PAC; 2,800, 4/25/19, Biden for President; 2,800, 9/9/19, Hickenlooper for Colorado; 10,000, 10/1/19, Iowa Democratic Party; 2,800, 11/29/19, Deval for All; 2,800, 4/24/20, Biden for President; 355,000, 5/5/20, Biden Victory Fund; 5,600, 6/29/20, Booker Victory Fund; 2,800, 10/9/20, Jon Hoadley for Congress; 2,800, 12/13/20, Warnock for Georgia; 2,800, 12/13/20, Jon Ossoff for Senate; 2,900, 4/27/21, Wyden for Senate.

Thomas Barrett, of Wisconsin, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Nominee: Thomas M. Barrett.

Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions amount, date, and donee:

Self: $1,000.00, 8/02/2020, Biden for President; $100.00, 03/29/2018, Rebecca Dallet for Justice; $100.00, 10/26/2017, State Senate Democratic Committee.

Spouse: None.

Michael M. Adler, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Belgium.

Nominee: Michael M. Adler.

Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Belgium.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, Donee:

Abby Finkenauer for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Alan Cohn for Congress, $500.00, 09/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Alan Gross, $500.00, 03/23/2020, Michael M. Adler; Andy Kim for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Ben McAdams for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Biden for President, $2,800.00, 04/16/2019, Michael M. Adler; Biden for President, $2,800.00, 11/25/2019, Judy Adler; Biden for President, $2,800.00, 06/22/2020, Judy Adler; Biden for President, $25.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Biden for President, $15.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Biden for President, $50,000.00, 08/03/2020, Michael M. Adler; Biden Victory Fund, $2,800.00, 06/18/2020, Judy Adler; Biden Victory Fund, $2,800.00, 06/22/2020, Judy Adler; Biden Victory Fund, $25.00, 09/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Biden Victory Fund, $250.00, 09/22/2020, Michael M. Adler;

Biden Victory Fund, $250.00, 10/21/2020, Michael M. Adler; Biden Victory Fund, $25.00, 12/18/2020, Michael M. Adler; Bill Nelson for US Senate, $2,700.00, 03/16/2017, Michael M. Adler; Bill Nelson for US Senate, $1,000.00, 12/14/2017, Judy Adler; Bill Nelson for US Senate, $1,000.00, 12/22/2017, Michael M. Adler; Bill Nelson for US Senate, $1,600.00, 01/31/2018, Judy Adler; Bill Nelson for US Senate, $1,100.00, 09/30/2018, Judy Adler; Bill Nelson Recount, $1,000.00, 12/20/2018, Michael M. Adler; Charlie Crist for Congress, $2,500.00, 07/20/2017, Michael M. Adler; Charlie Christ for Congress, $1,000.00, 12/22/2017, Judy Adler; Charlie Crist for Congress, $1,000.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Charlie Crist for Congress, $1,000.00, 11/21/2020, Michael M. Adler; Chris Pappas for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Cindy Axne for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Colin Allred, $500.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Cong. Alcee Hastings Re-Election Campaign, $1,000.00, 10/28/2019, Michael M. Adler; Darren Soto, $1,000.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, $1,000.00, 07/22/2018, Michael M. Adler; Debbie Murcasel Powell, $2,800.00, 02/21/2020, Michael M. Adler; Debbie Murcasel Powell for Congress; $2,800.00, 04/09/2019, Michael M. Adler; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, $2,800.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, $2,800.00, 12/23/2019, Judy Adler; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, for Congress $2,800.00, 04/09/2019, Michael M. Adler; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, for Congress $2,700.00, 10/19/2018, Michael M. Adler; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, for Congress $2,700.00, 10/19/2018, Judy Adler; Dona Shalala for Congress, $1,000.00, 04/17/2018, Michael M. Adler; Donna Shalala Campaign, $2,800.00, 01/23/2020, Michael M. Adler; Donna Shalala for Congress, $1,000.00, 10/25/2018, Judy Adler; Elect Sam Johnson, $1,000.00, 5/21/2021, Michael M Adler; Elissa Slotkin for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Florida Democratic Party, $35.00, 08/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Florida Senate, 2018, $5,000.00, 03/22/2018, Judy Adler; Florida Senate, 2018, $1,100.00, 11/1 6/2018, Judy Adler; Friends of Schumer, $5,800.00, 8/20/2021, Judy Adler; Gary Peters, $1,000.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Gary peters for Congress, $1,000.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Harley Rouda, $500.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; JAC PAC, $1,000.00, 11/19/2019, Michael M. Adler; Jared Golden for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Javier Rodriguez for Senate, $1,000.00, 02/21/2018, Michael M. Adler; JDCA PAC, $15,000.00, 11/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; JEM Fund—A joint committee benefiting Congressman Josh Gottheimer, Congresswoman Elaine Luria, 03/23/2020, 1,500.00, 09/22/2017, Jeremy Ring for Congress, $500.00, 09/22/2017, Michael M. Adler; Jeremy Ring for Congress, 09/22/2017, $500.00, Michael M. Adler; Jeremy Ring for Congress, 09/22/2017, $500.00, Judy Adler; Joe Biden, 11/23/2018, $1,000.00, Michael M. Adler; Joint Action Committee, 02/22/2021, $250.00, Michael M. Adler; Josh Gottheimer for Congress, 12/20/2018, $1,000.00, Michael M. Adler; Kathy Manning for Congress, 11 /30/2017, $500.00, Michael M. Adler; Kathy Manning for Congress, 03/21/2018, $1,000.00, Michael M. Adler; Ken Rusell, 12/20/2018, $1,000.00, Michael M. Adler; Kim Schrier, 8/20/2021, $5,000.00, Judy Adler; Lucy Mcbath, 12/23/2019, $500.00, Michael M. Adler; Mary Barzee Florez for Florida, 12/23/2019, $500.00, Michael M. Adler; Matt Cartwright 06/1 5/2018, $1,000.00, Michael M. Adler; Matt Haggman for Congress, 12/23/2019, $500.00, Michael M. Adler; Matt Haggman for Congress, 06/1 5/2018, $2,700.00, Judy Adler; Matt Lieberman for Senate, 07/21 /2018, $2,700.00, Michael M. Adler; Max Rose for Congress, 08/21 /2020, $1,000.00, Michael M. Adler; Montanans for Tester, 2/23/2019, $500.00, Michael M. Adler; Motanans for Bullock, 01/20/2018, $1,000.00, Michael M. Adler; Phillips for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Sharice Davids, $500.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Sherrod Brawn for Congress, $2,700.00, 10/19/2018, Michael M. Adler; Susan Wild for Congress, $1,000.00, 07/18/2019, Michael M. Adler; Susan Wild for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Susie Lee, $500.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Tom Malinowski for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler; Tom Ohalleran, $500.00, 12/23/2019, Michael M. Adler; Unite the Country, $10,000.00, 01/23/2020, Michael M. Adler; Xochi Torres Small for Congress, $500.00, 07/22/2020, Michael M. Adler.

Erik D. Ramanathan, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Sweden.

Nominee: Erik Douglas Ramanathan.

Post: Ambassador to Sweden.

(The following is a list of members of my immediate family. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

Ranesh Ramanathan: $1,000.00, 08/11/2017, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $2,800.00, 04/25/2019, Biden for President; $2,800.00, 03/16/2020, Biden for President.

Self: $2,700.00, 03/10/2017, Moulton for Congress; $1,000.00, 07/17/2017, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $2,700.00, 09/06/2017, Moulton for Congress; $1,000.00, 09/13/2017, Serve America Victory Fund; $90.91, 09/13/2017, Ken Harbaugh for Congress; $5,000.00, 11/29/2017, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $1,000.00, 03/19/2018, Friends of Dan Feehan; $2,000.00, 06/01/2018, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $500.00, 06/23/2018, Patrick Ryan for Congress; $500.00, 09/06/2018, Schiff for Congress[1]; $10,000.00, 10/02/2018, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $500,00, 10/09/2018, Dean Phillips for Congress; $1,000.00, 10/13/2018, 44 Fund; $500.00, 10/13/2018, Lori Trahan for Congress Cmte; $71.43, 10/13/2018, Friends of Dan Feehan; $1,000.00, 10/17/2018, Kaine for Virginia; $100.00, 10/22/2018, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $250.00, 12/08/2018, McCready for Congress; $100.00, 03/07/2019, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $2,800.00, 04/12/2019, Mike Johnston for US Senate; $2,800.00, 04/25/2019, Biden for President; $100.00, 05/29/2019, Moulton for Congress; $500.00, 05/29/2019, Friends of RD [Huffsteter]; $500.00, 05/29/2019, Gina Ortiz Jones for Congress; $10,000.00, 06/03/2019, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $500.00, 09/10/2019, Gina Ortiz Jones for Congress; $1.000.00, 09/19/2019, Amy McGrath for Senate, Inc.; $500.00, 10/27/2019, Friends of Dan Feehan; $2,800.00, 12/03/2019, Finkenauer for Congress; $35,500.00, 01/28/2020, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $250.00, 02/03/2020, Joe Cunningham for Congress; $500.00, 03/09/2020, Friends of Dan Feehan; $500.00, 03/10/2020, Friends of RD [Huffstetler]; $2,800.00, 03/11/2020, Biden for President; $250.00, 03/24/2020, Theresa Greenfield for Iowa; $500.00, 06/22/2020, Jackie Gordon for Congress; $1,000.00, 07/26/2020, Moulton for Congress; $1,000.00, 07/26/2020, Moulton Leadership Fund; $500.00, 09/20/2020, Friends of Dan Feehan; $7,500.00, 09/28/2020, Biden Action Fund; $7,500.00, 09/28/2020, DNC Services Corp/DNC; $500.00, 10/22/2020, Friends of Dan Feehan; $250.00, 10/22/2020, Diane for Colorado CD3; $75.18, 11/06/2020, Biden Victory Fund; $81.42, 11/10/2020, Biden Victory Fund; $500.00, 11/28/2020, Georgia Senate Victory Fund[2].

[1]The FEC database also a $500.00 donation on the same date for ''Schiff Leads PAC''. According to my records, only one $500.00 donation was made, making this a duplicative attribution.

[2]The FEC database also lists a $250.00 donation on 11/29/2020 to ''Jon Ossoff for Senate'' and a $250.00 donation on the same date to ''Warnock for Georgia''. According to my records. I made a $500.00 donation on 11/28/2020 to ''Georgia Senate Victory Fund'' that was then presumably reattributed/sent on to these two campaigns resulting in multiple database entries.

John R. Bass, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be an Under Secretary of State (Management).

Ramin Toloui, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs).

Scott A. Nathan, of Massachusetts, to be Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation.

Adriana Debora Kugler, of Maryland, to be United States Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of two years.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations 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.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Arthur W. Brown and ending with Peter C. Trenchard, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 22, 2021.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Rahel Aboye and ending with Kyra Turner Zogbekor, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 22, 2021. (minus 1 nominee: Mark S.R. Gray)

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Adam Jeffrey Abramson and ending with Jessica Torres Yurcheshen, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 27, 2021.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Mario D. Ambrosino and ending with Cristobal Zepeda, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 27, 2021.

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Nicholas R. Abbate and ending with Maria E. Snarski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 27, 2021.

By Ms. CANTWELL for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Viquar Ahmad, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

*Viquar Ahmad, of Texas, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Commerce.

*Jed David Kolko, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs.

*Alan Davidson, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

By Mr. PETERS for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*John P. Howard III, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for the term of fifteen years.

*Loren L. AliKhan, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for a term of fifteen years.

*Adrienne Jennings Noti, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the

Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

By Mr. TESTER for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

*Kurt D. DelBene, of Washington, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Information and Technology).

By Mr. WARNER for the Select Committee on Intelligence.

*Shannon Corless, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of the Treasury.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(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. ROUNDS (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 3396. A bill to improve the position of the Principal Cyber Advisor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 3397. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Zero Suicide Initiative pilot program of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 3398. A bill to amend the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant program to promote career awareness in accounting as part of a well-rounded STEM educational experience; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 3399. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide a process to lock and suspend domain names used to facilitate the online sale of drugs illegally, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 3400. A bill to prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from imposing a fee or reporting requirements on certain facilities for methane emissions; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 3401. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to maintain a list of the country of origin of all drugs marketed in the United States, to ban the use of Federal funds for the purchase of drugs manufactured in the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 3402. A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to prohibit medical discrimination relating to applications for commercial use authorizations and special recreation permits, and to clarify the status of the holders of commercial use authorizations and special recreation permits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 3403. A bill to prohibit the disbursement of Federal funds to State and local governments that allow individuals who are not citizens of the United States to vote in any Federal, State, or local election; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 3404. A bill to provide the consent of Congress to an amendment to the Constitution of the State of New Mexico; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. 3405. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to issue a rule providing that certain low power television stations may be accorded primary status as Class A television licensees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 3406. A bill to amend section 214(c)(8) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the data reporting requirements relating to nonimmigrant employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. HAGERTY, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 3407. A bill to promote security partnership with Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. OSSOFF:

S. 3408. A bill to amend chapter 36 of title 44, United States Code, to require reporting regarding the security of cloud computing products and services; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 3409. A bill to amend the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act to require the appropriate Federal banking agencies to develop a Community Bank Leverage Ratio that is between 8 percent 8.5 percent for calendar years 2022, 2023, and 2024, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 3410. A bill to amend section 13 of the Federal Trade Commission Act to provide for equitable relief, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 72

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 72, a bill to require full funding of part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

S. 79

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 79, a bill to eliminate the disparity in sentencing for cocaine offenses, and for other purposes.

S. 344

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 344, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retirement pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes.

S. 464

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 464, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require a group health plan or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan to provide an exceptions process for any medication step therapy protocol, and for other purposes.

S. 697

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 697, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth.

S. 800

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 800, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit nurse practitioners and physician assistants to satisfy the documentation requirement under the Medicare program for coverage of certain shoes for individuals with diabetes.

S. 1108

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1108, a bill to regulate large capacity ammunition feeding devices.

S. 1125

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1125, a bill to recommend that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation test the effect of a dementia care management model, and for other purposes.

S. 1385

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1385, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to establish additional requirements for dealers, and for other purposes.

S. 1574

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added

as cosponsors of S. 1574, a bill to codify a statutory definition for long-term care pharmacies.

S. 1593

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1593, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the designation of general surgery shortage areas, and for other purposes.

S. 1813

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 1813, a bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to support research on, and expanded access to, investigational drugs for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and for other purposes.

S. 1904

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1904, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign support for Palestinian terrorism, and for other purposes.

S. 1907

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1907, a bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to develop effluent limitations guidelines and standards and water quality criteria for PFAS under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, to provide Federal grants to publicly owned treatment works to implement such guidelines and standards, and for other purposes.

S. 2048

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2048, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

S. 2244

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2244, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for teacher and school leader quality enhancement and to enhance institutional aid.

S. 2283

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2283, a bill to improve the Veterans Crisis Line of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2391

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2391, a bill to provide for clarification and limitations with respect to the exercise of national security powers, and for other purposes.

S. 2607

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2607, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the former hostages of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981, highlighting their resilience throughout the unprecedented ordeal that they lived through and the national unity it produced, marking 4 decades since their 444 days in captivity, and recognizing their sacrifice to the United States.

S. 2769

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2769, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to cover physician services delivered by podiatric physicians to ensure access by Medicaid beneficiaries to appropriate quality foot and ankle care, to amend title XVIII of such Act to modify the requirements for diabetic shoes to be included under Medicare, and for other purposes.

S. 2771

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2771, a bill to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in San Angelo, Texas, as the ''Colonel Charles and JoAnne Powell Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic''.

S. 2922

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2922, a bill to establish a commission to study the war in Afghanistan.

S. 3018

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 3018, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish requirements with respect to the use of prior authorization under Medicare Advantage plans, and for other purposes.

S. 3079

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3079, a bill to exempt essential workers from Federal COVID–19 vaccine mandates.

S. 3108

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3108, a bill to provide counsel for unaccompanied children, and for other purposes.

S. 3196

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3196, a bill to enhance the policies, procedures, and training for midshipmen at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, and for other purposes.

S. 3204

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3204, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona certain land in Pima County, Arizona, and for other purposes.

S. 3293

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) were added as cosponsors of S. 3293, a bill to expand access of veterans to mental health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3354

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3354, a bill to delay the implementation of a rule relating to the importation of sheep and goats and products derived from sheep and goats, and for other purposes.

S. 3362

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3362, a bill to require the Healthy People Maternal, Infant, and Child Health Workgroup and the Maternal Health Working Group to establish a formal coordinated approach for monitoring maternal health efforts across the Department of Health and Human Services.

S. 3384

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3384, a bill to establish in the Department of State the Office to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 3398. A bill to amend the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant program to promote career awareness in accounting as part of a well-rounded STEM educational experience; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the STEM Education in Accounting Act with my colleague Senator ROSEN. Our bill would recognize accounting as part of a well-rounded STEM education and allow school districts to use their Federal education

block grant resources to develop and improve instruction in accounting. It also aims to introduce more students to accounting and improve career awareness and workforce diversity in the field. In today's rapidly changing world, improving students' access to a STEM-based curriculum is increasingly vital to ensure they are prepared to succeed in the 21st-century workforce.

Mathematics—the ''M'' in ''STEM''—is a critical skill that can help students unlock countless doors to high-paying, in-demand fields. One of those doors leads to the accounting profession, whose work has a direct impact on employers, employees, retirees, investors, and the global economy. Certified professional accountants, or CPAs, play a key role in providing capital markets with confidence in financial reporting. Modern accounting increasingly requires cutting-edge math and technology skills, including IT auditing, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cyber security, to keep up with the market's needs.

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, which is current law, school districts may use funds from the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program to support a host of curricular and extracurricular activities that deliver a well-rounded education to students in all grade levels. Specifically, the STEM Education in Accounting Act would add ''activities to promote the development, implementation, and strengthening of programs to teach accounting'' to the list of courses and activities supported by this flexible block grant. Our bill would also promote high-quality accounting instruction for members of groups underrepresented in the accounting profession.

Encouraging a robust pipeline of future accounting professionals is paramount. I encourage my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill to promote accounting education, improve students' finance skills, and strengthen the pipeline of future accountants, who play such a vital role in our financial system.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4894. Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MARKEY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1404, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, popularly known as the 'Ghost Army', in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service in conducting deception operations in Europe during World War II.

SA 4895. Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MARKEY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1404, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4894. Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MARKEY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1404, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, popularly known as the 'Ghost Army', in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service in conducting deception operations in Europe during World War II; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) the 23d Headquarters Special Troops (comprised of the 23d Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops, the 603d Engineer Camouflage Battalion, the 406th Combat Engineer Company, the 3132d Signal Service Company, and the Signal Company, Special, 23d Headquarters, Special Troops) and the 3133d Signal Service Company were units of the United States Army that served in Europe during World War II;

(2) the 23d Headquarters Special Troops was actively engaged in battlefield operations from June of 1944 through March of 1945;

(3) the 3133d Signal Service Company was engaged in operations in Italy in 1945;

(4) the deceptive activities of these units were integral to several Allied victories across Europe and reduced casualties;

(5) in evaluating the performance of these units after World War II, an Army analysis found that ''Rarely, if ever, has there been a group of such a few men which had so great an influence on the outcome of a major military campaign.'';

(6) many Ghost Army soldiers were citizen-soldiers recruited from art schools, advertising agencies, communications companies, and other creative and technical professions;

(7) the first 4 members of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops landed on D-Day and 2 became casualties while creating false beach landing sites;

(8) a detachment of Army radio operators under the command of Lieutenant Fred Fox joined the invasion fleet for a planned deception, Operation Troutfly, which was cancelled;

(9) Lieutenant Fox's men and their radios were instead attached to the 82d Airborne, which had lost 95 percent of its radio equipment, providing critical communications as the 82d Airborne fought its way inland;

(10) the secret deception operations of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops commenced in France on June 14, 1944, when Task Force Mason, a 16-man detachment of the 23d led by First Lieutenant Bernard Mason, arrived in Normandy;

(11) Lieutenant Mason and his men set up dummy artillery to draw enemy fire and protect the 980th Field Artillery Battalion (VIII Corps) as part of the Normandy Campaign;

(12) the rest of the soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops arrived in France in July and August of 1944;

(13) full-scale deception efforts began with Operation Elephant from July 1 to 4, 1944, in which the 23d Headquarters Special Troops covered the movement of the 2d Armored Division when it left a reserve position to go into the line between the First United States and Second British Armies;

(14) Operation Elephant was the first of the 21 full-scale tactical deceptions completed by the 23d Headquarters Special Troops;

(15) often operating on or near the front lines, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops used inflatable tanks, artillery, airplanes and other vehicles, advanced engineered soundtracks, and skillfully crafted radio trickery to create the illusion of sizable American forces where there were none and to draw the enemy away from Allied troops;

(16) the 3132d and the 3133d Signal Service Companies, activated in Pine Camp (now Fort Drum), New York, at the Army Experimental Station in March and June of 1944, respectively, were the only ''sonic deception'' ground combat units of the United States in World War II;

(17) soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops impersonated other, larger Army units by sewing counterfeit patches onto their uniforms, painting false markings on their vehicles, and creating phony headquarters staffed by fake generals, all in an effort to feed false information to Axis spies;

(18) during the Battle of the Bulge, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops created counterfeit radio traffic in an effort to deceive the enemy of the movement of elements of General George S. Patton's Third Army as it shifted to break through to the 101st Airborne Division and elements of 10th Armored Division in the besieged Belgian town of Bastogne;

(19) in its final mission, Operation Viersen, in March 1945, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops conducted a tactical deception operation intended to draw German units down the Rhine River and away from the Ninth Army, allowing the Ninth Army to cross the Rhine into Germany;

(20) during Operation Viersen, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops, with the assistance of other units, impersonated 2 complete divisions of American forces by using fabricated radio networks, soundtracks of construction work and artillery fire, and hundreds of inflatable and real vehicles;

(21) according to a military intelligence officer of the 79th Infantry, ''There is no doubt that Operation Viersen materially assisted in deceiving the enemy with regard to the real dispositions and intentions of this Army.'';

(22) 3 soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops gave their lives and dozens were injured in carrying out their mission;

(23) in April 1945, the 3133d Signal Service Company conducted Operation Craftsman in support of Operation Second Wind, the successful Allied effort to break through the German defensive position to the north of Florence, Italy, known as the Gothic Line;

(24) along with an attached platoon of British engineers, who were inflatable decoy specialists, the 3133d Signal Service Company used sonic deception to misrepresent troop locations along this defensive line;

(25) the activities of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company remained highly classified for more than 40 years after the war and received minimal recognition;

(26) the extraordinary accomplishments of this unit are deserving of belated official recognition; and

(27) the United States is eternally grateful to the soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company for their proficient use of innovative tactics during World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Services Company, known collectively as the ''Ghost Army'', in recognition of unique and highly distinguished service during World War II.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall

strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be available for display as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations associated with the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Services Company.

(d) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the cost of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDAL.

(a) NATIONAL MEDAL.—The medals struck under this Act are national medals for the purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, Unites States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purpose of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 3(d) shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purposes of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

SA 4895. Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. MARKEY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1404, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, popularly known as the 'Ghost Army', in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service in conducting deception operations in Europe during World War II; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, popularly known as the 'Ghost Army', in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service in conducting deception operations in Europe during World War II.''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I have 10 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 BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 10 a.m., conduct an executive session.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 10:45 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a business meeting.

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 Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 11:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITIEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate o Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 3 p.m., to conduct a business meeting.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 2 p.m., to conduct a closed business meeting followed by a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITIEE ON COMPETITION POLICY, ANTITRUST, AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

The Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my State Department fellow Deanne de Lima be given floor privileges throughout the remainder of this Congress.

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Will Sheehan, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 117th Congress.

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

DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE TO MAKE A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL S. 1605

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 64, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 64) directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill S. 1605.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 64) was agreed to.

RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION MITIGATING OPTIONS AND TECHNICAL EXTENSIONS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5545, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5545) to extend certain expiring provisions of law relating to benefits provided under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs during COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. SCHUMER. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 5545) was passed.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

GHOST ARMY CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. 1404.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1404) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company in recognition of their unique and distinguished service as a ''Ghost Army'' that conducted deception operations in Europe during World War II.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the Markey substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; that the Markey amendment to the title be considered and agreed to; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 4894) in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the matter of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) the 23d Headquarters Special Troops (comprised of the 23d Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops, the 603d Engineer Camouflage Battalion, the 406th Combat Engineer Company, the 3132d Signal Service Company, and the Signal Company, Special, 23d Headquarters, Special Troops) and the 3133d Signal Service Company were units of the United States Army that served in Europe during World War II;

(2) the 23d Headquarters Special Troops was actively engaged in battlefield operations from June of 1944 through March of 1945;

(3) the 3133d Signal Service Company was engaged in operations in Italy in 1945;

(4) the deceptive activities of these units were integral to several Allied victories across Europe and reduced casualties;

(5) in evaluating the performance of these units after World War II, an Army analysis found that ''Rarely, if ever, has there been a group of such a few men which had so great an influence on the outcome of a major military campaign.'';

(6) many Ghost Army soldiers were citizen-soldiers recruited from art schools, advertising agencies, communications companies, and other creative and technical professions;

(7) the first 4 members of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops landed on D-Day and 2 became casualties while creating false beach landing sites;

(8) a detachment of Army radio operators under the command of Lieutenant Fred Fox joined the invasion fleet for a planned deception, Operation Troutfly, which was cancelled;

(9) Lieutenant Fox's men and their radios were instead attached to the 82d Airborne, which had lost 95 percent of its radio equipment, providing critical communications as the 82d Airborne fought its way inland;

(10) the secret deception operations of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops commenced in France on June 14, 1944, when Task Force Mason, a 16-man detachment of the 23d led by First Lieutenant Bernard Mason, arrived in Normandy;

(11) Lieutenant Mason and his men set up dummy artillery to draw enemy fire and protect the 980th Field Artillery Battalion (VIII Corps) as part of the Normandy Campaign;

(12) the rest of the soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops arrived in France in July and August of 1944;

(13) full-scale deception efforts began with Operation Elephant from July 1 to 4, 1944, in which the 23d Headquarters Special Troops covered the movement of the 2d Armored Division when it left a reserve position to go into the line between the First United States and Second British Armies;

(14) Operation Elephant was the first of the 21 full-scale tactical deceptions completed by the 23d Headquarters Special Troops;

(15) often operating on or near the front lines, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops used inflatable tanks, artillery, airplanes and other vehicles, advanced engineered soundtracks, and skillfully crafted radio trickery to create the illusion of sizable American forces where there were none and to draw the enemy away from Allied troops;

(16) the 3132d and the 3133d Signal Service Companies, activated in Pine Camp (now Fort Drum), New York, at the Army Experimental Station in March and June of 1944, respectively, were the only ''sonic deception'' ground combat units of the United States in World War II;

(17) soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops impersonated other, larger Army units by sewing counterfeit patches onto their uniforms, painting false markings on their vehicles, and creating phony headquarters staffed by fake generals, all in an effort to feed false information to Axis spies;

(18) during the Battle of the Bulge, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops created counterfeit radio traffic in an effort to deceive the enemy of the movement of elements of General George S. Patton's Third Army as it shifted to break through to the 101st Airborne Division and elements of 10th Armored Division in the besieged Belgian town of Bastogne;

(19) in its final mission, Operation Viersen, in March 1945, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops conducted a tactical deception operation intended to draw German units down the Rhine River and away from the Ninth Army, allowing the Ninth Army to cross the Rhine into Germany;

(20) during Operation Viersen, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops, with the assistance of other units, impersonated 2 complete divisions of American forces by using fabricated radio networks, soundtracks of construction work and artillery fire, and hundreds of inflatable and real vehicles;

(21) according to a military intelligence officer of the 79th Infantry, ''There is no doubt that Operation Viersen materially assisted in deceiving the enemy with regard to the real dispositions and intentions of this Army.'';

(22) 3 soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops gave their lives and dozens were injured in carrying out their mission;

(23) in April 1945, the 3133d Signal Service Company conducted Operation Craftsman in support of Operation Second Wind, the successful Allied effort to break through the German defensive position to the north of Florence, Italy, known as the Gothic Line;

(24) along with an attached platoon of British engineers, who were inflatable decoy specialists, the 3133d Signal Service Company used sonic deception to misrepresent troop locations along this defensive line;

(25) the activities of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company remained highly classified for more than 40 years after the war and received minimal recognition;

(26) the extraordinary accomplishments of this unit are deserving of belated official recognition; and

(27) the United States is eternally grateful to the soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company for their proficient use of innovative tactics during World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Services Company, known collectively as the ''Ghost Army'', in recognition of unique and highly distinguished service during World War II.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be available for display as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations associated with the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Services Company.

(d) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the cost of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDAL.

(a) NATIONAL MEDAL.—The medals struck under this Act are national medals for the purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, Unites States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purpose of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund

such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 3(d) shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purposes of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The bill (S. 1404), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The title amendment (No. 4895) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title.)

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, popularly known as the 'Ghost Army', in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service in conducting deception operations in Europe during World War II.''.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, December 16; 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 and resume consideration of the Gawande nomination; further, that the Senate recess from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. For the information of Senators, we expect to move to discharge the Thomas nomination for the Ninth Circuit during Thursday's session.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 8:15 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 16, 2021, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

ERROL RAJESH ARTHUR, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE JOSE M. LOPEZ, RETIRING.

LESLIE A. MEEK, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE JUDITH ANNE SMITH, RETIRING.

CARL EZEKIEL ROSS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE FLORENCE Y. PAN, RESIGNED.

JESSICA G. L. CLARKE, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE COLLEEN MCMAHON, RETIRED.

SHERILYN PEACE GARNETT, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE MANUEL L. REAL, RETIRED.

HECTOR GONZALEZ, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE BRIAN M. COGAN, RETIRED.

KENLY KIYA KATO, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE BEVERLY REID O'CONNELL, DECEASED.

NINA MORRISON, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE DORA L. IRIZARRY, RETIRED.

EVELYN PADIN, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY, VICE FAITH S. HOCHBERG, RETIRED.

WILLIAM S. POCAN, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN, VICE WILLIAM C. GRIESBACH, RETIRED.

JENNIFER LOUISE ROCHON, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE GEORGE B. DANIELS, RETIRED.

FRED W. SLAUGHTER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE ANDREW J. GUILFORD, RETIRED.

SUNSHINE SUZANNE SYKES, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE JAMES V. SELNA, RETIRED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. STEPHEN L. DAVIS

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. CHARLES R. HAMILTON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

THOMAS M. MAGILL

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 15, 2021:

THE JUDICIARY

JENNIFER SUNG, OF OREGON, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT.

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

ROSTIN BEHNAM, OF MARYLAND, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION.

ROSTIN BEHNAM, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 19, 2026.

THE JUDICIARY

SAMANTHA D. ELLIOTT, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

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

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 16, 2021 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JANUARY 5

10 a.m.

Committee on Rules and Administration

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the U.S. Capitol Police following the January 6th attack on the Capitol.

SR–301

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to S. 1605, National Defense Authorization Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S9167–S9218

Measures Introduced: Fifteen bills were introduced, as follows: S. 3396–3410. **Page S9213**

Measures Passed:

Enrollment Correction: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 64, directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill S. 1605. **Page S9216**

REMOTE Act: Senate passed H.R. 5545, to extend certain expiring provisions of law relating to benefits provided under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs during COVID–19 pandemic. **Pages S9216–17**

Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act: Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 1404, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, popularly known as the 'Ghost Army', in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service in conducting deception operations in Europe during World War II, and the bill was then passed, after taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S9217–18**

Adopted:

Schumer (for Markey) Amendment No. 4894, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S9217**

Schumer (for Markey) Amendment No. 4895, to amend the title. **Page S9218**

House Messages:

National Defense Authorization Act: By 88 yeas to 11 nays (Vote No. 499), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to S. 1605, to designate the National Pulse Memorial located at 1912 South Orange Avenue in Orlando, Florida, after taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto: **Page S9167**

Withdrawn:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the bill, with Schumer Amendment No. 4880 (to the House amendment), to add an effective date. **Page S9175**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

Schumer Amendment No. 4881 (to Amendment No. 4880), to modify the effective date, fell when Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the bill, with Schumer Amendment No. 4880 (to the House amendment) (listed above) was withdrawn. **Page S9175**

Gawande Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Atul Atmaram Gawande, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. **Page S9200**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Friday, December, 17, 2021. **Page S9200**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9200**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9200**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, December 16, 2021. **Page S9218**

Lopez Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Linda Lopez, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California. **Page S9200**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Atul Atmaram Gawande, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. **Page S9200**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9200**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9200**

Ohta Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Jinsook Ohta, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California. **Page S9200**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Linda Lopez, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California. **Page S9200**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9200**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9200**

Urias Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of David Herrera Urias, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico. **Page S9200**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Jinsook Ohta, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California. **Page S9200**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9200**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9200**

Frimpong Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Maame Ewusi-Mensah Frimpong, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Page S9201**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of David Herrera Urias, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico. **Page S9201**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9200**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9201**

Beckering Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Jane M. Beckering, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Michigan. **Page S9201**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Maame Ewusi-Mensah Frimpong, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Page S9201**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9201**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9201**

Kumar Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Shalina D. Kumar, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan. **Page S9201**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Jane M. Beckering, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Michigan. **Page S9201**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9201**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9201**

Thurston Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Jennifer L. Thurston, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California. **Page S9201**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the

Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Shalina D. Kumar, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan. **Page S9201**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9201**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9201**

Menendez Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Katherine Marie Menendez, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota. **Page S9201**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Jennifer L. Thurston, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California. **Pages S9201–02**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9201**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9201**

Dimke Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Mary Katherine Dimke, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington. **Page S9202**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Katherine Marie Menendez, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota. **Page S9202**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9202**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9202**

Pantaleon Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon, of New York, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Spain, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador of the United States of America to the Principality of Andorra. **Page S9202**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Mary Katherine Dimke, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington. **Page S9202**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9202**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9202**

Emanuel Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Rahm Emanuel, of Illinois, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to Japan. **Page S9202**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon, of New York, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Spain, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador of the United States of America to the Principality of Andorra. **Page S9202**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9202**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9202**

Markell Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Jack A. Markell, of Delaware, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador. **Page S9202**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Rahm Emanuel, of Illinois, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to Japan. **Pages S9202–03**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9202**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9202**

Crocker Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the

Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador. **Page S9203**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Jack A. Markell, of Delaware, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador. **Page S9203**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9203**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9203**

Gitenstein Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Mark Gitenstein, of Washington, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador. **Page S9203**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador. **Page S9203**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9203**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9203**

Bauer Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Denise Campbell Bauer, of California, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the French Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador of the United States of America to the Principality of Monaco. **Page S9203**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Mark Gitenstein, of Washington, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador. **Page S9203**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9203**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9203**

Burns Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of R. Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China. **Page S9203**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Denise Campbell Bauer, of California, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the French Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador of the United States of America to the Principality of Monaco. **Pages S9203–04**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9203**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9203**

Cronin Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Claire D. Cronin, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to Ireland. **Page S9204**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of R. Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China. **Page S9204**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9204**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9204**

Escobari Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Marcela Escobari, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. **Page S9204**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Claire D. Cronin, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to Ireland. **Page S9204**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9204**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9204**

Knapper Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Marc Evans Knapper, of California, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. **Page S9204**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Marcela Escobari, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. **Page S9204**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9204**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9204**

Gifford Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Rufus Gifford, of Massachusetts, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador. **Page S9204**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Marc Evans Knapper, of California, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. **Page S9204**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9204**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9204**

Sanchez Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Gabriel P. Sanchez, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. **Page S9205**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Rufus Gifford, of Massachusetts, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador. **Page S9205**

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

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S9205**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9205**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 50 yeas to 49 nays (Vote No. EX. 500), Jennifer Sung, of Oregon, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. **Page S9175**

By 62 yeas to 37 nays (Vote No. EX. 501), Samantha D. Elliott, of New Hampshire, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Hampshire. **Pages S9181–82**

Rostin Behnam, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Rostin Behnam, of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring June 19, 2026. **Page S9205**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Errol Rajesh Arthur, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Leslie A. Meek, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Carl Ezekiel Ross, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

Jessica G. L. Clarke, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Sherilyn Peace Garnett, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Hector Gonzalez, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Kenly Kiya Kato, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Nina Morrison, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Evelyn Padin, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

William S. Pocan, of Wisconsin, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

Jennifer Louise Rochon, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Fred W. Slaughter, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Sunshine Suzanne Sykes, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

1 Air Force nomination in the rank of general.

1 Army nomination in the rank of general.

A routine list in the Army. **Page S9218**

Messages from the House: **Page S9209**

Measures Referred: **Page S9209**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S9209**

Executive Communications: **Page S9209**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S9209–13**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S9213–14**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S9214–15**

Additional Statements: **Page S9209**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S9215–16**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S9216**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S9216**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—501) **Pages S9175, S9181–82**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:15 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 16, 2021. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S9218.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

DISASTER RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine disaster recovery assistance, focusing on authorization of the Community Development Block Grant—Disaster Recovery Program, including S. 2471, to establish a community disaster assistance fund for housing and community development and to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to provide, from the fund, assistance through a community development block grant disaster recovery program, and S. 2404, to improve Federal activities relating to wildfires, after receiving testimony from Michael Sprayberry, Hagerty Consulting, Inc., Raleigh, North Carolina; Matt A. Mayer, Opportunity Ohio, Columbus; and Carlos E. Martin, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 46, to reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 and to establish the United States Coral Reef Task Force, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 3196, to enhance the policies, procedures, and training for midshipmen at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 3309, to require SelectUSA to coordinate with State-level economic development organizations to increase foreign direct investment in semiconductor-related manufacturing and production, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 3375, to promote travel and tourism in the United States, to improve the health safety and security of international flights entering the United States, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

The nominations of Alan Davidson, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information, Jed David Kolko, of California, to be Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, and Viquar Ahmad, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary, and to be Chief Financial Officer, all of the Department of Commerce.

U.S. AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Committee on Commerce: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the United States airline industry, after receiving testimony from Doug Parker, American Airlines Group, Inc., Fort Worth, Texas; Gary C. Kelly, Southwest Airlines Co., Dallas, Texas; Scott Kirby, United Airlines Holdings, Inc., Chicago, Illinois; John Laughter, Delta Air Lines, Atlanta, Georgia; Sara Nelson, Association of Flight Attendants—CWA, AFL–CIO, and Mike Tretheway, InterVISTAS Consulting Inc., both of Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Marc R. Stanley, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Argentine Republic, Rashad Hussain, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, Ramin Toloui, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary (Economic and Business Affairs), Thomas Barrett, of Wisconsin, to be Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Erik D. Ramanathan, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden, Scott Miller, of Colorado, to be Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation, and to serve concurrently and

without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Principality of Liechtenstein, Jamie L. Harpootlian, of South Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia, John R. Bass, of New York, to be an Under Secretary (Management), Mark Brzezinski, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Poland, and Michael M. Adler, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium, all of the Department of State, Adriana Debora Kugler, of Maryland, to be United States Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Scott A. Nathan, of Massachusetts, to be Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation, Chantale Yokmin Wong, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Director of the Asian Development Bank, with the rank of Ambassador, and routine lists in the Foreign Service.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 3099, to amend title 44, United States Code, to establish the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program within the General Services Administration, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2932, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 430 South Knowles Avenue in New Richmond, Wisconsin, as the ''Captain Robert C. Harmon and Private John R. Peirson Post Office Building'';

H.R. 767, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 40 Fulton Street in Middletown, New York, as the ''Benjamin A. Gilman Post Office Building'';

H.R. 1170, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 League in Irvine, California, as the ''Tuskegee Airman Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Friend Memorial Post Office Building'';

H.R. 1444, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 132 North Loudoun Street, Suite 1 in Winchester, Virginia, as the ''Patsy Cline Post Office'';

H.R. 3210, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1905 15th Street in Boulder, Colorado, as the ''Officer Eric H. Talley Post Office Building''; and

The nominations of Loren L. AliKhan, and John P. Howard III, both to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, and Adrienne Jennings Noti, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Alison J. Nathan, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit, who was introduced by Senator Schumer, Georgette Castner, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, who was introduced by Senators Booker and Menendez, Ruth Bermudez Montenegro, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California, who was introduced by Senator Padilla, Julie Rebecca Rubin, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland, who was introduced by Senator Cardin, and Cristina D. Silva, and Anne Rachel Traum, both to be a United States District Judge for the District of Nevada, who were introduced by Senators Rosen and Cortez Masto, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

AMERICAN INNOVATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights concluded a hearing to examine the impact of consolidation and monopoly power on American innovation, after receiving testimony from Diana Moss, American Antitrust Institute, Denver, Colorado; Alex Harman, Public Citizen, Washington, D.C.; Eric Migicovsky, Beeper Inc., Palo Alto, California; Bettina Hein, Juli, Boston, Massachusetts; and Roger P. Alford, Notre Dame Law School, Notre Dame, Indiana.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 731, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the management of information technology projects and investments of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

S. 1607, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve how the Department of Veterans Affairs discloses to individuals entitled to educational assistance from the Department risks associated with using such assistance at particular educational institutions and to restore entitlement of students to such assistance who are pursuing programs of education at educational institutions that are subject to Federal or State civil enforcement action;

S. 1664, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to take certain actions to improve the processing by the Department of Veterans Affairs of claims for disability compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder;

S. 1850, to preserve the memorials to chaplains at Arlington National Cemetery;

S. 1936, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for extensions of the time limitations for use of entitlement under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs by reason of school closures due to emergency and other situations;

S. 1944, to improve Vet Centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

S. 2089, to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that grants provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for State veterans' cemeteries do not restrict States from authorizing the interment of certain deceased members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces in such cemeteries;

S. 2431, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to require the employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to receive training developed by the Inspector General of the Department on reporting wrongdoing to, responding to requests from, and cooperating with the Office of Inspector General;

S. 2513, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the application and review process of the Department of Veterans Affairs for clothing allowance claims submitted by veterans;

S. 2514, to rename the Provo Veterans Center in Orem, Utah, as the ''Col. Gail S. Halvorsen 'Candy Bomber' Veterans Center'';

S. 2533, to improve mammography services furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs;

S. 2624, to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2022;

S. 2627, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve assistance for veterans with travel necessary for counseling, mental health services, health care, and others services furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs;

S. 2644, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to members of the National Guard who perform certain full-time duty;

S. 2687, to provide the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs testimonial subpoena authority;

S. 2720, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national clinical pathway for prostate cancer;

S. 2761, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to maintain demographic information regarding veterans and publish such information on a website of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

S. 2787, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of doctors of podiatric medicine in the Department of Veterans Affairs;

S. 2794, to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase automatic maximum coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program and the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program;

S. 2852, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of care in non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently;

S. 3025, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma;

S. 3094, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve homeless veterans reintegration programs;

S. 3163, to improve access to medical examinations required by veterans to obtain disability compensation or pension under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

S. 3293, to expand access of veterans to mental health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs;

An original bill entitled, ''Veterans Benefits Improvement Act''; and

The nomination of Kurt D. DelBene, of Washington, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Information and Technology).

BUSINESS MEETING

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Shannon Corless, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of the Treasury.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House is scheduled to meet in Pro Forma session at 11 a.m. on Thursday, December 16, 2021.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2021

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Ann Claire Phillips, of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Maritime Administration, Steven Scott Cliff, of California, to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and John Edward Putnam, of Colorado, to be General Counsel, all of the Department of Transportation, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Finance: business meeting to consider the nomination of Neil Harvey MacBride, of Virginia, to be General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider the nominations of Bridget Meehan Brennan, Charles Esque Fleming, and David Augustin Ruiz, each to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio, John H. Chun, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington, and Katherine Vidal, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, 9 a.m., SH–216.

House

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Smithsonian Institution: Protecting Smithsonian Facilities and Collections Against Climate Change'', 12:30 p.m., Webex.

Joint Meetings

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: to receive a briefing on defending Ukraine and deterring Putin, 10 a.m., VTC.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, December 16

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Atul Atmaram Gawande, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

(Senate will recess from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 a.m., Thursday, December 16

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 11 a.m.

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