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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, February 18, 2022, at 10 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022

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.

Mighty God, the refuge and strength for all who trust You, come close to us, as we lift our hearts in prayer. Lord, help us to love You as You deserve. Inspire us to love one another as You have loved us.

Today, bless our lawmakers in their work. Warm their hearts, increase their faith, and make them more conscious of Your transforming presence. Lord, breathe Your peace into their hearts, as they strive to build a better nation and world. Please do for us more than we can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2022.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Celeste Ann Wallander, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, President Biden addressed the country about the ongoing crisis that Russia has created on its border with Ukraine.

There was much in the President's remarks that I appreciated. He was right to candidly remind the Russian people that neither the United States nor NATO nor Ukraine wants a war. He was right to emphasize that the world will not shrug or stand idly by if Vladimir Putin tries to invade his neighbor or redraw the map of Europe through deadly force.

We have spent much time discussing Russia's alleged security concerns and not enough time examining the legitimate concerns of Russia's neighbors, many of whom have a long history—a long history—of being invaded by Moscow. The concerns of these free, sovereign states matter as well, and the President would do well to amplify their voices and their historical experiences.

So it is fine for President Biden to engage in good-faith diplomacy, provided we are skeptical about Putin's intentions. Thus far, Putin's behavior is proving how little he can be trusted and how little he is interested in diplomacy as anything other than a gambit to divide the West or a pretext for war.

The United States must keep sending these strong messages, verbally and with concrete actions, both right now before any hostilities and then with

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

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devastating force if Putin does, indeed, plow ahead.

The United States and our partners should waste no time in helping Ukraine prepare for war—weapons, materiel, advice, logistics, and intelligence. We should be building the infrastructure to help Ukraine sustain their resistance to Russian aggression if and when it comes.

I welcome the President's deployment of additional forces to the territory of NATO allies situated along our alliance's eastern flank. I recommended he take such action months ago. And I am particularly grateful to the Kentuckians of the 101st Airborne Division who are leaving Fort Campbell this week to join NATO reinforcements in Eastern Europe.

As our diplomats work to halt the train of Russian aggression, it is the brave men and women of the U.S. military who give their words added weight.

I am hopeful that President Biden will rise to the occasion. As a bipartisan group of colleagues and I made clear in a joint statement yesterday, the President would have overwhelming, bipartisan support to use his existing Executive authorities for tough sanctions against Russia in the event of conflict.

We should acknowledge Putin's use of energy as a weapon. If the President is serious about providing relief for Americans at the pump or blunting Putin's manipulation of energy markets, he will stop his administration's anti-energy policies that make it harder for our own producers to explore, to produce, and to export energy to vulnerable allies.

While our eastern flank allies have consistently taken a clear-eyed approach to their own defense, it is time for America to invest more meaningfully in our own military capabilities and demand that our allies in Western Europe actually follow suit.

Whether the administration is serious about competition with Russia and China will be clear when it submits its fiscal 2023 budget request. Our allies and adversaries will all be watching.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. President, now on a different matter, while the world's eyes are fixed on the present foreign policy crisis, troubling facts are continuing to surface surrounding the administration's previous self-inflicted crisis—the botched retreat from Afghanistan.

Last week, journalists published the findings of a 2,000-page autopsy that Army officials compiled following the chaotic withdrawal from Kabul. The report hammers home a damning fact we have actually already known for months: The Biden administration received clear advance warnings from commanders on the ground that should have been heeded but went ignored. As I warned at the time, we have confirmation this disaster was foreseeable—foreseen, actually—and avoidable.

The Army's conclusions build upon the report from the Special Inspector General which was declassified last month.

While President Biden and his political advisers still cling to the notion that they got mistaken advice and were caught off-guard, both these reports suggest that nonpartisan experts knew and predicted the Afghan military would likely collapse and spent months trying in vain to get the administration to pay attention.

Top commanders reported that trying to get State Department officials to engage in advance evacuation plans was like ''pulling teeth''; that the National Security Council was ''not seriously planning for an evacuation''; that among peers in uniform, ''everyone clearly saw some of the advantage of holding Bagram.''

As the top U.S. commander on the ground during the evacuation put it, policymakers had not ''paid attention to the indicators of what was happening on the ground.''

This staggering report from our own U.S. Army should have chastened the Biden administration. It should be an occasion for apology, reflection, and accountability. But last week, President Biden instead tried to simply wave away our own Army's conclusions without evidence.

He was asked, ''Are you rejecting the conclusions or the accounts in this [Army] report?''

The President replied, ''Yes, I am.''

''So, they're not true?''

''I'm rejecting them,'' the President said.

No evidence; just hand-waving denial. Frankly, it was a bizarre performance.

Our retreat from Afghanistan seriously damaged America's credibility. It made confronting terrorist threats that much harder from over the horizon, and it invited more testing like what we are now enduring in Eastern Europe.

President Biden and his team were warned of all these dangers well in advance by our own military, but our Commander in Chief seems to have flat-out ignored our commanders. This has been an unbelievably costly lesson that the Biden administration should never have had to learn even once. Let us all hope they don't need to learn it twice.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. President, now on one final matter, parents and kids need a swift end to pandemic disruptions that ignore the incredibly low risk to children.

I am proudly joining Senator THUNE and many of our Republican colleagues on a resolution that would overturn the absurd preschool mask mandates which the Biden administration has tied to Head Start funding.

More than 1,200 doctors and health professionals have signed a public statement about ''the Urgency of Normal''—''the Urgency of Normal''—the medical and moral urgency of returning normalcy back to children as fast as possible. Republicans at the local, State, and Federal level are standing with the parents. We are going to keep fighting against these disruptions to family life caused by rules and mandates that are not at all based in science. Two years of needless school closures and unscientific, forced child-masking are 2 years too many.

But, unfortunately, pandemic policies are not the only reason that recent years have been one giant advertisement for school choice and parents' rights. We have also seen far-left bureaucrats trying desperately to inject radical theories and fringe ideas into teacher trainings and K–12 classrooms.

Everybody has heard draw-dropping anecdotes from school districts all across our country. Last year, the Biden administration tried to divert money for mainstream civics education into woke propaganda like the debunked 1619 Project. They only backed down when Senate Republicans called out Secretary Cardona directly. Meanwhile, the far-left national teachers union adopted an official resolution and approved extra money for their fight to make ''structural racism'' and ''critical race theory'' into central tenets in kids' schooling.

This nonsense is absolutely pervasive—pervasive.

Just a few weeks ago, North Carolina parents had to call out their statewide Office of Early Learning for funding training materials that talked about ''deconstruct[ing] whiteness''—''deconstruct[ing] whiteness.'' These materials were for preschool teachers.

In San Francisco, the school board spent 2021 focused on renaming schools instead of reopening schools. They decided ''George Washington'' and ''Abraham Lincoln'' were insufficiently woke namesakes, and they tried to change a prestigious high school's merit-based standards into a non-merit-based lottery in the name of equity.

Not surprisingly, parents are watching this nonsense and demanding change. For example, just yesterday, a multiethnic multilingual recall campaign to unseat three of those San Francisco school board members won an overwhelming victory with the voters.

American parents are speaking out, but instead of listening to them, the political left is lashing out.

President Biden's Education Secretary solicited an outside group to send a letter to President Biden's Attorney General that referred to concerned parents as potential domestic terrorists.

One part of the Biden administration set up another part of the Biden administration with a pretext to investigate and harass concerned parents.

One far-left advocate recently complained to NPR that ''school transparency is essentially this big brother-type regime.'' What a joke.

The nationwide teachers union boss, Randi Weingarten, personally tweeted out a claim that ''racists . . . are showing up in droves to school board meetings.''

Even the liberal ACLU, which used to care about individual rights and transparency, is prioritizing woke bureaucrats ahead of middle-class parents. Here was the ACLU's statement:

> Curriculum transparency bills are just thinly veiled attempts at chilling teachers and students from learning and talking about race and gender in schools.

So let's think about that for a minute. The far left is admitting in public that if the public gets to look at the racial and gender theories that they want to teach little kids, then those lesson plans will become untenable.

I am going to say that again. The far left is admitting in public that if the public gets a look at the racial and gender theories that they want to teach little kids, then these lesson plans will become untenable.

That is what they are actually saying. If parents gain transparency into the crazy stuff we are teaching, we might have to stop teaching it.

In other words, their reaction proves the point. The fact that woke bureaucrats are this terrified by transparency proves exactly—exactly—why parents deserve it.

Bear in mind, these same people are passionate supporters of a sweeping toddler takeover that would give Federal bureaucrats huge new powers to shape early childhood across America and discriminate against religious daycares.

The choice before American families is actually pretty stark. On the one hand, an alliance between Big Labor, woke bureaucrats, and many elected Democrats apparently wants indefinitely masked children being taught radical nonsense while parents are pushed to the sidelines. But Republicans at the local, State, and national levels are standing up for science, for common sense, and for the children's best interests. The party of parents has your back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, over the last 12 months, the economy has rebounded at levels that we have not seen in decades—a 5.7-percent GDP growth rate and 6.6 million new jobs. This is the fastest our economy has grown since, perhaps, 1984, and the new jobs we added to the economy were the most ever for a President's first year.

After former President Trump botched our national response to COVID, America is now on the right track under President Biden, but we face serious challenges that demand action from Congress. The cost of living has come up for families across the country and around the world. The destruction unleashed by COVID has decimated supply chains, strained the labor supply, and the effects of a global pandemic that began 2 years ago still reverberate today. These challenges demand action, and Democrats remain laser-focused on lowering costs for American families.

Yesterday, our caucus met for our weekly lunch, where we held a spirited, enthusiastic discussion about ideas from our Members of how we can lower costs and take action to do so. We talked about how we can continue working to lower childcare costs, prescription drug costs, the costs of semiconductors, which is a huge driver of price increases across a wide variety of products, and things as basic and vital as the cost of food and meat.

Lowering costs will continue to be a caucuswide effort. We are not going to agree on everything, but we are all on the same page in that we need to tackle the issue head on.

That is the difference between Democrats and Republicans. Rising costs, of course, impact all of us, whether we come from blue or red States, but Democrats are the ones laser-focused on showing where we stand and in offering solutions that aim squarely at the problem. Republicans seem to have no solutions, just rhetoric. The other side, sadly, seems, oftentimes, motivated by something else. Rather than working with us in a bipartisan spirit, our Republican colleagues seem more comfortable giving speeches that go on and on about rising costs without offering any solutions. Complaining about the problem doesn't make inflation better—proposing solutions does—and that is precisely what Democrats will continue focusing on.

Over the next month and beyond, Members from our side will continue offering a number of solutions—solutions—that will lower costs and leave more money in people's pockets. We need to help working families build wealth after the pandemic. We need to lower the costs of medications like insulin, which can still reach $600 a month. We need to relieve our strained supply chains and increase domestic manufacturing on things like chips—and on that front, I am hopeful that we can take bipartisan action soon.

Our Republican colleagues, we hope, will join us in these efforts. Our Members would welcome it.

We have come a long way from the start of COVID, but we still have more to do. Democrats' goals are to make sure that the job creation and wage increases of last year carry into this year. We are going to keep working on that this spring, and I hope to see our colleagues from the other side work with us to improve the lives of the American people. If we can keep wages growing and get costs down, the average American will have more money in his or her pocket to live a better life.

FURTHER ADDITIONAL EXTENDING GOVERNMENT FUNDING ACT

Mr. President, on the CR, soon our Republican colleagues must come to an agreement with Democrats for passing a continuing resolution to keep the government open until March 11. This extension is necessary in order to give appropriators more time to arrive at an omnibus.

On the one hand, bipartisan negotiations on a yearlong spending bill continue to go well—a credit to everyone working on this issue from both sides of the aisle. I thank Chairman LEAHY, Ranking Member SHELBY, and my House colleagues.

On the other hand, right now, the thing we must do—the responsible thing to do—is to pass the CR before the deadline on Friday. Democrats are united in approving it just as it was approved with great bipartisan support in the House.

Nobody here wants a Republican government shutdown. I dare say Republicans prefer not to have a Republican shutdown, but for that to happen, Republicans must keep working with us on an agreement to move quickly on a CR. Democrats are working in good faith to reach a time agreement soon with our Republican colleagues. There is every reason in the world to arrive at an agreement quickly, so I urge my colleagues on the other side to keep working with us to get there.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on nominations, later today, the Senate is scheduled to advance and confirm a pair of critical Department of Defense nominees.

One of them is Celeste Wallander, nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. A veteran of the National Security Council, Ms. Wallander is one of our country's top Russian experts and a deeply experienced foreign policy adviser.

As tensions persist in Eastern Europe, Ms. Wallander's expertise is urgently needed, and her nomination must be approved as soon as possible. Frankly, it should have happened weeks ago, the moment she was reported out of committee with support from both sides, but Ms. Wallander has remained on hold because one Member of this body—just one Republican—has objected to her swift passage.

Intentionally delaying the confirmation of a qualified expert on Russian affairs at a time like this is supremely reckless and is making the American people less safe. For a Member of the Senate to insist on this hold is a clear risk to our national security, and it only serves to undermine our defense efforts. It is unacceptable and the definition of ''cynical.''

Let me say it again.

To intentionally delay the confirmation of a critical Department of Defense nominee and a Russian expert at a time when tensions persist in Ukraine and Eastern Europe is supremely reckless and is making the American people less safe.

But while this nominee has been delayed, she will nonetheless be confirmed by this Chamber. The vast majority of Senators understand that certain nominees are out of bounds from typical partisan politics. So we are going to do our jobs and confirm this nominee. As long as Republican holds continue on a vast number of other important nominations, the Senate will keep voting as long as it takes to get them through the Chamber. If it means voting late, as we have done in recent weeks, then that is what we must do.

I will return later to join with my colleagues to speak further on increasingly reckless holds—holds that damage our security, both domestic and national—that we are seeing on the other side.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are currently in the midst of the worst border crisis in our Nation's history.

It is no exaggeration to say that the situation at our southern border is out of control. In December, U.S. Customs and Border Protection apprehended more than 178,000 individuals attempting to cross our southern border illegally—178,000 in 1 month—which is more than double the number of individuals apprehended by the Border Patrol the previous December.

This is no isolated incident. Almost from the day the President took office, our Nation has been experiencing an unprecedented border surge. In fiscal year 2021, the Border Patrol encountered more than 1.7 million individuals attempting to cross our southern border—the highest number ever recorded.

The situation at our southern border is a security, enforcement, and humanitarian nightmare. Our Border Patrol officers have done heroic work this past year, but they are stretched incredibly thin and are having to spend too much time caring for migrants and not enough time patrolling the border. This heightens the chance that dangerous individuals—from terrorists to drug smugglers, to human traffickers—will slip across the border into the country unnoticed.

Drug trafficking across our southern border is a major problem and a problem that affects our entire country. There is a massive increase of fentanyl being smuggled across the border in States around the country, with total seizures up 134 percent and as high as 1,000 percent in South Texas. Alarmingly, fentanyl overdoses are now the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45.

I have talked with local law enforcement officials in South Dakota who report that they regularly seize drugs that they can trace back to cartels trafficking them across our southern border. In other words, it is not just border States that are affected by security problems at our borders. Every State in our Union is threatened by lax border security.

Addressing the situation at our southern border should be one of this administration's top priorities, but the President has been almost completely AWOL on this issue, as has his supposed border czar, the Vice President. He seems to be hoping that if he ignores this crisis long enough, it will go away. But it hasn't gone away. In fact, it shows no signs of stopping.

It is hard to overemphasize the depth of the President's dereliction of duty on this issue. After all, it is the President's job to deal with national security and border enforcement. Yet the President continues to do essentially nothing to address the situation at our southern border. He can't even be bothered to visit the border. In fact, there is reason to believe that the President has never, never visited the border—not as President, not as Vice President, and not even as a Senator—beyond driving by it once on the way to a campaign rally in 2008.

Of course, this situation isn't just a matter of the President being derelict in his enforcement duties. The President is partly, if not largely, responsible for the existence of this situation in the first place.

Immediately upon taking office, the President took steps that weakened our Nation's border security. On his very first day in office, the President rescinded the declaration of a national emergency at our southern border. He halted construction of the border wall, and he revoked a Trump administration order that called for the government to faithfully execute our immigration laws. That was all on his first day, and that wasn't all.

The President's Department of Homeland Security also issued guidelines that same day pausing deportations except under certain conditions. The effect of all this was to declare to the world that the U.S. borders were effectively open, and the administration hasn't made much of an effort to correct that impression. The President has significantly limited the ability of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection to enforce immigration laws.

Deportations dropped precipitously during fiscal year 2021, as did arrests in the interior of the country. And, of course, having a President who seems untroubled by the massive number of migrants attempting to cross our borders illegally hardly sends a discouraging message to those contemplating making the crossing themselves.

There is simply nothing good to say about President Biden's record on the border so far. His policies are not compassionate. There is nothing compassionate about policies that invite illegal immigration and encourage individuals to undertake the dangerous journey to our southern border.

He has betrayed the duty he owes to the American people who should be able to count on their President to care about security concerns, including border security.

We just marked the anniversary of the President's first year in the White House, a year marked by disaster at our southern border. The President has a chance to change that record, to leave behind something other than border chaos to mark his time in office. But until we see real action from this administration, I am not going to get my hopes up.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RUSSIA

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, as I speak here today, Russian President Vladimir Putin has amassed 130,000 to 150,000 soldiers on Ukraine's doorstep in a show of force that could be a dress rehearsal for an invasion of Ukraine. But Putin's inventory of tanks, infantry, and missiles is enabled by another dangerous weapon: Russia's export of dirty energy, oil and gas.

Our global addiction to fossil fuels, an addiction which Russia is only too happy to exploit, is kindling this potential conflict. Without a worldwide clean energy revolution, we will never be able to quit this cycle of fossil fuel corruption and conflict. We will never be able to experience true independence from foreign interference. And we will never be able to protect our friends and our allies or ourselves from wars spurred by dirty energy profits.

As long as Vladimir Putin can wield natural gas and oil as a threat against our country and our European allies and partners, we will always be on the defense. As long as Putin can wield gas prices and oil prices as a cudgel to remake borders, these crises will become a repeating drumbeat on the battlefield of history. As long as Putin can rely on global economic systems that are dominated by dirty fossil fuels instead of clean renewable energy, we will all remain vulnerable.

The most effective way to reduce the long-term security threat to Ukraine and to Europe and to sovereign nations everywhere is to stop the spigot that puts billions of Euros and dollars into the hands of Vladimir Putin and his oligarch cronies in return for dirty fuels.

In 2021, more than 36 percent of Russia's Federal budget revenues came

from oil and gas sales. This could fund annual Russian military activities more than twice over.

The United States itself participates in these dirty profits. Seven percent of our oil imports come from Russia. We send billions of dollars a year to Putin, to those oil giants in Russia. We do it ourselves.

Since 2015, Russia has used these oil and gas revenues to expand its currency reserves to $631 billion, the fourth largest reserve in the world.

Why does this matter? Because the massive revenue chest dilutes the impact of nonmilitary options to respond to Russia's aggression.

President Joe Biden is right to seek a diplomatic off-ramp to the current crisis over Ukraine. This crisis has no military solution, but a long-term solution has to include a comprehensive strategy that ends the globe's deadly addiction to Russian fossil fuels. That strategy will only happen through an American-led clean energy revolution that frees the West from dependence on Putin's pipelines.

Many of my Republican colleagues think that the only way to address energy security is by building more pipelines or drilling for more oil and gas. That is just plain wrong. Instead of doubling down on investments that align with Russia's dirty energy business model, we must lean into the innovation of clean energy technologies to fight against Russia. That is our competitive and strategic edge. Their vulnerability is that we are the technological giant of the planet, but we have to act like that and implement policies that reflect the fact that we are the technological giant.

My Republican colleagues often come to the floor and attribute their fealty to oil and gas as a quest for energy security and independence when we know their calls for more domestic drilling are nothing more than a ploy for profits by the Big Oil companies. While families and workers are getting tipped upside down at the gasoline pump every single day, oil companies are stuffing billions into their pockets. Exxon, Conoco, and Chevron made more than $45 billion in profits last year as gas prices increased by more than 40 percent.

Republicans call these price increases ''supply constraints'' and incorrectly blame President Biden's energy policies. But here are the actual facts: Daily domestic oil production remained constant between 2020 and 2021, at 12 million barrels of oil a day. We are producing as much today in the Biden administration as we were producing during the Trump administration. So I just don't want to continue to hear this from the Republican side. What they are saying is not true.

Here are some more facts that the American Petroleum Institute, or the ''American Prevarication Institute,'' and my Republican colleagues seem to omit: In 2021, 3 million of those 12 million barrels were exported to foreign countries.

Let me say that again. Of the 12 million barrels of oil that we actually drilled for here in the United States, 3 million of those barrels were exported around the world.

Who wanted to export those barrels of oil? The American Petroleum Institute. And we are exporting them abroad because, in 2015, Republicans voted to end the decades-long export ban on sending oil overseas. It was their votes that paved the way to send American oil overseas. It was their votes that aligned with the American Petroleum Institute that results today in 3 million barrels of oil a day leaving the United States, as we see these crocodile tears about oil imports and exports from the American Petroleum Institute, from the Republican Party.

So you can't say, out of one side of your mouth, ''energy independence'' but, out of the other side, ''export, baby, export.'' That is what the Republican Party has stood for; that is what the American Petroleum Institute advocated for and got as a new American policy after four decades, in 2015. And the more oil we drill for here at home, the more likely Big Oil will sell American consumers out to the highest bidder abroad for our oil.

Republicans owe Americans at the pump an apology for putting us in this situation. We cannot support a business model where Big Oil drills for energy in the United States, only to sell that product to China at the expense of the American consumer.

In November of 2020, I requested a Federal report that revealed that the repeal of the 2015 crude oil export ban increased U.S. crude exports—while imports remained largely unchanged—and resulted in higher oil costs.

The first step to true energy independence is to reinstate the ban on exporting American crude oil and natural gas abroad. The other step must be equally aggressive: aggressive investments in clean energy, in wind, in solar, in all-electric vehicles, in battery storage technologies, in new metals, new inventions, so that we don't have to import that oil from Russia or from any other place in the world, so that we can break our addiction to the Russian oil that comes into our country right now, even as we speak on the floor of the U.S. Senate, because that hurts American working families. It hurts vulnerable communities in our country.

Our fossil fuel addiction is a catalyst for conflict. A clean energy Green New Deal would be a pathway for peace. The position of my Republican colleagues represents the kind of short-term thinking that will harm our long-term national security, the security of our European partners and allies, and the health of our planet.

If we export more American natural gas to our allies in Europe, fuel prices would increase for American consumers and the Russian Government would continue to profit by simply redirecting its fossil fuel supply to Asia. Putin would still be able to use his oil and natural gas revenue to threaten the sovereignty of free and democratic countries. And as a top three oil and natural gas producer, Russia will continue to have significant influence on energy supply and pricing as long as there continues to be global demand for its oil and gas exports, whether that demand is Eastern Asia or Eastern Europe.

This is not theoretical. Just last week, Russia and China inked a 30-year deal through which Russia will send natural gas worth $80 billion a year to China. In addition to whom Russia sells its oil and gas, we must start focusing on why Russia has a market for its oil and gas in the first place.

This is a demand-side problem. Let's demand some answers. If we are serious about addressing fossil fuel demand, let's switch to clean energy and make smart investments in electric transportation. We don't need more gas pumps; we need more heat pumps for heating and cooling. We don't need more pipelines; we need more transmission lines to deliver safe, secure, and reliable clean energy. And we don't need more mass destruction; we need mass construction of clean, industrial facilities, clean manufacturing, clean cars here in the United States and worldwide.

If we are serious about ending Russia's oil and natural gas blackmail, we should invest in energy-efficient technologies that get us off the fossil fuel that threatens our planet and threatens the security of Europe. We need to build electric cars and trucks so Americans and Europeans will never again be at the mercy of global energy markets led by Russia and OPEC.

We need to build electric heat pumps so our European allies no longer have to rely on Putin's natural gas to heat their homes in the winter.

And we need to build clean energy manufacturing facilities here in the United States so that we can export clean energy technologies to Europe and create jobs here at home. We need to make the wind turbines here in the United States. We need to make the solar panels here in the United States. We need to make the battery technologies here in the United States. We need to make the all-electric vehicles here in the United States. That has to be our plan.

That will frighten Putin. That will frighten all of the rest of his petrol buddies right now having a little confab in Sochi. That will frighten him. But we cannot preach temperance from a barstool. So the United States must lead our European allies in the clean energy revolution to protect us all from Russia, yes, but also from the existential threat of climate change caused by dirty fuels.

If the United States leads with government investment in clean energy, we will drive down the cost curve for these clean energy technologies and spread this widespread adoption in the United States and Europe and across the planet.

Just look at the power that clean energy already has in our country. The clean energy sector was one of the Nation's fastest growing job sectors.

Solar jobs: In 2010, we had 93,000 workers. By now, we have 345,000.

Wind jobs: In 2010, 75,000 employees. By 2020, up to 114,000.

Energy efficiency jobs: 830,000 in 2010. Now, it is up to 2.1 million people working in energy efficiency in our country.

That worker power is matched by actual power. Just listen to these generation achievements. We have gone from 1,200 megawatts of solar in 2008 to 120,000 megawatts today.

For wind, it has gone from 25,000 to 143,000 megawatts. All-electric vehicles—there were only 2,500 all-electric vehicles in the United States in 2008. That was a crime, that we had fallen so far behind, that the auto industry in the United States just sat down on the job, but by 2030, we are now expecting 18 million new jobs—18 million new electric vehicles on the streets of our country.

This is America's strength. This is where we can dominate the world—the clean energy economy. We will not free ourselves from Putin's energy clutches by staring down the dark barrel of a gun but by harnessing the clean energy of the Sun.

If Vladimir Putin's market for fossil fuel shrinks, so does his ability to finance threats and sow division around the world. In order to defuse tensions around Europe, we need a revolution—a clean energy revolution.

Our wind turbines are weapons against Russia's pipelines. Our solar panels are shields against Siberian oil. Together with the EU's European Green Deal, that is how we will fight and win the clean energy revolution that will finally disarm Putin's dirty regime.

Our first step is to pass the climate justice and clean energy provisions from the Build Back Better bill. That $555 billion investment includes tax credits and rebates in clean energy, heat pumps, all-electric vehicles, advanced domestic manufacturing, wind and solar, which will be made in America. A clean economy will be created.

Those credits are coupled with a technology-neutral climate and clean energy bank that will help finance the clean economy and a Civilian Climate Corps, which will train the next generation of young people and workers to bring jobs and justice to our local communities.

We need to deploy one of our greatest assets against Putin: American ingenuity and the American workers, a well-trained, well-paid battalion of American workers who will build our clean energy revolution with jobs that cannot be outsourced. This clean energy revolution is worth fighting for, and I know we can do it.

Now we need to build on the past 12 years of domestic clean energy success and help build European economies that no longer have to rely on Vladimir Putin to heat their homes and power their cars.

The United States imports Russian oil. Europe imports Russian gas. What if, instead, we exported climate innovation and leadership to the world? That is the clean energy revolution that could stem the possibility of war and climate catastrophe.

We don't need Russia's oil any more than we need Russia's caviar if we are serious in our country. We need a new NATO that comes together and forges an alliance to deploy all-electric vehicles, to deploy wind and solar, so we back out the oil and gas—not only in Europe, not only in the United States, but all around the world—that we use.

This is our moment. We have a chance here in the U.S. Senate to respond. But I don't want to hear anything more from the American Petroleum Institute—the ''American Prevarication Institute.'' Their policies are the ones that we are living with today. Those are the policies that must change. That is the only way in which we can meet this healthcare, environmental, national security, and moral issue of all time. If we do it, generations in the future will look back and say that we responded to that challenge.

I yield the floor.

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

SUPER BOWL LVI

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, like many Americans, Nebraskans were rooting for the Bengals on Sunday. Everyone loves a good underdog story. The Bengals hadn't won a playoff game in more than 30 years until this season, and they were effectively the visiting team in a Super Bowl that was played in Los Angeles against the L.A. Rams.

Outside of Ohio, Nebraska may have more connection to the Bengals than any other State. To start, Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow has deep roots in Nebraska. Both of his brothers, Jamie and Dan, played for the Huskers in the early 2000s. His mom Robin grew up in Tecumseh, NE, and Burrow has uncles and other relatives scattered around southeast Nebraska.

His grandfather Wayne is a farmer in Johnson County. Wayne has watched every Super Bowl for 56 years, going back to Super Bowl I in 1967. This year was the first time he has attended the big game in person to cheer on his grandson and the Bengals.

Maybe best of all, Joe Burrow's dad played for the Nebraska Huskers in the seventies before going on to a career in the NFL and the Canadian Football League. Later, as an assistant coach, he was part of the Husker team that took on No. 1 Miami in the 2002 Rose Bowl. Husker football fans remember that game as the last time Nebraska has played for a national championship—not good. Five-year-old Joe Burrow was there in Pasadena to support his dad, making Sunday's Super Bowl the second time he has traveled to L.A. for a national title game.

Even by themselves, Joe Burrow's Nebraska connections would have been enough to make Husker Nation pull for the Bengals, but Bengals Coach Zac Taylor is another reason that Nebraskans were with Cincinnati on Sunday. He was the Huskers' starting quarterback for the 2005 and 2006 seasons, throwing for nearly 6,000 yards and 45 touchdowns. He was also the last Cornhusker to win the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year Award.

He credits his success as a player to Nebraska's coach at the time, Bill Callahan. Now, he has Brian Callahan, Bill's son, on his staff as his offensive coordinator. Troy Walters, the Bengals' wide receivers coach, was Nebraska's offensive coordinator from 2017 to 2019.

Another Bengals player with Nebraska ties is Stanley Morgan. He signed with the Bengals in 2019 after a stellar college career with the Huskers, and he is easily one of the best receivers in Husker football history. Morgan rewrote Nebraska's wide receiver record books from 2015 to 2018. He holds the record for career receptions and receiving yards and also for single-season receiving yards. With that last record, he eclipsed the previous total Nebraska football legend Johnny Rodgers set on his way to winning the Heisman Trophy in 1972. Now Morgan has a bright future ahead of him in the NFL.

Nebraska's connections to this Bengals team is strong. The team came up just short on Sunday, but Nebraskans are proud of what they accomplished this season. Joe Burrow and Zac Taylor led this team of underdogs to a game no one expected to see them in, and they ended the longest active playoffs drought in the NFL while they were at it.

Things are looking up for this Nebraska-led team. I look forward to seeing them in the playoffs again next year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to finish my remarks prior to the scheduled vote at 11:30.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, at the end of this month, the U.S. Supreme Court is slated to hear oral arguments in the case of West Virginia v. EPA, in which the Justices will consider the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. The stakes could not be higher. This case will have lasting impacts in Maryland, the Nation, and the planet.

As we follow the science and work to mitigate the damaging impacts of climate change, it is imperative that the Court respect EPA's authority, which

Congress granted, to regulate greenhouse gas emissions to protect public health and the environment.

I would like to take a moment to consider where we are and how we got here.

At issue in the case is the question of whether EPA acted outside of its statutory authority when it promulgated in 2015 the Clean Power Plan, the CPP, which established guidelines for States to limit carbon dioxide emissions from powerplants. The Trump administration repealed the CPP and issued in its place the Affordable Clean Energy rule, which eliminated or deferred the guidelines. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit vacated the Affordable Clean Energy rule as arbitrary and capricious.

One of the challengers, North American Coal Corporation, challenged how broad the EPA's authority is to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

Notably, the Clean Power Plan was never implemented. Yet several of the parties challenging the plan are asking the Supreme Court to issue a decision far beyond whether the CPP constitutes a reasonable interpretation of section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act. The challengers have put forth interpretations of two legal doctrines—the nondelegation and major questions doctrines—that could, if adopted, strip EPA of its authority to regulate greenhouse gases entirely.

The Supreme Court has spoken on the Clean Air Act. In 2007, in Massachusetts v. EPA, a Supreme Court decision ruled that EPA has the authority to regulate heat-trapping gases in vehicle emissions. The majority found that the Agency could not sidestep its authority to regulate greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change unless it could prove a scientific basis for its refusal. There is none.

The same year, in Environmental Defense v. Duke Energy, the Court ruled unanimously with regards to the EPA's authority to regulate factories and powerplants that add capacity or make renovations that increase emissions of air pollutants.

In the current case of West Virginia v. EPA, I joined Chairman CARPER's amicus brief with nearly 200 Members of Congress. The brief illustrates EPA's authority under the Clean Air Act to protect the public from harmful pollution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and address the climate crisis. It also rejects arguments made by the petitioners challenging the EPA's authority to address carbon pollution. It is among a notable number of briefs filed in this case, many citing my home State of Maryland.

In their brief in support of the respondents, climate scientists observe that heavy rain and snowstorms across most of the United States have increased in both intensity and frequency since 2001. The Northeast region also faces flooding, particularly in the historic districts of cities like Annapolis, MD—home to the U.S. Naval Academy—and Newport, RI, as well as portions of Washington, DC, near the Tidal Basin. For example, human-caused climate change made the exceptionally heavy precipitation and flooding events that occurred in 2018 in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Washington, DC, up to 2.3 times more likely.

The Washington Post reported that more than 40 percent of Americans live in counties hit by climate-related disasters in 2021, including three in Maryland: St. Mary's County and Calvert County in Southern Maryland and Dorchester County along Maryland's Eastern Shore. According to FEMA data, each suffered declared disasters spawned by hurricanes.

Because of the vulnerability in my home State, I took direct action in 2019. I was proud to lead an effort with over 20 of my colleagues in a joint resolution providing for the congressional disapproval of the Trump administration's repeal of the Clean Power Plan.

Maryland is at risk not only to extreme weather events but also to slow-onset climate impacts that are equally damaging.

The National Parks Conservation Association in its brief remarks on Maryland's cultural history:

> The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park is located in . . . Maryland. The approximate elevation of the park is a mere three feet above sea level and is surrounded by the inlets of the Chesapeake Bay. Viewed another way, 3 feet is half the depth of one-quarter of the bay.
>
> As water levels continue to rise, this national historic park may be permanently lost.

The National Park Conservation Association's brief discusses the obligations Congress conferred on EPA to protect public lands and their resources.

On February 15, NOAA announced the interagency ''Sea Level Rise Technical Report,'' which provides the most up-to-date sea level rise scenarios, available for all U.S. States and territories. The report projects sea levels along the coastline will rise an additional 10 to 12 inches by 2050, with specific amounts varying regionally, mainly due to land height changes.

This effort is a product of the interagency Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flood Hazard and Tool Task Force, comprised of NOAA, NASA, EPA, USGS, Department of Defense, FEMA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as several academic institutions. The report leverages methods and insights from both the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ''Sixth Assessment Report'' and supporting research from the U.S. Department of Defense regional sea level database. The report tells us that the United States is expected to experience as much sea level rise by the year 2050 as it witnessed in the previous 100 years, and it must serve as a wake-up call.

Maryland's urban and suburban centers, in addition to our rural communities and coasts, are in danger. The National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors in their brief state that Baltimore, MD, as well as other major cities, including Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and Boston, have all experienced significant increases in exposure to wildfire smoke that prevailing winds carry across the country.

State and local governments are taking action. In their brief, the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors cite that in 2013, ''Baltimore developed comprehensive responses—touching infrastructure, building codes, natural coastal barriers, and public services—to threats from rising seas, heat waves, and storms. [In central Maryland], Annapolis developed a first-in-the-nation Cultural Resources Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2018 to mitigate climate impacts on important cultural and historical landmarks, and the Eastern Shore Climate Adaptation Partnership has brought together local governments from across the Eastern Shore to prepare for climate impacts.''

Private companies, too, are among subnational actors that are all-in on climate. Maryland's McCormick & Company has set a new, more ambitious goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions 42 percent by 2030, after achieving its prior target of 20 percent by 2025—4 years earlier than expected. The spice manufacturer and Fortune 500 company has also announced a new commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, in line with the enhanced U.S. National Determined Contribution Secretary Kerry delivered ahead of the COP26 meeting that occurred last year. But the company cannot mitigate climate change alone. The Federal Government must support it. The Clean Air Act is an essential tool by which we do so.

Through the Build Back Better agenda and elsewhere, Congress is taking an all-of-the-above strategy to combat climate change, complemented by the Biden administration's whole-of-government approach.

I am proud that the draft Senate Environment and Public Works Committee title to fulfill reconciliation instructions includes funding legislation to make Federal buildings greener. But more is needed. The legislation also includes funding for water utilities to enhance their resilience to natural hazards as authorized by the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The Supreme Court must tread carefully in curtailing any specific tool, including the Clean Air Act, and must not intercede where legislative efforts to curb EPA's authority have failed. Conversely, we must continue to pursue as many avenues as possible to deal with the climate crisis.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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. 692, Celeste Ann Wallander, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Joe Manchin III, Catherine Cortez Masto, Debbie Stabenow, Tammy Baldwin, Christopher Murphy, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tammy Duckworth, Jeanne Shaheen, Michael F. Bennet, Tina Smith, Brian Schatz, Mark R. Warner, Richard J. Durbin.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Celeste Ann Wallander, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 81, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 56 Ex.]

YEAS—81

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Barrasso	Hassan	Risch
Bennet	Heinrich	Romney
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blunt	Hirono	Rounds
Booker	Hoeven	Rubio
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Brown	Inhofe	Schatz
Burr	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Capito	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shelby
Carper	Leahy	Sinema
Casey	Manchin	Smith
Cassidy	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	Marshall	Sullivan
Coons	McConnell	Tester
Cornyn	Menendez	Thune
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Tillis
Cotton	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Cramer	Murphy	Warner
Crapo	Murray	Warnock
Daines	Ossoff	Warren
Duckworth	Padilla	Whitehouse
Durbin	Paul	Wicker
Fischer	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Portman	Young

NAYS—13

Blackburn	Hawley	Moran
Braun	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Lankford	Tuberville
Ernst	Lee	
Hagerty	Lummis	

NOT VOTING—6

Feinstein	Kelly	Sanders
Graham	Luján	Toomey

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 81, the nays 13.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 476, David A. Honey, of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Richard Blumenthal, Catherine Cortez Masto, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jacky Rosen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Benjamin L. Cardin, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Gary C. Peters, Chris Van Hollen.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of David A. Honey, of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 93, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Ex.]

YEAS—93

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

NAYS—3

Blackburn	Hawley	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—4

Feinstein	Kelly
Graham	Luján

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 93, the nays are 3.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David A. Honey, of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD NOMINATIONS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this is a pivotal moment for our country and for our economy. Everyone understands we need a full Federal Reserve Board. Once we move the President's nominees and get them confirmed and get them sworn in, it will be the first time in nearly a decade that the Federal Reserve has had a full complement of seven Fed Governors. That is especially important with the upcoming meeting of the Federal Reserve in March because the Fed's job is to tackle inflation and bring prices down for American families.

It is a pretty simple equation. The President nominates. I mean, it didn't happen in the last few years, but the President nominates. We have hearings. We ask some questions. We send them followup questions. The nominees answer these questions. That is how this place works. That is a good thing about this place.

Then we call the vote in committee, and we vote yes or no. The job is vote yes or vote no and hope your side prevails.

And that is what Americans think we should do. Every day Americans get up, go to work, and do their jobs. But Senate Republicans didn't do theirs yesterday.

We had our markup, a meeting to confirm five—just five—nominees for the Federal Reserve. The Chair of the Federal Reserve, appointed originally by President Trump, has been renominated by President Biden. His nomination we were voting on; the Vice Chair, Lael Brainard, who has been on the Fed some time; and then three new Fed slots that have been vacant for some time: Sarah Bloom Raskin, who would be Vice Chair of Supervision, a very important job at the Fed; and the other two, also important jobs, Lisa Cook and Philip Jefferson. All five of these nominations we wanted to vote on yesterday.

Three weeks ago, Senator TOOMEY, the leading Republican on the committee, he and I agreed it would be yesterday; that the vote would be yesterday and we would meet at 2:15 and vote them up or down. And everybody—all 14 of us get a vote.

Well, under Senate rules, if one party doesn't want to play ball, they don't

show up, and we can't do business. So all 12 Democrats showed up. We wanted to vote. We actually took an informal vote, which passed 12 to 0, for essentially all six of them. There was one ''no'' on one of them. But Republicans didn't show up.

So, as I said, Americans every day get up, go to work, and do their jobs. They expect us to get up every day, go to work, and do our jobs. But Republicans are AWOL in the fight against inflation. If we are going to get serious about inflation, we need a Federal Reserve in place. We need all seven Fed Governors in place, ready to work, ready to debate and make decisions about monetary policy, about interest rates, about jobs, about attacking inflation.

Americans—in Boulder or Denver or Cleveland or Columbus, Americans don't want more political theatrics. They want solutions to bring down their costs. And Republicans, they have been great at coming to the floor and speaking against inflation. They have got their political stunts. But when it really came time to show up and do their job, they just simply didn't show up yesterday to do their jobs. All 12 Democrats were there ready to go. All 12 of us wanted to move forward on these 5 nominations for the Federal Reserve, and under Senate rules we simply couldn't act officially to get this done.

So I know that the ranking member—I understand he doesn't want to do this for whatever reasons. He doesn't like her position on climate change. He doesn't like it that she is going to—the one he is complaining most about, he doesn't like it that she is going to stand up to Wall Street and not roll over for Wall Street every time Wall Street, you know, rattles the Fed's chains. He knows that, and he probably doesn't like that, but he is hanging his hat on some issue that really makes very little sense.

Sarah Bloom Raskin, the person whom he is most complaining about, over a weekend, had 48 hours to answer more than 180 questions from Senator TOOMEY and his colleagues. She answered them all in 48 hours. Then, even outside of the Senate rules, more questions were sent to her. She answered those questions.

So it is really about the fact that far too many people here pay far too much attention to the oil company lobby, but that is really neither here nor there. Everyday Americans, as I say, get up, go to work, do their jobs. Senate Republicans must do theirs.

Pure and simple, Republicans are AWOL in the fight against inflation. We are not going to stop fighting for these nominees. The American people want us to vote. Some people vote yes, some no. I am fine with that. But the American people want us to do our jobs.

When you come here, there aren't three boxes: vote yes, vote no, or check a box that says: I don't want to come to work today; I am not going to vote.

No, they want us to vote. So we will keep fighting for these nominees.

I implore at least 1 Republican of the 12 on the committee to come to our next markup, our next vote, our next executive session so we can vote on these nominees. I want the Federal Reserve, for the first time in a decade, to all be there pulling in the same direction, fighting inflation for our country.

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

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

HEALTH CARE FOR BURN PIT VETERANS ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon here on the Senate floor to mark what will soon be the passage, in just a matter of moments, of a vital veterans bill and to thank my colleagues—both Republicans and Democrats—who came together to support the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act. This is an important bill, and it will remove hurdles for post-9/11 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, in particular, who were exposed to burn pits, so they can receive healthcare from the VA without delay.

This legislation is cosponsored by every single member of the Senate VA Committee, and I commend each of my Senate colleagues in their support for this legislation.

Supporting our veterans has a way of bringing us together, and I am so glad that is true. I am on the floor this afternoon with the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, and I appreciate how he and my Senate colleagues understand the urgency of this bill and are quickly moving to pass it by unanimous consent.

Post-9/11 veterans are the newest generation of American heroes to suffer from toxic exposure encountered during military service; and passing this legislation marks just a first step—a first step—of a phased approach to solving the complex challenges of caring for those veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic exposures.

For way too long, we have heard from veterans who got sick after exposure to burn pits and need lifesaving care. There is a bipartisan consensus on our committee that this phased approach—delivering healthcare now and reforming the benefit system next—is the most effective pathway forward for toxic exposure veterans and all other veterans as well.

Servicemembers are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. We know that. We respect that. We honor that. We must match that level of commitment by crafting thoughtful and effective solutions to make certain we hold up our end of the bargain and continuously work toward the best outcomes for those who served and sacrificed.

I once joined a roundtable in Wichita, KS, with local members of the Vietnam Veterans of America and was moved by their stories—not only of their own health consequences from Agent Orange but their concerns of how their exposure was affecting the health of their children and grandchildren. From that veteran feedback, I introduced the Toxic Exposure Research Act with Senator BLUMENTHAL, which was signed into law in 2016.

I have since heard from many veterans in Kansas and across the country who are sick and dying from the effects of toxic exposure caused by burn pits. Addressing the needs of veterans exposed to burn pits cannot wait. This legislation could be lifesaving for those exposed or suffering. When our men and women in uniform go into harm's way on our behalf, we owe it to them to take care of them when they come home for whatever injuries are incurred during their service. This is not a question of resources; this is a question of getting reform done the right way.

The Senate soon will act to pass this bill, moving us closer to completing phase 1 of this approach to provide timely, sustainable care to our veterans. I will continue to work with veterans, advocates in the VA, and, importantly, my colleagues on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and its chairman, Senator TESTER, of Montana, to make sure we are crafting legislative solutions that are veteran-centric.

I call upon my colleagues in the House to quickly take action and act on this bill and act on our promise as a nation so post-9/11 veterans who are suffering from toxic exposures can get the care they need.

I thank my colleagues on the committee, Chairman TESTER, and our respective staffs for working to craft this feasible path forward. And I want to thank many veteran organizations that have expressed their support for this legislation, including the Disabled Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Wounded Warrior Project, Iraq and American Veterans of America, the American Legion, Military Officers Association of America, and Military-Veterans Advocacy.

I am confident that if we continue to work together with the VA and with veterans' groups, we will keep the needs of veterans foremost in our minds and that we can deliver meaningful reforms for the current generation of veterans and for all those who come thereafter.

I yield the floor to the Senator from Montana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend, the Senator from Kansas, Senator MORAN, the ranking

member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

When we started this Congress, the No. 1 issue that was put forth by the veterans service organizations representing the veterans in this country was toxic exposure. It was incumbent that the Veterans' Affairs Committee do something about toxic exposure. We created the bill called the COST of War.

We are at a point now where we are going to try to implement that bill in phases. The phase we are working on today has six major components to it. No. 1, it expands the screening period of healthcare eligibility for combat veterans who served after September 11, 2001, from 5 years to 10. No. 2, it provides an open enrollment period for any post-9/11 combat veteran who is more than 10 years from separation. No. 3, after we do the first two things, it tells the VA to have an outreach plan to contact veterans who did not enroll during their initial period of enhanced eligibility so that they can sign up for the potential benefits. It directs the VA to incorporate a clinical screening regarding a veteran's potential exposures and symptoms commonly associated with toxic substances. The fifth thing it does is it mandates toxic exposure early education and training for healthcare and benefits personnel who work at the VA. And, finally, it strengthens Federal research on toxic exposure.

This is a big bill; it is an important bill; and it does right by our veterans in this country. Toxic exposure is not something that is new. We have dealt with it since World War I, World War II, Agent Orange, and the Vietnam war, and, right now, toxic exposure due to burn pits.

When we get done with this process, it is not going to take an act of Congress to get the benefits they need to get moving into the future. This is a giant step forward in that regard.

So I want to thank both the minority and majority staffs, the Senator from Kansas, who has been an incredible help to be able to work together to get this to the point where it is today.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 263, S. 3541.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3541) to improve health care and services for veterans exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. TESTER. 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 be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. TESTER. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate on the bill, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 3541) was passed as follows:

S. 3541

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act''.

SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking ''January 27, 2003'' and inserting ''September 11, 2001''; and

(B) by striking ''five-year period'' and inserting ''ten-year period'';

(2) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

''(B) With respect to a veteran described in paragraph (1)(D) who was discharged or released from the active military, naval, air, or space service after September 11, 2001, and before October 1, 2013, but did not enroll to receive such hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care under such paragraph pursuant to subparagraph (A) before October 1, 2022, the one-year period beginning on October 1, 2022.''; and

(3) by striking subparagraph (C).

(b) CLARIFICATION OF COVERAGE.—Section 1710(e)(1)(D) of such title is amended by inserting after ''Persian Gulf War'' the following: ''(to include any veteran who, in connection with service during such period, received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Service Specific Expeditionary Medal, Combat Era Specific Expeditionary Medal, Campaign Specific Medal, or any other combat theater award established by a Federal statute or an Executive Order)''.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 2024, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on—

(1) the number of veterans who enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, to receive care pursuant to eligibility under subparagraph (B) of section 1710(e)(3) of such title, as amended by subsection (a)(2); and

(2) of the veterans described in paragraph (1), the number of such veterans who reported a health concern related to exposure to a toxic substance or radiation.

(d) OUTREACH PLAN.—Not later than December 1, 2022, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a plan to conduct outreach to veterans described in subparagraph (B) of section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(2), to notify such veterans of their eligibility for hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care under such subparagraph.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2022.

SEC. 3. INCORPORATION OF TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall incorporate a screening to help determine potential exposures to toxic substances during active military, naval, air, or space service as part of a health care screening furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department established and operated under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, to improve understanding by the Department of exposures of veterans to toxic substances while serving in the Armed Forces.

(b) TIMING.—The Secretary shall ensure that a veteran described in subsection (a) completes the screening required under such subsection not less frequently than once every five years.

(c) DETERMINATION OF QUESTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The questions included in the screening required under subsection (a) shall be determined by the Secretary with input from medical professionals.

(2) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.—At a minimum, the screening required under subsection (a) shall, with respect to a veteran, include—

(A) a question about the potential exposure of the veteran to an open burn pit; and

(B) a question regarding exposures that are commonly associated with service in the Armed Forces.

(3) OPEN BURN PIT DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''open burn pit'' means an area of land that—

(A) is designated by the Secretary of Defense to be used for disposing solid waste by burning in the outdoor air; and

(B) does not contain a commercially manufactured incinerator or other equipment specifically designed and manufactured for the burning of solid waste.

(d) PRINT MATERIAL.—In developing the screening established under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that print materials complementary to such screening that outline related resources for veterans are available at each medical center of the Department to veterans who may not have access to the internet.

(e) SCREENING UPDATES.—The Secretary shall consider updates to the content of the screening required under subsection (a) not less frequently than biennially to ensure the screening contains the most current information.

(f) ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, AIR, OR SPACE SERVICE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''active military, naval, air, or space service'' has the meaning given that term in section 101(24) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 4. TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT TO VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

(a) HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to health care personnel of the Department of Veterans Affairs education and training to identify, treat, and assess the impact on veterans of illnesses related to exposure to toxic substances and inform such personnel of how to ask for additional information from veterans regarding different exposures.

(b) BENEFITS PERSONNEL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall incorporate a training program for processors of claims under the laws administered by the Secretary who review claims for disability benefits relating to service-connected disabilities based on exposure to toxic substances.

(2) ANNUAL TRAINING.—Training provided to processors under paragraph (1) shall be provided not less frequently than annually.

SEC. 5. ANALYSIS AND REPORT ON TREATMENT OF VETERANS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO TOXIC EXPOSURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall analyze, on a continuous basis, all clinical data that—

(1) is obtained by the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care furnished under section 1710(a)(2)(F) of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) is likely to be scientifically useful in determining the association, if any, between the medical condition of a veteran and the exposure of the veteran to a toxic substance.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report containing—

(1) the aggregate data compiled under subsection (a);

(2) an analysis of such data;

(3) a description of the types and incidences of medical conditions identified by the Department under such subsection;

(4) the explanation of the Secretary for the incidence of such medical conditions and other explanations for the incidence of such conditions as the Secretary considers reasonable; and

(5) the views of the Secretary on the scientific validity of drawing conclusions from the incidence of such medical conditions, as evidenced by the data compiled under subsection (a), regarding any association between such conditions and exposure to a toxic substance.

SEC. 6. ANALYSIS RELATING TO MORTALITY OF VETERANS WHO SERVED IN SOUTHWEST ASIA.

(a) ANALYSIS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, shall conduct an updated analysis of total and respiratory disease mortality in covered veterans.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The analysis required by paragraph (1) shall include, to the extent practicable, the following with respect to each covered veteran:

(A) Metrics of airborne exposures.

(B) The location and timing of deployments of the veteran.

(C) The military occupational specialty of the veteran.

(D) The Armed Force in which the veteran served.

(E) Pre-existing health status of the veteran, including with respect to asthma.

(F) Relevant personal information of the veteran, including cigarette and e-cigarette smoking history, diet, sex, gender, age, race, and ethnicity.

(b) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered veteran'' means any veteran who—

(1) on or after August 2, 1990, served on active duty in—

(A) Bahrain;

(B) Iraq;

(C) Kuwait;

(D) Oman;

(E) Qatar;

(F) Saudi Arabia;

(G) Somalia; or

(H) the United Arab Emirates; or

(2) on or after September 11, 2001, served on active duty in—

(A) Afghanistan;

(B) Djibouti;

(C) Egypt;

(D) Jordan;

(E) Lebanon;

(F) Syria; or

(G) Yemen.

SEC. 7. STUDY ON HEALTH TRENDS OF POST 9/11 VETERANS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an epidemiological study on the health trends of veterans who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001.

SEC. 8. STUDY ON CANCER RATES AMONG VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the incidence of cancer in veterans to determine trends in the rates of the incidence of cancer in veterans.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study required by subsection (a) shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the study, the following:

(1) The age of the veteran.

(2) The period of service and length of service of the veteran in the Armed Forces.

(3) The military occupational specialty or specialties of the veteran.

(4) The gender of the veteran.

(5) The type or types of cancer that the veteran has.

SEC. 9. PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR SUCH VETERANS AND CAREGIVERS AND SURVIVORS OF SUCH VETERANS.

(a) PUBLICATION OF LIST OF RESOURCES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish a list of resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs for—

(A) veterans who were exposed to toxic substances;

(B) families and caregivers of such veterans; and

(C) survivors of such veterans who are receiving death benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(2) UPDATE.—The Secretary shall periodically update the list published under paragraph (1).

(b) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall develop, with input from the community, an informative outreach program for veterans on illnesses that may be related to exposure to toxic substances, including outreach with respect to benefits and support programs.

SEC. 10. REPORT ON INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date on which the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record achieves full operational capability, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the data quality of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record and the usefulness of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record in supporting veterans in receiving health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An identification of exposures to toxic substances that may not be fully captured by the current systems for environmental and occupational health monitoring and recommendations for how to improve those systems.

(2) An analysis of the quality of the location data in determining exposures of veterans to toxic substances and recommendations for how to improve the quality of that location data.

(3) Recommendations on how to improve the usefulness of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—The term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.—The term ''Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record'' includes any pilot program or other program used by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense to track how members of the Armed Forces or veterans have been exposed to various occupational or environmental hazards.

Mr. TESTER. 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.

Mr. TESTER. I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, it is important, I think, that we acknowledge a very simple truth that few people can disagree with and that is we are living at this moment in the most difficult time of our lives.

I say to the American people, if you are feeling anxious, feeling depressed, if you are feeling overwhelmed, if you are feeling confused, if you are feeling angry, you are not alone. Many millions of Americans feel exactly the same way.

This pandemic has had a devastating and horrific impact upon our country. Over 900,000 people have died from COVID and tens of millions have been made ill. Many thousands of workers have lost their jobs simply because they went about doing their jobs. They had to go to work. They were critical workers and many thousands died as a result.

In the midst of the pandemic, in an unprecedented way, millions of other workers have chosen to find new employment paths. They have given up their old jobs.

But it is not just working people who have been impacted; it has been a terrible time for the young people of our country. The education of our younger generation, from childcare to graduate school, has been severely disrupted in a way that we have never seen in the modern history of this country.

But, again, it is not just for workers or the children; it is for elderly people. You have senior citizens in this country who have died at alarmingly high rates, but in addition to that, they have been isolated over the last several years because of fear of catching the virus, which means that they can't come in contact with their kids or their grandchildren. They can't get out of the house, and they are hurting as a result.

In America today, it is no great secret—an issue we are trying to deal with—that mental illness is on the rise as is drug addiction, alcoholism, and domestic violence. In other words, these are difficult and, in fact, unprecedented times within our lives.

But what I want to point out this afternoon is that while the vast majority of people in our country are hurting emotionally, they are hurting economically. These are not difficult times for everybody. That is an important point to be made.

In fact, I want to start off, if I might, with some really, really good news if you are a billionaire in this country or a CEO of a large corporation.

For those people, these times have not been bad; they, in fact, have been very, very good. In fact, if you are one of the very richest people in this country, this moment right now has never been better for you than anytime in American history.

Today, corporate profits are at an alltime high, and CEOs, heads of large corporations, have seen huge increases in their compensation packages. Let me just give a few examples.

Everybody in America is worried about the high price of gas. You drive around, and today, gas prices are higher than they were yesterday.

While gas prices are soaring, shock of all shock, oil company profits are now higher than they have been in over 7 years. Gas prices are soaring, and—guess what—large oil companies are making huge profits. In fact, in the last quarter, ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP made nearly $25 billion in profits in one quarter.

Gas prices are soaring. The profits of the oil companies are soaring as well.

But that is not all. Everybody is worried about higher food prices. Many senior citizens living on fixed incomes go to the grocery store, and they get very upset about seeing increased prices on meat and vegetables and everything else.

Well, it turns out that the food industry is also enjoying huge increases in profits. In fact, Kroger, one of the largest grocery store chains in America, made a recordbreaking profit of some $4 billion in 2021. While their stock price dropped 36 percent in the past year, its CEO got a 296-percent pay raise over the past decade. They have been able to spend $1.5 billion on stock buybacks and dividends to enrich their wealthy shareholders.

Food prices are soaring. Yet company after company in the food industry is making huge profits.

For the people on top, the good news is that it is not just that corporate profits have never been better—that is good news—but even better for them is that CEO compensation has never been higher.

You know, there was a time way back in the 1950s when I was growing up when CEOs did very, very well. They made 20 times more than their average worker. Well, if you are a CEO, the good news is, those days are long gone when you only made 20 times more than your average worker. Today, as I am sure the CEOs of this country know, they are now making 350 times more than what the average worker in America makes—350 times more. Talk about greed.

By the way, at a time when we pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, the really, really good news is that the CEOs of the top eight pharmaceutical companies in America made over $350 million in compensation in 2020. Got that? Eight CEOs of the drug companies that charge the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs made $350 million collectively in compensation.

If that is not good enough news for the billionaire class, let me give you some even better news. Today, the billionaire class owns more income and wealth percentagewise than at any time in American history as a result of a massive transfer of wealth.

You know, we hear a lot of talk about transfer of wealth—oh my God, we can't tax the rich and transfer wealth; terrible; terrible—but there has been over the last many decades a huge transfer of wealth. The only problem is, it has gone in the wrong direction—from working families to the top 1 percent. As a result of that, what we have now is that the top 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 92 percent. The top 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 92 percent.

Rather amazingly, the two wealthiest people in America now own more wealth than the bottom 42 percent. Two people own more wealth than the bottom 42 percent. You know, in this country, we pride ourselves on being a country that believes in fairness, that believes in justice—justice for all. It is not fair, it is not just that two people now own more wealth than the bottom 42 percent of the American people—that is wealth, accumulated income.

In terms of income, what we earn in a given year, since the Wall Street crash of 2008, the top 1 percent has earned 45 percent of all new income created in this country. Got a hundred people; the guy on top earns 45 percent of all of that income.

You know, every day, as you well know, Members of the Senate and the House go to the floor to give congratulatory remarks to the Boy Scouts, congratulating them on their anniversary or kids who have done well, and the Girl Scouts, 4–H clubs, sports teams. I guess we recently honored Tom Brady for his great football success. That is what we do. Every day, somebody is coming here and congratulating somebody else, and that is fine. I do the same. In fact, we just congratulated some great Olympians from Vermont. But maybe the time is approaching when we should offer a unanimous resolution congratulating the billionaire class for their enormous success in moving this country into the oligarchic form of society that they have long desired. Maybe we should do a UC on that issue.

By the way, here is another area of congratulations to the billionaire class. When we speak about oligarchy—when we speak about oligarchy—we should all understand that we are not just talking about massive levels of income and wealth inequality. We are not just talking about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. We should all understand that never before in American history have so few owned so much.

This issue, the issue of the incredible concentration of ownership in our country, is almost never talked about here in Congress or in the corporate media, and that has a lot to do with the corrupt political system that we operate under where many Members of Congress receive huge campaign contributions from these very same people.

But here is an important point to make, and tomorrow, actually, I will be doing a hearing on this as chairman of the Budget Committee. This is an issue we almost never discuss, and it is of enormous consequence.

Today in America, just three Wall Street firms, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street—I suspect that many Americans have never even heard of these firms—BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, three firms, manage over $21 trillion in assets—$21 trillion in assets. What does that mean? Well, for starters, it means that the amount of money these one, two, three firms control is more than the gross domestic product, the GDP, of the United States of America, the largest economy in the world, and more than five times the GDP of Germany.

These three firms, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, are major shareholders in more than 96 percent of S&P 500 companies. What does that mean? It means that they have significant influence over many hundreds of companies that employ millions of American workers.

Now, it used to be, way back when, there was a company, Company X, owned by somebody—nice guy, not a nice guy, good employer, bad employer. There was a person or a group of people who owned a company. That is rapidly changing in the oligarchic world that we are living in where a handful of Wall Street companies have major control over hundreds and hundreds of companies.

You know, after the Wall Street crash of 2008, I recall a lot of discussion about the wealth and the power of the big banks, the giant banks, and whether or not they were too big to fail. There was a huge amount of discussion.

Well, today, these three firms, three Wall Street firms, are the largest shareholders in some of the biggest banks in America: JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, and Citibank. In other words, these banks are also owned by a handful of Wall Street firms.

What about transportation? You know, we all get on planes and go here

and there. Well, these three major Wall Street firms, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, are among the top owners of the four major airlines—United, American, et cetera.

Well, what about healthcare? What about healthcare? Who owns the healthcare industry? Well, together, these three Wall Street firms own an average of 20 percent of the major drug companies. They also own many hundreds of nursing homes, hospitals, and emergency rooms.

What about housing? Well, what we are seeing is a handful of Wall Street firms are now the major owners of rental housing in America—at a time, by the way, when the cost of housing and rents is soaring in this country.

Maybe, just maybe, if you haven't heard a whole lot about these issues, it might have something to do with the fact that a handful of Wall Street firms control half of the newspapers in America.

I think there is a reality which maybe says it all, and that is, during this terrible, terrible pandemic, when so many people have died and become ill and lost their jobs and missed school and suffered all of the isolation this pandemic has brought about, 745 billionaires in America became more than $2 trillion richer. That is, to my mind, the clearest example of the level of corporate greed we are now experiencing.

Desperate workers who live paycheck to paycheck are forced to go to work. They go to work in hospitals. They go to work in public transportation. They go to work in meatpacking plants. They are busdrivers—whatever they may be. Thousands of them have died on the job while a handful of billionaires—745—became more than $2 trillion richer.

When we talk about the growth of oligarchy in America—I talk about it; not a whole lot of other people here do—when we talk about oligarchy in America, it is not just that the very rich are getting much richer. That is one thing. But the reality is that tens of millions of working-class people, lower income people, in the wealthiest country on Earth are suffering today under incredible economic hardship, desperately trying day to day to survive, and 745 billionaires in the pandemic—$2 trillion increase in their wealth, and tens of millions of Americans are struggling hard just to survive.

Today, nearly 40 million Americans live in poverty; and tonight, almost 600,000 people will be sleeping out on the streets or in homeless shelters. They have no apartments, no places in which to live.

And here is an important fact to remember: In our country today, the average worker is making $42 a week less than he or she made 49 years ago. In other words, when you try to appreciate the anger that exists in this country, the discontent, it has a lot to do with the fact that the average American worker is worse off in terms of real inflation weekly income than was the case 49 years ago.

Now, think about that. Think about how crazy that is. Think about all of the increase in technology and productivity that we have seen, where workers today are producing a lot more than they used to because of the new technology, and yet, because of the huge transfer of wealth and income, they are worse off than they were in 1973.

Half of the people in our country today are living paycheck to paycheck, and tens of millions are an accident, a divorce, an illness, or a layoff away from economic devastation.

In America today, we remain the only major country on Earth not to guarantee healthcare as a right. The result of that is we have a system in which over 80 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured and tens of thousands die each and every year because they don't get to a doctor when they should.

While many public schools throughout our country lack the resources to adequately educate our young people or pay their teachers the wages those teachers deserve, at the same time, we are the most heavily incarcerated Nation on Earth. We have got more people in jail than any other country.

Meanwhile, 45 million Americans who did go to college—they saved up; they went to college—they are now drowning in $1.8 trillion in student debt. I talk to those nurses and workers every day who say: Bernie, we have got to do something because every month I am paying hundreds and hundreds of dollars in student debt.

And here is something else that we don't talk about—you know, we have a habit here, I am afraid, in the Senate and the House; we talk about a lot, but often not the most important things in the country—and that is that I suspect that, as part of human nature, every person in America and around the world would like to live long and happy and productive lives. That is pretty basic human nature. But in America today, the very richest people live, on average, 15 years longer than the poorest Americans.

So when you talk about income and wealth inequality, it is not just about this guy has a nice house, this person doesn't have a nice house; big car, no car. That is one thing. If you are poor in America, you are dying at a significantly younger age than if you are wealthy.

The polls seem to show that more and more Americans are giving up on democracy. They work long hours for low wages. They worry about their kids. They can't afford healthcare. They see their jobs going to other countries. Meanwhile, the people on top are doing better than any time in American history, and they wonder: Hey, if we elect these guys to the House and the Senate, Governors, what are they doing for us? Do they understand? Do they live in the real world? Do they understand what is going on in our lives, or are they too busy going out and raising campaign contributions from the rich and the powerful?

I believe that the time is long, long, long overdue for the Congress to start addressing the needs of the American people. And I know it is a radical idea to suggest that maybe, just maybe, we should do what the American people want and not what wealthy campaign contributors want.

When 83 percent of the American people want us to lower the cost of prescription drugs—do you know what, it might be time for the Senate to do that.

When 84 percent of the American people know there is something wrong with elderly people who can't afford dental care, hearing aids, or eyeglasses—84 percent—maybe, just maybe, we may want to expand Medicare to cover those basic healthcare needs.

When overwhelming numbers of the American people know that it is beyond absurd that some billionaires and large profitable corporations don't pay a nickel in Federal income tax, maybe, just maybe, we might want to change our tax system so that the rich and the powerful start paying their fair share of taxes.

When 76 percent of the American people understand that our home healthcare system is a disaster, that many elderly people and disabled people would rather stay home rather than be forced into a nursing home, maybe we should expand home healthcare.

When we remain the only major country on Earth not to have paid family and medical leave—the only major country on Earth—maybe it is time that the Congress pass a paid family and medical leave act.

When we have a dysfunctional childcare system in which in my State, not different around the country, working parents are paying 25 percent, 30 percent of their income for childcare so they can go to work, maybe we should reform our childcare and pre-K system so that it is affordable for all parents in this country.

And maybe—I know this is another radical idea. There is a piece in the paper today about the impact of climate change. The sea level is going to rise by a foot in the next few decades. We are looking at drought, floods, extreme weather disturbances. Here is a really radical idea: Maybe, at a time when the scientists tell us that it is questionable in terms of the kind of planet we are going to leave our kids and future generations, whether or not it is going to be habitable or livable, I know it is a radical idea—a lot of fossil fuel money coming into this place—but maybe, just maybe, we stand up to the fossil fuel industry and tell them their short-term profits are not more important that the future of this planet.

So we have a lot of work to do. I am not sure that we will do it. I am not sure that Members of Congress have

the willingness or the courage to stand up to the powerful special interests who control the economic and political life of this country.

But this, I will say: If we do not do that in terms of the economy, in terms of climate, in terms of healthcare, in terms of education, future generations will look back at this Congress and say, Where were you?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Wyoming.

ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to specifically talk about Americans' need for more American energy.

For the last year, the American people have been suffering from ongoing Joe Biden inflation. They are paying the price, they are feeling the pain, and it all started on day 1 of the Biden administration, when he took out his Executive order pen, and he killed a pipeline bringing energy from Canada to the United States.

And as this war on American energy has continued, we are now at a point where inflation is the worst it has been in 40 years. So it is no surprise that the President's approval rating has dropped to a low of only 40 percent in America.

Well, this incredible rise in prices for energy, as well as all of the other components—whether it is gas, whether it is groceries—but if energy gets more expensive, we know that it costs more to manufacture things, it costs more to grow things, it costs more to transport things from where they are grown or manufactured to market.

So much of this inflation has been brought on as a result of the Joe Biden policies related specifically to American energy.

When you look at the laws that he has promoted, the executive actions that he has taken from day 1, going all the way up to a speech he gave just yesterday, this is a President who is dancing to the tune of the climate elitists and wants to keep American energy in the ground.

Energy prices are up overall about 30 cents on the dollar since Joe Biden took over. They have gone up 8 months in a row. Gasoline prices are up by about a dollar a gallon, if not more so, since Biden took office.

I was at a high school in Greybull, WY, and started talking about energy prices. I asked if they know what the cost of a gallon of gasoline was, and the student body knew to within nine-tenths of a penny how much the cost of gasoline was in their hometown of Greybull, WY.

You can see it right up there, and people know the price, and they have been watching, since Joe Biden took over, the price of energy going up; and we have also seen Joe Biden's approval going down.

This isn't a coincidence. This is a direct result of the anti-American energy policies of this President and the Democrats in this body and this administration.

On his first day in office, his very first day in office, Joe Biden killed the Keystone Pipeline. He blocked new oil and gas leases on public lands. He has gone after energy exploration in Alaska.

And for the senior Senator from Alaska to come to the floor and go to an Energy Committee and say: It is hard to believe, but we are using more energy in the United States today, she said, from Russia than we are from Alaska, that is a result of the actions of this administration.

So what has happened with all of this? What has the impact been to American families?

Well, they are struggling. They are suffering. They are having to change the way they drive, the way they eat, the way they live. People can't keep up. Wages aren't keeping up with costs. They are just not. People's dreams are being crushed because they have to take the savings that they have been saving for different items they wanted to do and they have to use it to just get by, where it costs about $275 a month now, this year, to just get by compared to last year. Just to maintain a standard of living, people are having to pay $275 more each and every month, just to maintain and not to get ahead.

Apparently, according to the majority leader, the Democrats finally—finally—yesterday at their lunch were going to talk about inflation. It is now February of 2022; Joe Biden came into office January of 2021. He said inflation was going to be temporary. A month, he said, after month after month after month, and now 10 months into a very serious situation, we still don't hear any practical solutions coming from the Democrats. We do hear gimmicks. We do hear gimmicks.

Joe Biden, in September, had his National Security Advisor, unbelievably, beg OPEC and Russia—Russia—to produce more oil. We are using twice the amount of crude oil now from Russia than we were a year ago. Vladimir Putin, who may any day—even this day—invade Ukraine, is still exporting 5 million barrels of crude oil a day. The price of oil is $90 a barrel, probably going to $100. The Biden and Democratic policies have been a jackpot for Vladimir Putin.

So, in November, after he tried the effort to beg Putin to produce more energy and sell it to the United States, the President went to another trick in his bag of tricks—another gimmick—and he said: Let's release some energy from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

So he said how much he was going to release. The Secretary of Energy was asked in a press conference: Well, how much is that relative to how much we use in the United States? She didn't have any idea. Turned out it was 2½ days' worth, and the impact of the release dropped the price by 2 cents a gallon—2 cents.

Oh, Democrats patted themselves on the back, and then prices went up again—a complete failure.

Now prices are expected to go even higher, as I said—maybe $100 a barrel soon. Many experts are predicting $4 a gallon when you go to fill up this summer. And now we hear another gimmick coming from the Democrats.

This time it is a temporary pause in the gasoline tax until after election day. So the New York Times had a story about it today: ''Democrats, With Eye on Midterms, Search for Ways to Bring Down Rising Prices.''

It is not because Americans are suffering, not because people at home, if the Democrats ever go home, are telling them how hard it is, not because they have an understanding of the needs of the American people—nope, none of those reasons. The Democrats, with an eye on the midterms, have introduced this legislation. When you look at the cosponsors, it is interesting that so many of them are people who are listed as ''vulnerable'' come the elections in November. This might be the gimmick to end all gimmicks. Suspending the gas tax—and, oh, by the way, bringing it back right after the election. It is all election-driven.

Are we going to need less energy after election day? Is there going to be more expensive energy after election day? That is what we get.

I found it interesting to see one Democrat stand up and comment on this. It is Larry Summers. He was an economic adviser and Secretary, Cabinet Member, worked with both the Clinton and Obama administrations. What did he call it? ''Short-sighted, ineffective, goofy, and gimmicky.''

Thank you, Larry Summers, for pointing out to the Democrats in this body what the American people already see—your efforts are ''short-sighted, ineffective, goofy, and gimmicky.''

Of course, the gas tax is the way that we pay in this country for roads and bridges. If the gas tax went away today, the American people and those kids in high school and grade school who can do the math, who know that the gas tax is 18 cents a gallon—Federal gas tax—knows that the increase in the cost of gasoline to what they are paying at the pump is still about $1 a gallon higher today than it was when Joe Biden became President of the United States.

This newest proposal by the Democrats is not about affordable energy; it is a cheap political trick. It might sound good in a press release. The kids in Greybull, WY, know it is not going to help them.

Democrats desperately want to look like they are trying to do something after ignoring inflation, denying it was even there in the first place. Yet, after months and months and months of the American people suffering, the American people know a gimmick when they see it. So Democrats have tried to spend 5 months passing their billion-dollar reckless tax-and-spending bill. The President calls it Build Back Better. That is what he called it yesterday when he gave a speech to a number of

county commissioners. The bill includes electric vehicles so that they get subsidized. Of course, electric vehicles pay no gas tax because they don't use gas; they use electricity. So they don't subsidize in any way or pay to use the roads for the wear and tear on the roads that they drive. Yet the Democrats are calling for billions and billions of dollars of subsidies for those drivers. Nearly every Democrat in this body still supports this taxpayer giveaway.

Nearly every Democrat in the Senate still supports Joe Biden's war on American energy. Well, the war on American energy is raising the cost to American consumers.

As I said, if we are going to take 18 cents off the cost of a gallon of gas when it is already up a dollar a gallon or more, and by summer will be a lot higher than that, it is like putting a bandaid on a bullet hole. And Joe Biden, once again, yesterday, talked to these county commissioners, promoting his so-called Build Back Better plan, which includes the Green New Deal, which is increased taxes on American energy, increased regulations on American energy, increased penalties on producing American energy. The American people get the fact that will raise the costs for them to drive their car, to heat their home, to grow crops, to get items to market—where shelves are still bare, and they were this past weekend at the grocery store in Casper, WY.

Democrats still are delighted that we ended the Keystone XL Pipeline. The Secretary of Energy was supposed to come out with a report about how many jobs were lost by that. Well, still waiting for the report. Homework is past due.

Will we ever see the report from the Secretary of Energy who doesn't want to point out this specific impact that Joe Biden has had on this country in terms of killing jobs and raising energy prices?

The American people see through all of this. That is why only 3 in 10 Americans today support the President of the United States on what he is doing about inflation. That means that just about every Republican and every Independent and a whole lot of Democrats don't like the fact that Joe Biden is ignoring them, refusing to focus on the issues that are important to them and their lives and their families and their future; that their dreams are being stolen and ripped from them; that they have been using savings that they wanted to use for things they had been planning for years. And what we see is another gimmick coming from the Democrats only because their eyes are on the midterms. Their eyes ought to be on the people at home who sent them here in the first place.

There is a solution to the high cost of American energy, and that is to produce more American energy. Let us make it here. We have it. Oh, we have it in abundance. We have it in Wyoming. We have it all across the country. Produce American energy. Use American energy.

Vladimir Putin knows how to use energy. He uses it as a weapon, and he is using it as a weapon right now, holding Europe hostage. Germany has fallen into his trap with Nord Stream 2. He knows how to use energy. We have been in the United States an energy superpower. We are. We have the capacity to do it. We have gone from energy dependence to energy independence, to energy dominance. We need to return to the day when we are using American energy.

We are much better as a country and safer as a country and stronger as a country if we sell energy from the United States to our friends rather than follow the Joe Biden route of begging Vladimir Putin to sell some of his energy to us. That weakens America. It weakens us. It weakens our future.

We have the resources here in America. We have the know-how. We have the individuals wanting to work producing American energy. We need an administration which will allow us to do so, and we don't have one with the leadership in the White House and with the majority party in the House and the Senate right now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today to speak about the critical role played by U.S. attorneys and U.S. marshals in keeping America safe.

Law enforcement is a team effort, and we need officials at the Federal, State, and local levels working together to stop crime in this country and to keep people safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods.

It was only 2 months ago when I came to the floor of this Senate to request unanimous consent for the Senate to take up and confirm five U.S. attorney nominations. Despite the outstanding credentials of all of these nominees, one Senator, the junior Senator from Arkansas, refused to allow the Senate to confirm five nominees for U.S. attorney positions by a voice vote—a tradition in the Senate. That Senator's objections had nothing to do with the nominees. He said so. They had nothing to do with their records and had nothing to do with their qualifications.

Well, after he was confronted on the floor of the Senate, he lifted his objections. We were able to get those U.S. attorneys confirmed and put them to work, and there is work to be done in every State in the Union to make this a safer nation.

We believe in law enforcement—we believe in it at every level—and when there is delay in putting professionals in place, that delay can cost lives. If you stand up and say ''I don't want to defund the police'' but then refuse to fill vacancies when it comes to law enforcement, that is inconsistent.

Sadly, we find ourselves in the same position today, 2 months later, with the same Senator from Arkansas. He is again objecting to the swift confirmation of U.S. attorney and U.S. marshal nominations. In short, this same Senator is making it increasingly difficult for us to prosecute violent criminals, track down fugitives, and protect Americans from gang violence, cybercrime, terrorism, and fraud.

It is worth taking a moment to consider what U.S. attorneys and U.S. marshals do. The positions that they hold are nearly as old as the Nation itself. Both U.S. marshal and U.S. attorney positions were created by the Judiciary Act of 1789, passed by the First Congress, and signed into law by President George Washington.

The specific responsibilities have changed over time, but the core function is the same. This is the Federal answer to enforcing the law, prosecuting crimes, and protecting our communities. U.S. attorneys are charged with prosecuting all Federal criminal offenses. U.S. marshals have the responsibility of risking their lives to protect Federal judges and courthouses, tracking down fugitives, and assisting in locating and recovering missing children, just to mention a few. In short, U.S. attorneys and U.S. marshals play a critical role in enforcing the law, promoting public safety, and protecting our communities.

So it is sad that this same junior Senator from Arkansas is blocking the confirmations of six U.S. attorneys and two U.S. marshals today. Doing so threatens public safety across America and puts millions of Americans at risk, including the most vulnerable.

Despite all of the tough talk we hear from many of these Senators on the other side of the aisle about their dedication to law and order and keeping America safe, it is a Republican Senator who refuses to take up and confirm these nominations in an expeditious way.

Before I ask for consent for the Senate to confirm the nominees, I would like to yield to the majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I thank the majority whip.

Thank you for your good work as chair of the Judiciary and for your talk on this issue.

I thank my colleague from Minnesota, who has been passionate about getting this done as well.

I rise today to join with my Democratic colleagues in support of these U.S. attorneys and marshals who have singlehandedly been delayed for weeks by one Senator, the junior Senator from Arkansas.

For decades—decades—Democrats and Republicans have regularly cooperated to swiftly confirm the many, many individuals selected by each President to serve in their administration. Regardless of the party in the White House, both sides have long agreed that a President deserves to have his or her administration in place

quickly. That doesn't mean we don't disagree, but it does mean that when nominees are held up, opposed, or blocked, it is for a legitimate purpose, not for leverage and partisan games to score political points at the expense of public safety. Most of us still believe in that principle but, sadly, not all of us.

On the other side of the aisle, a small group of obstructionist Republicans has spent the last year hijacking the rules of the Senate to place an unprecedented number of holds on hundreds—hundreds—of Presidential appointees.

Let me repeat. This isn't about a few nominees here and there; we are talking about hundreds of nominees.

In this case, my colleague from Arkansas is holding back six U.S. attorneys and two U.S. marshals—vital roles in preserving public safety. The level of partisan obstruction is a new low for the Senate.

When President Trump was in office, every single U.S. attorney and U.S. marshal—every single one—was confirmed by this Chamber with unanimous consent. Yes, we had deep, deep problems with the Trump Department of Justice, but never did we demand a rollcall vote just to confirm nominees like these. In fact, the last time the Senate had to hold a rollcall vote—listen to this—the last time the Senate had to hold a rollcall vote to confirm a U.S. attorney was a half a century ago—nearly half a century ago—in 1975, and it is not hard to see why. U.S. attorneys and marshals aren't political positions. Their job is literally to keep Americans safe. They are Federal prosecutors, and they are Federal law enforcement.

If my Republican colleagues on the other side truly care about public safety, why are they obstructing the appointments of individuals whose jobs would precisely be to maintain public safety in the first place? It is ''Alice in Wonderland'' logic.

Now, this isn't just about breaking precedent. Right now, communities across the country still don't have their U.S. attorneys on the job because of obstruction here in the Senate. Districts in Georgia, Ohio, Nevada, Minnesota, Michigan, and Illinois are all still waiting for U.S. attorneys.

Sadly, the families who live in these communities shouldn't have to pay the price for what a very small number of Republicans are doing here, but, sadly, that is what is happening. It is a textbook example of why Americans are frustrated with the Senate and are frustrated with their government.

On the other hand, I want to thank my Democratic colleagues for advocating on behalf of the U.S. attorneys and marshals. I thank my friend Senator DURBIN, chairman of the Judiciary, for speaking passionately. I thank Senator KLOBUCHAR for coming to the floor to speak. I thank Senators ROSEN and CORTEZ MASTO and DUCKWORTH and BROWN, who have also spoken.

One way or another, these nominees will be confirmed by the Senate. Republican obstructionists can try to delay, but they cannot stop these individuals from ultimately going through.

If the holds on these nominees are not dropped, I will be filing cloture on them, and we will schedule votes to advance them until the job is finished. If that means more late nights, then more late nights are coming. If it means vote series with six or seven or eight votes in a row, then that is what we will do.

Most of us don't want to go down that road, and we don't have to. The overwhelming majority of Democrats and Republicans want to preserve the decades of precedent and comity that has enabled us to work together on nominees.

So let me say for one last time, delaying the appointment of U.S. attorneys and U.S. marshals over cheap partisan games ultimately makes Americans less safe and weakens law enforcement.

I urge my Republican colleague to drop his obstruction or else he can explain to his colleagues why we have to schedule a dizzyingly large number of rollcall votes just to push these nominees through.

I thank my colleagues for their work and yield to Senator DURBIN.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the majority leader. I would like to just add: There must be those following the debate who are wondering, ''What is the basis for the junior Senator from Arkansas opposing these eight nominees? There must be something wrong with them. There must be something in their background that doesn't add up.''

Consider the variety of individuals who are being held up by the junior Senator from Arkansas: Ryan Buchanan, of Georgia, to be U.S. attorney for the Northern District; Jason Frierson, of Nevada, to be U.S. attorney for the District of Nevada; Andrew Luger, of Minnesota, to be U.S. attorney for the District of Minnesota—and the Senator from Minnesota will speak to that in just a moment—Mark Totten, of Michigan, to be U.S. attorney for the Western District of Michigan; Marisa Darden, of Ohio, to be U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Ohio; Delia Smith, of the Virgin Islands, to be U.S. attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands; Eddie Frizell, again of Minnesota, to be U.S. marshal for the District of Minnesota; and LaDon Reynolds, of Illinois, to be U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Illinois.

We looked especially at our own nominees very closely to make sure that they were qualified to take on these Federal positions. Several of my colleagues are going to come to the floor today to speak about the nominees being held up by one Senator, so rather than delving into the records of all of the eight nominees, let me just focus on the one in Illinois—Chief LaDon Reynolds, nominated to serve as U.S. marshal for the Northern District.

Chief Reynolds has served the people of Illinois for nearly 30 years. He joined the Oak Park Police Department in 1994, rising steadily through the ranks until his appointment in 2019 as chief.

In addition to his service at the Oak Park Police Department, Chief Reynolds serves on the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes, and the Executive Board of the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. In short, Chief Reynolds is eminently qualified to serve as U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Illinois. There is simply no valid basis to delay his confirmation.

And I have yet to hear the Senator from Arkansas come forward with a bill of particulars of why he has decided to single out the people whom I just mentioned, to deny them an opportunity to make communities safer across America. At a time of high crime and the need for a coordinated effort at every single level, there is absolutely no valid explanation of why these individuals are being withheld from their responsibilities in these communities.

We need to have law enforcement taken seriously and respected. Holding up nominations for no particular reason other than a political issue that may bother the Senator is certainly no reason for us to jeopardize the safety of innocent people living in these communities who depend on these Federal law enforcement officials to do their job.

At this point, I would like to make a unanimous consent request.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nominations en bloc: Calendar No. 660, 661, 662, 663, 739, 740, 741, and 742; 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 statement related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, reserving the right to object, which I most certainly will do, I will just address what the Senator from Illinois said.

He said he has heard no explanation for why I am objecting to every Department of Justice nominee moving forward on a fast-track basis. That is false. He has heard my explanation repeatedly. He may not like it, but he has heard it.

I am taking this stance on behalf of four brave U.S. marshals who defended the Federal courthouse in Portland from leftwing street militias associated with the BLM movement and antifa.

The summer of 2020 was part of riots all across our country, but in Portland these riots were particularly dangerous. Marshals were targeted with lasers to blind them, with ball bearings,

with fireworks. There were efforts to barricade them inside the courthouse and set it on fire to burn them alive. These marshals are heroes, and they should be celebrated. Anyone who says they support law enforcement should be defending these marshals.

Not surprisingly, leftwing activists and leftwing organizations, like the ACLU, are coming to the defense of the leftwing street militia that attacked these marshals, tried to burn down the Portland courthouse, suing marshals on frivolous grounds.

Many of these marshals are being defended by the Department of Justice, as is the Department of Justice's longstanding custom and practice to either provide representation for its law enforcement officers when they are sued in court or, if there is some conflict, to reimburse them and pay their legal fees. Four marshals are not being defended, though.

These four marshals are GS–11s, GS–13s. They have been serving our country for a lifetime. Many of them are veterans, veterans of foreign wars. They face financial bankruptcy and ruin because the Department of Justice won't represent them; in many cases, won't even give them an answer or explain why the representation was denied.

When I learned of this, I demanded answers. And the Department of Justice had no answers. So if my colleagues think that I am going to just roll out the red carpet for Department of Justice nominees to be confirmed to politically connected positions, while GS–11s and GS–13s are hung out to dry, they have another thing coming.

Now, some of you may say: Well, maybe there are investigations underway. Maybe these officers engaged in misconduct. We don't know. They won't give us answers. But here is what we do know: All four of them—all four—are currently on unrestricted Active Duty—unrestricted Active Duty.

And I would add, all four—all four—are in the Special Operations Group for the Marshals Service, which means to say they are the marshals who are most likely to be deployed nationwide and put in circumstances that risk their lives and call for them to use violence, to include lethal violence.

Now, I don't know the circumstances that led to the denial of representation of these four marshals or why some of them are being strung along, but I have to assume—I have to assume—that if they are on unrestricted Active Duty in the Special Operations Group of the Marshals Service, that Merrick Garland and Vanita Gupta can't have any doubts about their fitness to serve or their actions for all those weeks in Portland when they defended the courthouse from leftwing street militias.

I understand my colleagues want to get their U.S. attorneys or their U.S. marshals confirmed. Maybe there are people at Main Justice they want to get confirmed as well. That is very simple. We could do it today. We could hear from Merrick Garland or Vanita Gupta that they will defend these four U.S. marshals in court or we could hear a satisfactory answer of why they won't defend the marshals in court.

Is it because they were standing up to a leftwing street militia? Is it because they were taking a stance to defend Federal property from antifa? I don't know. We can't get an answer. Maybe my Democratic colleagues could get an answer.

But to think that I am just going to roll over and allow the Senate to fast-track nominees to the Department, when GS–11s and GS–13s, law enforcement officials, are being hung up to dry—sorry.

These are people—and I have talked to them—who were worried about buying Christmas gifts for their children last year because they had to pay legal fees, who are worried about paying the mortgage next month, who are worried about sending their kids to camp. Sorry if your lawyers have to wait for a week or two to get confirmed to the U.S. attorney's position. I am worried about four heroes who defended Federal property from leftwing street militias.

So, yes, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, try to follow that logic, if you will. The Senator is so committed to law enforcement, he is so committed to U.S. marshals, he won't let us appoint people to fill vacancies.

He takes the case in Portland, OR, where he wrote a letter to the Department of Justice within the last 2 weeks asking for the status of their defense of these 74 individuals. Now, he knows, and we all know, that before we can take any action for anybody, we need a confidentiality waiver, a privacy statement. That is routine in all of our offices.

Each one of these individuals, despite the interest of the junior Senator from Arkansas, has their own legal right to determine whether or not they want to waive any privacy so that they can tell the public or discuss even with the Senator their plight and how they want to address it.

There is also something called the attorney-client privilege, which the Senator, I am sure, is aware of. That, too, is a privilege which allows the individual to deny ordinary access to information if they so choose. It is their decision.

So the complication of the situation is ignored by the Senator from Arkansas. He is valiantly standing for U.S. marshals that he won't appoint. He believes they are important and that they give their lives to their country—and many have—and yet he won't let them stand up and do that on behalf of our communities.

He wants an answer to his letter, and until he gets an answer to his letter, then we are not going to be able to put law enforcement in place to deal with crime in this country. We can make all the statements, run all the ads, make all the speeches on the floor about a concern for safety in our communities, and then the junior Senator from Arkansas says, ''I want you to be safe in your community, but you can't have a U.S. attorney to prosecute those would-be terrorists. You can't have a U.S. marshal for pursuit of fugitives from justice. You can't have a U.S. marshal to protect the courthouse for men and women who go to work there every day and risk their lives for the administration of justice.''

This is upside down. We are talking about 74 individuals. The Department of Justice has said they are going to defend 70 of them. One is a question, I assume, whether he was acting in the scope of his employment, and three are under review. And for that reason, this Senator has decided to stop the administration of justice in these jurisdictions or at least slow it down. That makes no sense whatsoever.

The basis for objecting to these individuals has nothing to do with their individual qualifications. He didn't raise a single question. All he said is, ''Your lawyers are going to have to wait,'' as if these were just lawyers waiting for a fee.

These are men and women willing to serve, as he serves, in public service. It is more than just lawyers—not that there is anything wrong with that category of Americans—but it is individuals who are willing to engage in public service.

And why are we in such a hurry? We are in the second year of this President's administration. It is time to fill these vacancies.

As Senator SCHUMER said earlier on the floor, there are several on the Republican side who just want to drag this out interminably in the hopes that they can stop the Biden administration from filling these vacancies.

My colleague from Arkansas asked whether the DOJ is representing Federal law enforcement personnel who protected the Federal courthouse in Portland. The FOX News headline about his letter said: ''Cotton places hold on DOJ nominees after refusal to defend US Marshals involved in Portland Antifa riots.''

Here is the reality. The Department of Justice often represents or pays private counsel to represent Federal employees sued in their individual capacity, but there are some constraints, and I have mentioned them. For example, regulations require that the Department of Justice can only represent employees for actions within the scope of their employment; for example, protecting the Portland courthouse, which clearly is within the scope. And the Department of Justice can only represent them if doing so would be in the interest of the United States. It clearly would be if they are defending against terrorists.

The Senator knows this. Do you know why he knows it? Because the

Department of Justice responded to his letter. He just didn't like the response—it didn't go far enough.

The Department said, ''The Department of Justice strongly supports the provision of representation to federal officers acting in the line of duty.'' The Department also told him that it represents or has paid for private counsel to represent 70 of these employees who have been sued in connection with the events in Portland, while denying only a single request for representation.

I don't know the facts of that denial. I don't know if there has been a privacy waiver signed. I don't know if this individual said, ''I have an attorney-client privilege, and I don't have to tell the Senator from Arkansas or anyone what the circumstances are.'' The Senator from Arkansas is now demanding to know why the Department of Justice denied this one request for representation and why it is still reviewing three others. That is right—he is blocking the confirmation of critical law enforcement officials across the United States until he gets an answer that he likes.

The DOJ has already explained that it cannot comment further—here is what they said—''in light of significant confidentiality interests and applicable privileges.'' As I mentioned earlier the privacy laws and attorney-client privilege.

''DOJ's regulations make it clear that communication about an employee's requests for representation are protected by the attorney-client privilege, and the Privacy Act prevents DOJ from disclosing the personnel record of an employee,'' and that is as it should be.

Let me be clear. These privileges protect the privacy of the very law enforcement personnel whose interests the Senator from Arkansas claims to represent.

My Republican colleagues frequently claim to be the party of law and order, but in this matter and others, they are the ones playing politics with law enforcement because the Department of Justice will not snap to the Senator's request and violate standing Federal laws; because they won't ignore and violate those laws of privacy and attorney-client privilege, he is prepared to endanger the communities and law enforcement until he gets his way.

I have heard my Republican colleagues time and again claiming that the Biden administration and Democratic mayors in big cities are responsible for violent crime. They claim that the increase in violent crime has nothing to do with the fact that America is awash in guns, that the reality is that the increase in violent crime started during the last administration, under President Trump. It is affecting communities led by both Republican and Democratic officials. And it is being driven by gun violence.

FBI statistics show that 77 percent of homicides in 2020 were committed with guns. In Chicago, that number is higher. Ninety-three percent of homicides last year in Chicago were committed by gun.

We face a gun violence crisis. The Judiciary Committee held five hearings last year on ways to reduce it. I am going to continue it this year. But if we are going to address this crisis, we are going to need Senators from both parties to show some courage and to admit that gun violence in America is a real problem.

We also need Republicans to stop defending the violent insurrection that took place right in this Chamber on January 6, 2021. The Senator was present. All of us were. We will never forget that day as long as we live. Five brave police officers lost their lives as a result of what the Republican National Committee in its official policy position calls ''legitimate political discourse.''

This is nothing new. Last year, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan—$350 billion for State and local governments. We made sure that funding was going to hire good law enforcement officials and invested in community violence intervention. Not a single Republican Senator approved it.

There are areas where we are working together on bipartisan legislation, and I hope we will continue to. Last year, President Biden signed three laws in that area.

I hope my Republican colleagues will take a lesson from today. If we are going to stand together, then let us all stand behind the Federal law enforcement team.

When President Trump asked for his team, Democrats in the Senate cooperated and gave those people to him. They weren't the people we would have chosen, but he was President and had the right to do his best to protect this Nation. So does President Biden.

President Biden has called for significant increases for our police in the Byrne Justice Program and the COPS Hiring Program, but this important funding has been delayed by debate over appropriations. We shouldn't delay the appointment of these key law enforcement officials either.

Again and again, Democrats are working to support law enforcement and to keep Americans safe. Sometimes we are joined in these efforts by Republicans and other times not, but there is no benefit to law enforcement when Senators block the confirmation of well-qualified U.S. attorney and U.S. marshal nominees, as we see today.

I urge the Senator from Arkansas to stand up for law enforcement. A political story on FOX is not worth undermining the lives of innocent Americans. We have to end this obstruction and let these nominees protect and serve.

I now yield to Senator KLOBUCHAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I am surprised to hear the Senator from Illinois continue to refer to this as a political issue or a political story when we have career law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line to defend Federal property from leftwing street militias. And they are worried if they can put the food on the table for their children, if they can buy them gifts at Christmas, if they can put braces on them, if they can send them to summer camp.

I don't consider that a political issue; I consider it standing up for law enforcement—not just these four but every deputy marshal around the country who forms the backbone of the Marshals Service, the backbone of the Marshals Service all across the country, who have to wonder if maybe they are going to be the next one to be hung out to dry by the Department of Justice if they confront a rioter with the wrong politics.

This is not a political issue.

Now, the Senator from Illinois continues to speak about confidentiality and attorney-client privilege as if this is all information that has been communicated to these four marshals and they just don't want to share it with us here in the Senate. That is not the case. Three of them, I would say, haven't heard anything. In a lawsuit that is almost 18 months old, they have been told nothing yet. That is why they have had to go out and retain their own counsel.

One of them was denied representation with no more basis than saying it is not in the interest of the United States of America. Well, forgive me if I don't trust Vanita Gupta to determine what is in the interest of the United States when it comes to defending law enforcement.

These marshals are told that these determinations are final and there is no appeal and there is no recourse. Well, I am the recourse now.

The Senator from Illinois keeps talking about these urgent law enforcement needs in his own State of Illinois. I would point out that the position that is empty has been empty since 2018. If it was so urgent, the Senator from Illinois could have cooperated with the Trump administration and tried to fill it then. These U.S. attorney positions that are empty—President Biden fired all U.S. attorneys a year ago. If it was so urgent to have Senate-confirmed U.S. attorneys in position, he could have asked them to continue to serve until he was able to find suitable replacements.

The Senator from Illinois also said: Well, Senator Cotton got his letter responded to. I am not looking for some courtesy exchange of letters here; I am trying to protect four U.S. marshals who defended the Portland courthouse from a leftwing street militia, who have been hung out to dry, imperiling the confidence of all marshals across the country in whether or not their political leadership at the Department of Justice will back them up when they are in a controversy. The Department still won't answer that. They won't

take any steps to answer it. They simply hide behind confidentiality and privilege just like they are hiding behind it with these four U.S. marshals—after 18 months.

What is so complicated? As the Senator from Illinois said, they are representing 70 others. What makes these four so different? Maybe they engaged in misconduct. Is that possible given the fact that they are all on unrestricted active duty in the Special Operations Group, the element of the marshals most likely to have to use violence, to include lethal violence? Would Merrick Garland and Vanita Gupta really send them back out on the streets if they had engaged in misconduct in Portland?

These marshals deserve better, and they could get better if the Department of Justice would just agree to represent them or if they would give a satisfactory, fact-based answer about why they are not representing them. Maybe some of my Democratic colleagues could call Merrick Garland or Vanita Gupta and ask them for such an answer or maybe just call them and say: Why don't you represent these four marshals? That seems like the obvious, satisfactory outcome for everyone here: U.S. marshals are represented in court, as they should be, and we can go back to fast-tracking Department of Justice nominees. But until we get to that outcome, we won't be fast-tracking Department nominees because I will continue to stand up for these brave men of law enforcement who deserve better from this Department of Justice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today in support of the two nominees from my State: Andy Luger, who has been nominated to be the U.S. attorney for the District of Minnesota; and Eddie Frizell, a veteran, serving our country bravely overseas, who has been nominated to be the U.S. marshal.

I was sitting here thinking to myself as I listened to Senator COTTON that there were a lot of things I disagreed with at the Trump Justice Department—many, many things; many, many things—but never once did I think about holding up the U.S. attorney of Arkansas or of Arizona or of Illinois because I disagreed with Donald Trump. Why? Because as someone who used to be in law enforcement, I understand how important these positions are, and I don't think they should be held hostage simply because he happens to have a disagreement about something the Justice Department is doing.

There were so many things that I disagreed with Bill Barr and his associates about, and not only did I support the nominee for Minnesota whom Donald Trump put up for both the marshal and the U.S. attorney and voted for them, but I actually issued a public statement saying that they were qualified. I worked with them, and I talked to them ahead of time, and I actually liked them, because they might not have been, as the Senator from Illinois pointed out, my first choice, but there was something larger than politics and my first choice. My first choice was our justice system, our country, and the safety of our citizens.

Right now, in my home State, they do not understand why a Senator from Arkansas is holding up law enforcement in the State of Minnesota.

As the chief Federal law enforcement officer for their respective districts, U.S. attorneys are critical to ensuring that American communities are kept safe. This role is so vital that the Founders created the position during the very first Congress as part of the Judiciary Act of 1789. This is the same act that created the Attorney General and the structure of the courts.

Today, in my State, the U.S. attorney leads a team of nearly 130 dedicated law enforcement professionals, including 65 assistant U.S. attorneys. The office is responsible for bringing to justice those who commit a range of Federal crimes, including drug trafficking, child exploitation, cyber crimes, and national security matters.

After 9/11, it was the U.S. Attorney's Office in my home State of Minnesota that was involved in what was known as the hijacker who got caught. A citizen turned him in, and it was our U.S. Attorney's Office that worked with New York on that case.

It was our U.S. Attorney's Office that took on the second biggest white-collar case next to Madoff and won.

It was our U.S. Attorney's Office, under the nominee who is right now on the floor, Andy Luger, that took on perhaps the most infamous missing children case in the country. I know that the Presiding Officer, being from the State of Wisconsin, knows this case of Jacob Wetterling—sad, tragic case. He was able to put together the puzzle pieces that had eluded law enforcement because of his vast experience working as an assistant in the State of New York, working in Minnesota in this very office as an assistant and working his way up. He was able to put together that case with local, State, and Federal law enforcement and solve it and bring some justice and bring some closure for the Wetterling family, who will never see their son again. That is Andy Luger.

This is a guy who took on a sex trafficking case on his own with a young woman trafficked in the city of Rochester and brought the case to trial. This is someone who has reached out to our communities—our Native American communities—and gotten things done.

And this is someone, based on my discussions, Senator COTTON, with the Trump White House, that they would have actually, after firing all the U.S. attorneys, would have had him back. He decided to go to the private sector for a while, and now he is ready to come back.

So this is someone whom I have gotten calls about, since you put this hold on all the U.S. attorneys, from Republican Members of Congress who think we need him in place. I have gotten calls from Republicans across my State who want to put this guy in place.

We have double jeopardy here for my State because you are not only holding up, Senator COTTON, the U.S. attorney for the State of Minnesota, you are also holding up the U.S. marshal.

Andy Luger, the U.S. attorney nominee, as I noted, previously led the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota from 2014 to 2017. His proven experience is exactly what is needed to handle the challenges facing law enforcement in Minnesota today.

He has been waiting since January 1 to get this done because he figured this went well before the Committee—so he is waiting. He is waiting to serve our State, as is our U.S. marshal candidate.

In addition to the U.S. Attorney's Office, for over 160 years, the U.S. Marshals Service has helped keep Minnesota safe, protecting public servants, tracking down and apprehending fugitives, and operating the Witness Protection Program.

President Biden's nominee to serve as U.S. marshal for the District of Minnesota, as I noted, is Eddie Frizell. Chief Frizell was recommended by a selection committee, as was Andy Luger that Senator SMITH and I convened. It included leaders in Minnesota's law enforcement advocacy and communities.

Eddie Frizell brings nearly 30 years of experience in law enforcement in my State, including serving as a chief of police for the Metro Transit Police Department. As I noted, he is also a 30-year veteran of the Minnesota Army National Guard.

I once met him coming off a plane after his deployment. I will never forget that moment. As the brave soldiers are getting off that plane, I thought, ''I know that guy.'' Yes, I was a Senator now. I knew him when he was a police officer and I was a county attorney. Thirty years, veteran of the Minnesota Army National Guard, including two overseas deployments—one to Bosnia and another to Kuwait and Iraq. Throughout his career, he has led by example, immersing himself in the community and becoming what our newspaper called a ''model of persistence.'' His proven experience is exactly what is needed.

So why haven't we been able to confirm these two nominees, both of whom moved through the Judiciary Committee on a voice vote with broad bipartisan support, after I, as I noted, proudly supported President Trump's nominees—who, by the way, they went into their jobs, and they did their jobs.

That is how we do law enforcement. That is how it is supposed to work. This hold has nothing to with the qualifications of the nominees for my State. Instead, as Senator DURBIN has just noted, Senator COTTON has put an

indiscriminate hold on all the Department of Justice law enforcement nominees, stalling appointments for critical positions in Illinois, Georgia, Nevada, Michigan, Ohio, the Virgin Islands, and, yes, my State of Minnesota. And I am sure, if he continues this—and as Senator SCHUMER has noted, he is going to have to call up votes for positions that, during the Trump administration, went through with consent during the Trump administration.

These nominees in these States are ready to serve millions of Americans, including 5.7 million people in my State who need the leadership of a permanent U.S. attorney and U.S. marshal.

Senator COTTON is seeking information from the Department of Justice, and I hope that his questions are answered, but I cannot stand by and let him use critical law enforcement nominations as leverage.

I note—and I will end with this—the timetables. During the last administration, Erica MacDonald—the U.S. attorney I mentioned, former judge who had been appointed by Tim Pawlenty—whom I met with in my house so I could make sure that we moved her nomination quickly, she was confirmed by the Senate, Senator DURBIN, to be U.S. attorney the same day her nomination was reported by the Judiciary Committee on May 24, 2018.

Tom Heffelfinger was nominated by, by the way, two President Bushes—the first and the second President Bush. When he was nominated by President George W. Bush to be U.S. attorney for Minnesota, his nomination was received by the Senate on September 4, 2001. He was reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee on September 13 and confirmed by the full Senate the next day. His entire confirmation process took 10 days.

And, by the way, when he retired from his position, he then served on my selection committees—the U.S. attorney who had served under both President Bushes. This is how law enforcement is supposed to work.

Before him, Todd Jones, who became, by the way, the head of the ATF—he was nominated by President Bill Clinton to be U.S. attorney for Minnesota. His nomination was received in the Senate on October 7, 1998. He was reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee the next day and confirmed by the full Senate on October 21, 1998. His entire confirmation process took only 14 days.

Finally, there was James Rosenbalm, who was nominated by President Ronald Reagan to be the U.S. attorney for Minnesota. His nomination was received by the Senate on October 21, 1981. He was reported favorably out of the Judiciary Committee that day and was confirmed by the full Senate that day. His entire confirmation process happened in 1 day.

I hope we can get back to this tradition of cooperation and recognition that these law enforcement leaders aren't pawns in a political game. They are needed to help keep our communities safe and deserve to move through the Senate expeditiously.

We expect sound judgment from Federal law enforcement. Our constituents expect sound judgment when it comes to confirming top Federal law enforcement officers for a State. And it is time to do the right thing by confirming not just Mr. Luger and Mr. Frizell but the other law enforcement officers who have been held up. And I am happy to come back here day after day after day until we get this done.

The people who work in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Marshals Office, and my constituents deserve to have people in place.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in the interest of allowing the Senators who are wishing to speak an appropriate amount of time and within the confines of our upcoming vote, I ask unanimous consent that there be 40 minutes, equally divided, between the majority and minority; that the majority side be recognized in the order of Senators ROSEN, CORTEZ MASTO, DUCKWORTH, and BROWN.

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

The junior Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I feel like we are ships passing in the night here. I could go on and on about the exploits of these deputy marshals when they were Rangers and Green Berets and what they did in combat. But my Democratic colleagues aren't getting the heart of the matter: why they are being denied representation for defending the courthouse in Portland.

So I will direct a question to the Senator from Minnesota through the Chair: Does she believe that these four U.S. marshals should be represented in court like all other marshals are being represented?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Being that I am the Senator from Minnesota and I am not on the staff of the Attorney General of the United States and I have nothing to with the State in which this happened, I am not aware of all the facts of this. And I think it would actually be inappropriate for me to be involved in Justice Department policy. I am here on behalf of the people in my State, and I want to get someone in place.

And I have made the case, Senator COTTON, that at no time did I not only hold up the U.S. attorneys or the marshals under Donald Trump, I actually supported the ones in my State. And I am just asking for that same courtesy for the people of my State. We have talked about this before. And I simply believe that we should be able to get our U.S. attorneys and marshals in place. And you can do what you want to complain about what is going on in the Justice Department, to make your case to them, to go on TV about it, to make speeches in this Chamber, to write letters about it, to advocate, to gather your friends who might support you on this, but you shouldn't be hurting the people of my State while you do it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to allow these highly qualified Federal law enforcement nominations to move forward.

In my State of Nevada, the position of U.S. attorney has been unfilled for nearly a year.

This position, well, it plays a vital role in maintaining the rule of law and making sure that justice is carried out in our State. The continued obstruction of these critical nominees impacts the public safety of Nevadans and impacts their ability to see justice served.

They have a highly qualified nominee to serve as U.S. attorney, Jason Frierson. He is a graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Boyd Law School of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is a former Nevada Supreme Court clerk. And he served in the district attorney's office as a public defender and as a deputy attorney general for our great State.

In addition, Mr. Frierson has a long track record of fighting for hard-working Nevadans as speaker of the Nevada Assembly. I know he will lead in his role with integrity—integrity and a deep commitment to upholding the law as a top Federal prosecutor for our State.

There is absolutely no basis to delay his nomination and the nominations of other U.S. attorneys and marshals around the country. Holding up these qualified nominees does not help Americans. It only leaves them unprotected.

We must rise above partisan politics and do our duty to allow these key roles to be filled. For all of the people, for my State of Nevada, I urge my colleagues to allow the nomination of Jason Frierson and the other nominees in this block to finally move forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, again, I feel like we are ships passing in the night, not getting to the point here. So I will address a question to the junior Senator through the Chair, slightly differently than when I spoke to the Senator from Minnesota.

If officers are returned to unrestricted Active Duty on the Special Operations Group, does the Senator believe that they should be represented for past incidents of alleged misuse of force?

Ms. ROSEN. Senator, I will reiterate what my colleague from Minnesota said. I do not serve on the Judiciary Committee, and I do not serve in the Department of Justice. Therefore, I am not privy to the information that has been provided in privacy to the Department of Justice.

Those marshals, if they would like to divulge their information, they are free to do so as U.S. citizens. But there are privacy agreements with attorney-client privilege that is clearly not being able to be pursued in this fashion. So my opinion does not matter. What matters is the law. I do not serve in the Department of Justice; therefore I cannot answer your question.

Mr. COTTON. Unfortunately, they don't have any information to divulge. That is part of my point. The Department of Justice won't tell them why they are not being represented.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I rise to join my good colleague Senator ROSEN and my other colleagues in urging our friend and Senator from Arkansas to allow the nomination of these candidates for U.S. attorney and U.S. marshal to move forward.

And let me just start by answering the question that you have posed to both of my colleagues because I think it needs to be reframed. I think the premise really is this. There is no doubt that your ultimate goal here—and you have an ultimate goal that you are trying to achieve, and I don't question that. I do question, though, the procedure and the means by which you choose to succeed in your goal. And that is what we are talking about, Senator COTTON, because, at the end of the day, what you are trying to do is literally stand for U.S. marshals while at the same time harming the U.S. Marshals Service by not allowing two nominees to go before and get appointed to the U.S. Marshals Service. Likewise, you are adding to that—U.S. attorneys across the country, including one in the State of Nevada, who are on the frontlines of the law and order that we need in this country.

As you well know, U.S. attorneys work with U.S. marshals across the country to address violent crime in this country and prosecute it, to address drug trafficking, human trafficking, murders, and so on. So that means what you are trying to achieve here is actually harming law and order across the country. I don't think you intend to do that. I hope not. But that is what we are questioning right now, is the means by which you are trying to achieve here—what we are asking is for you to reconsider because at the end of the day—and I heard you earlier. I think you made some comment saying: Sorry your lawyers have to wait to get confirmed in a week or two. You know better. These aren't just lawyers. You know U.S. attorneys across this country are on the frontline of law and order. They are key to prosecuting essential crimes that we need to address in this country, including working with our U.S. marshals along with the FBI and other essential Federal Agencies.

I would ask that you reconsider the means by which you are trying to achieve your goal because in Nevada, the position of U.S. attorney has been vacant for a full year. The President has nominated Jason Frierson for that role. As you heard, Senator ROSEN and I both support this excellent candidate, and the full Senate needs to confirm him and let him get to work.

You have heard his background. He is more than qualified for this position, and I am not hearing from you that you have concerns about his qualifications. But he is essential to ensure that we get somebody in place, confirmed very swiftly, so that he can get to work on behalf of the people in the State of Nevada and be on the frontlines of addressing and ensuring we have law and order not only in Nevada but across the country in these other States.

My question to you, Senator COTTON, is, would you reconsider the means by which you are trying to achieve your goal so that you are not harming those men and women who are on the frontlines of law and order across the country, including here in the State of Nevada that we are talking about? And you will hear from some of my other colleagues.

So I pose the question to you, Senator, through the Chair.

Mr. COTTON. If that is a question for me, I reject the premise of your question. I am not harming law enforcement; I am standing up for law enforcement.

Once again, if you deny four U.S. marshals legal representation because they stood up to leftwing street militias—which may be unpopular in certain quarters of your party—then you cause every marshal across the country and, for that matter, every law enforcement official across the country to doubt whether their political superiors are going to defend them in the future.

Look, if you want to have a broader debate about law enforcement, I can, but we are going to be here for a long time.

It is your party that voted in lockstep for the FIRST STEP Act that let thousands of violent felons back on the street who have now committed innumerable violent crimes. It is your party that marched and chanted in the streets for defunding the police. It is the Democratic floor leader who blocked my resolution in the summer of 2020 to condemn the ''defund the police'' movement. You all voted in lockstep to confirm Vanita Gupta, the Associate Attorney General, who is responsible ultimately for these decisions, even though I and other Republicans cautioned you she would use her position to wage a war on the police from the Department of Justice. That is what is happening now.

I am standing up for law enforcement.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator from Nevada yield for a point?

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. The FIRST STEP Act—the Democrats did the FIRST STEP Act, the Republicans were in the majority. It was a bill sponsored by Senators GRASSLEY, DURBIN, LEE, and many others. Who signed it into law? Donald Trump signed it into law, this so-called Democratic measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I am disappointed because I hear my colleague, but he is not listening. He keeps repeating the same talking point that he is defending law enforcement when, at the same time, he is harming law enforcement across the country. This really is nonsensical. It does not make sense not only to me and my colleagues but to the general public that is watching.

We are talking about filling positions at the U.S. Marshals Service and U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country. They are essential to addressing what we see across the country and ensuring that there is law and order.

So it is the means by which you are trying to achieve your goal which we would ask you to consider. Unfortunately, I am not hearing from my colleague from Arkansas that he is willing to reconsider it and stand up for law and order across this country and support the U.S. Attorney's Offices and marshals who need to be appointed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. To respond to the Senator from Illinois, it is true that President Trump signed the FIRST STEP Act. The FIRST STEP Act was the worst mistake of the Trump administration. Yes, it is true that a number of Republican Senators voted for it. They were wrong. They didn't start demanding that we defund the police in the summer of 2020. They condemned that. They stood up for law enforcement.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I join my colleagues, the Senators from Nevada and Minnesota, in my frustration as to why we are here today.

Today, I am joining them and urging my colleagues to join me in calling for the swift confirmation of Chief LaDon Reynolds to be the U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Illinois. As a seasoned law enforcement officer, Chief Reynolds is more than ready to take on the challenges of this important leadership role, including playing a key part in addressing the rising violent crime devastating our communities in Northern Illinois.

Yet the only reason he is not already confirmed to this position is because of a hold from Senator COTTON—a hold that is completely unrelated to Chief Reynolds' immense qualifications. These qualifications include serving with distinction as the chief of police of the Oak Park Police Department for nearly 30 years, teaching law enforcement officers about the importance of community-oriented policing at the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and

Standards Board Executive Institute, and working to protect communities from rising hate as a board member of Governor Pritzker's Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes.

Senator DURBIN and I carefully reviewed Chief Reynolds' experience and expertise. It is clear to us and the White House that he is the best fit for the job. What we are asking for now is simply to let Reynolds get to work; let him take charge of an office that has already gone without Senate-confirmed leadership for 4 years. We need to have a confirmed U.S. marshal leading Federal law enforcement operations to secure our Federal courthouses and capture violent fugitives of the law.

As U.S. marshal, Reynolds would also play an important role in the Biden administration's multijurisdictional strike force to investigate and prosecute gun traffickers channeling deadly weapons into the city of Chicago.

Every day, there are new stories of horrifying and often deadly impacts of rising violent crimes in the Northern District of Illinois. In fact, last year was one of the city of Chicago's deadliest in decades.

But statistics alone cannot fully describe the devastation our communities have endured. For so many Chicagoans, the presence of gun violence is a constant source of trauma and grief in their day-to-day lives. It is painful and gut-wrenching to see this sort of senseless violence happen again and again.

We cannot wait any longer to advance Reynolds' confirmation, especially not for his nomination to be used as a pawn for Senator COTTON to expedite a response to his unrelated pending inquiry to the U.S. Department of Justice. Instead, we must act to make sure the Northern District of Illinois U.S. Marshal's Office has the leadership it needs to fulfill its mission of administering justice and enforcing the law.

If Senator COTTON is serious about tackling violent crime and making our communities safe, then we must move forward with confirming LaDon Reynolds to be the next U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Illinois now. Chief Reynolds' nomination has my full support.

I request that Senator COTTON lift his blanket hold on the U.S. attorney and U.S. marshal nominees pending consideration before the Senate, including Reynolds' nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. We keep hearing that this is unrelated, as if I am upset with something the Coast Guard did or the Corps of Engineers wants to improve some water project in Arkansas. These are Department of Justice nominees, and right now, the Department of Justice is not standing up for law enforcement officers by hanging these four marshals out to dry. That is why I am not agreeing to fast-track these nominees. I am not going to agree to fast-track political nominees while the Department of Justice hangs out to dry career law enforcement officers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Fast-track? Fast-track? Senator CORTEZ MASTO said it has been a year since they have had a U.S. attorney confirmed, sitting in Nevada. In Ohio now, it has been—let me count the days—404 days since 6 million people in the Northern District of Ohio last had a permanent U.S. attorney leading the office. Senator COTTON, with his demagoguery, comes down here and talks about fast-track? I don't know what speed they move in Arkansas, but I would not consider what we are trying to do as fast-track.

They have been vetted. Senator PORTMAN supports this nominee. Let me talk about that.

We know the pandemic has caused an alarming rise in violent crime, especially gun crimes. The Northern District of Ohio, which includes Toledo, Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Youngstown, Mansfield, Warren—cities in basically the northern half of the State. The U.S. attorney has the highest caseload in the last 30 years, filing a record 846 indictments in 2021 alone without a full-time, confirmed U.S. attorney.

Even before the pandemic, the district had a staggering caseload after reaching a record low in 2016, with only 363 new cases through, Senator COTTON, I might add, the Obama administration. The number of new cases began to climb in 2017, at the beginning of the Trump administration, if you want to play those games, Senator COTTON. The number of new cases rose to 706 in 2018. This as kept climbing since. Last year, there were 170 homicides in the city of Cleveland, where my wife and I live—another 30-year record—not to mention a surge in carjackings.

We need to fill key law enforcement positions in Ohio and, as Senator CORTEZ MASTO said, as Senator DURBIN said, in their States—and Senator ROSEN and Senator DUCKWORTH. We need to fill these key law enforcement positions.

I hear from Ohio police officers that they are in desperate need of help, while we, through—Senator COTTON and others accuse Democrats of undermining police or whatever term they use—a term that none of us use—when we have supported local governments with more dollars so they can hire more police while you oppose those same positions, as we know. So we are working with local police to get them that help, whether it is confirming U.S. marshals, whether it is confirming U.S. attorneys.

Thankfully, we have an extremely qualified nominee in Ohio who is ready and eager to serve. The only thing standing in our way is the U.S. Senate. Apparently, the only thing standing in the Senate's way is Senator COTTON, although I am sure somebody else would be willing to take his place.

Marissa Darden is a seasoned prosecutor with extensive experience, a lead attorney in both civil and criminal cases. As an assistant U.S. attorney in the Northern District, she was recognized for her work on several cases involving highly complex legal issues. She received the National High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Award for outstanding opioid investigation effort in 2016 and for outstanding investigative effort in 2019.

Listen to what some people have said. Federal District Court Judge Benita Pearson: You can be assured that Darden will fiercely enforce the law while treating all—attorneys, staff, the accused, and the community—with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

Former Acting U.S. Attorney Justin Herdman, nominated by President Trump and supported by Senator PORTMAN and me both—U.S. Attorney Justin Herdman was the last confirmed U.S. attorney in the Northern District. He described her as an attorney of outstanding ability and unquestioned integrity. He said that she is a leader who has a proven track record of delivering results inside and outside the courtroom.

First Assistant Federal Public Defender Jacqueline Johnson told us that this was her first recommendation for U.S. attorney in 38 years of practicing in the Northern District. She said she based her recommendation on her belief that Ms. Darden possesses the intellect, vision, temperament, and judgment needed to lead the U.S. Attorney's Office during this perilous season.

DEA Special Agent in Charge Keith Martin. With 26 years of experience, she is one of the best he has ever encountered, he said. He explained that she was phenomenal in her interaction with law enforcement, cooperative, and stands on her principles. He can't imagine a better choice.

These qualifications—I repeat that Senator PORTMAN also supports Ms. Darden's nomination. Her confirmation would also be historic, making her the first African-American woman to ever serve as U.S. attorney in Ohio.

Unfortunately, Senator COTTON blocks this nomination in addition to these eight other law enforcement nominees. By his own admission, his objections to these nominees have nothing to do with their qualifications.

I support his desire to get answers from DOJ. He should get them. But the solution for his disagreement with DOJ is not with the 6 million Ohio citizens who pay a price or the millions of citizens in Illinois or in Nevada who pay a price, or Minnesota or anywhere.

The last thing I will say, last week I spoke with police officers, one of the many kind of roundtable zooms I do around the State with police officers from around the State. One officer conveyed his colleagues' frustration with politics today. He told me that officers in his department have begun leaving letters on their lockers that say, if

they are killed in the line of duty, they want no elected officials invited to their funerals.

He said, the notes don't say no Democrats, no Republicans; they say no elected officials. A whole bunch of them. The reason for that is the gamesmanship we see right now, that we are not willing to confirm U.S. attorneys, U.S. marshals, in many cases, Federal district judges, just because somebody's been offended by the lack of a letter or something somebody at the Justice Department said to them.

The fact is we need to do this. It will help our States, it will help our country combat crime.

Let's heed this officer's warning and come together to get qualified and talented law enforcement officials and professionals on the job.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, so contrary to what the Senator from Ohio says, I am not offended by the lack of a letter or offended by something someone said. I'm offended that four U.S. marshals—four U.S. marshals had to decide whether they are going to have enough money to buy Christmas gifts for their kids, pay their mortgage next month, put braces on their kids, send them to summer camp because that is the position that the Department of Justice has put them in.

To recap, four U.S. marshals were among dozens deployed to Portland last summer to guard the courthouse from leftwing street militias. They were targeted with blinding lasers, ball bearings, fireworks. There was an effort to barricade them into the courthouse and set it afire to burn them alive.

Now leftwing activists in leftwing organizations like the ACLU are suing them, and the Department of Justice won't provide them representation, won't even tell them why they are not providing them representation.

Maybe they engaged in some kind of misconduct? Maybe it was excessive force? That would be strange, because all four of these deputy marshals are now back on unrestricted active duty with the special operations group of the Marshal Service, the element most likely to be sent into the most dangerous circumstances and have to use violence, including lethal violence.

It would be pretty strange to send them back to the special operations group with no restrictions if they engaged in some kind of misconduct in Portland. That is what this is about and what it does to undermine the faith and confidence of every career law enforcement professional in the Department of Justice.

So, no, I will not agree to fast-track political nominees to the Department when the Department leadership is hanging out to dry career law enforcement officers.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield for a question? I ask the question through the Chair.

Has the Senator been given a privacy waiver by the one marshal that the Department of Justice is not going to defend?

Mr. COTTON. No, I have not. But I know that the response that that marshal received was that the denial of representation was not in the interest of the United States. No more——

Mr. DURBIN. How much time do we have? I am sorry. Go ahead.

Mr. COTTON. No more facts, no more explanation, just like the three who are waiting for a determination and have been waiting for more than a year do not have any fact-based explanation.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, how much time do we have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 1 minute 13 seconds.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, that last admission by the Senator from Arkansas tells the whole story. He doesn't even know why the Department is turning down representation of 1 person out of 74. They have agreed to represent 70 of these U.S. marshal employees, and they said they will represent them; and three are under review. One has been turned down; and he hasn't received a privacy waiver, so he doesn't know why. I don't know why either. But you know who is paying the price for it?

Millions of Americans who are asking for Federal law enforcement to be adequately staffed to do their job. The U.S. attorneys and U.S. marshals that want to keep us safe and be part of the team to do that. And because this Senator suspects there may be something suspicious about this, he doesn't have a privacy waiver, he is going to hold up those officials throughout the United States and put their communities in peril. Tell me that that is devotion to law enforcement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. This is exactly the point. Privacy waiver or not, what does it matter? Here is what we do know. Here is what we do know. That none of these four know why they were denied representation or why they haven't had a determination. We know that. And we know that they were sent back on unrestricted active duty to the special operations group.

I think the Department of Justice political leadership owes these brave law enforcement officers an answer before it hangs them out to dry and exposes them to risk of financial ruin and bankruptcy.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is all time yielded back?

Mr. COTTON. I yield back.

VOTE ON WALLANDER NOMINATION

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

Mr. BROWN. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

The result was announced—yeas 83, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 58 Ex.]

YEAS—83

Baldwin	Grassley	Risch
Barrasso	Hassan	Romney
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blackburn	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Blunt	Hoeven	Sasse
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Boozman	Inhofe	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Burr	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Shelby
Capito	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Sullivan
Cassidy	Marshall	Tester
Collins	McConnell	Thune
Coons	Menendez	Tillis
Cornyn	Merkley	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Cotton	Murphy	Warner
Cramer	Murray	Warnock
Crapo	Ossoff	Warren
Daines	Padilla	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Paul	Wicker
Durbin	Peters	Wyden
Fischer	Portman	Young
Gillibrand	Reed	

NAYS—13

Braun	Johnson	Rubio
Cruz	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Ernst	Lee	Tuberville
Hagerty	Lummis	
Hawley	Moran	

NOT VOTING—4

Feinstein	Kelly
Graham	Luján

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON HONEY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Honey nomination?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—94

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

NAYS—1

Hawley

NOT VOTING—5

Feinstein	Kelly	Whitehouse
Graham	Luján	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

CRIME

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I have come to this floor before for the same subject, but I now come to express my concerns once again about the rise in crime in America. Now I want to express what that rise in crime means for everybody if we don't stop it. If we don't act soon, and don't reverse the trend of tolerating crime, a generation of Americans will see the greatest cities fall once again into decay. We have seen it before, and it is not something that we want to see again. To stop it, we must allow the police to enforce the law and demand that prosecutors do their job.

A couple of generations of Americans have now grown up not knowing how dangerous some of our biggest cities used to be. The two that come to mind are New York and Washington, DC.

First, let's look at New York 20, 40 years ago. When asked what they think of Times Square in Manhattan, most younger Americans would probably say that it is a tourist trap. But it wasn't always that way. In the 1970s, Times Square was an open sore, filled with adult theaters, drugs, and rampant crime. Back then, the New York City subway looked like something from some dystopian horror movie. In other words, you avoided New York City subways if you could.

Now, let's turn to Washington, DC, in the late 1980s. Its decay could almost be traced back entirely to one person. Just a few blocks from here where we are standing right now, a drug dealer named Rayful Edmond ran the most notorious crack cocaine operation in the country. By 1989, he was bringing 1,700 pounds of cocaine into DC every month. He used to put snipers on rooftops near his headquarters. Police suspected his operation was involved in 30 homicides. During that time, the city's murder rate doubled. Washington had the nickname the ''murder capital of the world.''

Then something great happened. Mayors and prosecutors got serious about dealing with crime. They sent Rayful Edmond to jail for life. People who lived in cities felt much safer. Businesses flourished. Pervasive fear gradually lessened because police took criminals off the street.

The crime rates in New York and Washington plummeted. Young families moved to urban neighborhoods that were far too dangerous just a few years before. This was wonderful, obviously. The block where Rayful Edmond once put his snipers on rooftops is now a very normal residential street.

Our cities, everybody knows, should be places where we want to live. We should enjoy going there to see other people. We shouldn't avoid cities because we are afraid of getting harassed on the streets or carjacked, at the worst. But that is what is beginning to happen again. All over the country, our biggest cities are starting to look dangerous and empty. History repeats and repeats.

Cities are devolving into what they were just a couple of decades ago. Homicides in 22 major cities have gone up 44 percent since 2019. Carjackings are up double, even triple, and worse in some cities. Thieves are stealing from stores with impunity. When that happens, those businesses shut down, leaving neighborhoods with empty storefronts and a recipe for urban decline.

Crime is up because of the permissive approach by too many so-called progressive prosecutors. One prosecutor in San Francisco has said that if you steal less than $950, you won't be prosecuted. No wonder people are committing more crimes. These prosecutors see criminals as victims, releasing them back into the streets shortly after being arrested. This sows fear in local residents. Common sense ought to tell everybody that. Common sense says it kills growth. Common sense says it hurt neighborhoods. Common sense says it endangers regular people who want to live their lives peacefully.

America is a nation of progress. We are a nation of progress moving forward. Our current backward slide to urban decays in the 1970s and 1980s is tragic. Working-class families and those who can't afford to move somewhere safer will bear the brunt of it.

The solution here is not very complicated. A recent poll showed two out of every three people know what some of these blue-city mayors haven't figured out yet: More police equals less crime.

When prosecutors list a whole bunch of crimes that they won't prosecute, it encourages lawbreaking. Also, we need to stop the crusade to defund the police. They need to stop progressive prosecutors. You know, I know there is prosecutorial discretion. We all know that not every crime can be punished or prosecuted.

But if you were a smart prosecutor who didn't want to encourage more crime, you wouldn't tell the whole world that certain crimes aren't going to be punished and others will be punished, because that is inviting those laws to be broken. That is why you see dozens of people rushing into a retail store, grabbing everything they can that is under $950 and leave.

Prosecutors ought to keep their mouths shut and just do the job; and if they use discretion, keep it to themselves not to punish some crimes.

So we need to make sure that repeat offenders and those who are a threat to society don't get bail. Otherwise, younger generations of America will learn all over again the harsh lessons about how quickly our greatest cities can fall into decay.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. 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—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I am on the floor today to talk about the nomination of Ambassador Julieta Valls Noyes, to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Originally nominated last July, Ambassador Noyes' nomination was reported favorably out of the Foreign Relations Committee in October.

Since then, she has waited in limbo for all of us to act. Ambassador Noyes has a distinguished 35-year career with the State Department, serving in important and challenging roles, many of those roles tied directly to the work she would be doing at the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, often referred to as PRM.

As Ambassador to Croatia, she presided over the final stages of a refugee resettlement program after the Balkan wars, while hosting regional conferences and trainings for prosecutors, police, and judges on refugee-related issues.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Ambassador Noyes oversaw the

nations with 11 Western European countries and the European Union, some of our country's most critical partners.

From 2005 to 2007, Ambassador Noyes was Director of Multilateral and Global Affairs in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, where she ran international negotiations on human rights—both at the United Nations in New York and in Geneva.

In that capacity, she also held consultations with the European Union, with the African Union, with other partners. And she was a member of high-level delegations that presented periodic reports to the United Nations on U.S. compliance with major international human rights treaties.

She has been recognized as a strong manager. She has overseen large teams. She has administered huge budgets.

In addition to all of this, she is the daughter of Cuban refugees who directly benefited from the work of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, so she has a personal connection to the importance of the Bureau's work.

When you think about that list of qualifications, she is really the ideal person to lead PRM. What is the rush, some may ask. PRM hasn't had a confirmed Assistant Secretary since the days of the Obama administration.

Well, all the more reason that it should have one now. It shouldn't be a rudderless organization when addressing so many important issues for our Nation.

PRM has a major role in human rights and humanitarian efforts rights abroad as well as providing aid to refugees here at home.

PRM is responsible for directing more than $3 billion in lifesaving humanitarian aid around the world to more than 84 million forcibly displaced people. Eighty percent of those are women and children. So if you care about the plight of women and children around the world, you want to have an experienced leader making sure those dollars are efficiently allocated to the best effect.

PRM leads the rebuilding of the U.S. refugee assistance program. PRM works with other governments to promote regional migration resolutions. PRM advances international population policies that save mothers and babies and prevent gender-based violence around the world.

PRM leads diplomatic efforts for international burden sharing to better reduce suffering and to be more effective in saving lives.

And PRM is a critical part of our national security infrastructure, vetting those who come into our country, ensuring they don't pose a risk to our safety and security.

The Bureau is doing all this, but they are doing it without a leader to make sure they do it in the most effective, professional, competent fashion.

The Bureau is doing critical work every day to address these challenges, and those challenges are growing as more and more countries are disrupted by war and by famine and by corruption.

So this Bureau deserves to have someone leading those efforts who has the type of background that the Ambassador has. All of us who want to see these programs administered effectively have a stake in having competent leadership in place.

Thus, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination, Calendar No. 462, Julieta Valls Noyes, to be an Assistant Secretary of State; that the nomination be 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; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Throughout his administration, President Biden has shown a shocking disregard for congressional authority and oversight.

Following his botched and deadly withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Biden administration has refused to take accountability or provide answers to Congress or the American people. The President repeatedly shifts blame and hides from the truth. His administration demands to have closed, so-called classified hearings, even though none of the material being discussed is classified information.

We still don't even know how many Americans are trapped in Afghanistan. We don't know how many Americans are trapped in Afghanistan. Biden abandoned them behind enemy lines.

It is wrong. It left many Americans with no faith in President Biden's ability to lead or appoint qualified individuals to serve in these important roles.

That is why I cannot and will not consent to allowing this nominee to move forward in an expedited manner. We should take a vote so every Senator can get on the record with their support or opposition to this nominee.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I would love for us to have a full, ordinary process here on the floor and to have all of us on both sides of the aisle support that process.

I come to the floor to ask for this unanimous consent because that process has been frustrated, and we now have been without a leader for this entire administration.

My colleague made a point about Afghanistan, and he said we need to know how many Americans are in Afghanistan. If you want better action on the issue of Americans as refugees abroad or stranded abroad, then you want to have a responsible leader, an accountable leader, heading up the Bureau of Population, Migration, and Refugees.

So let's do our job here in this Chamber because when we fail to enable such a critical organization, responsible for billions of dollars around the world being provided to millions of people, responsible for the vetting of people coming into our country, when we fail to do our job to put somebody in charge, we are only wounding ourselves.

This is exactly the type of partisan paralysis and destruction that is damaging our Nation. We need to get this confirmation completed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

REMEMBERING ELIZABETH PERATROVICH

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this evening to speak in honor and recognition of a woman by the name of Elizabeth Peratrovich.

Elizabeth Peratrovich is recognized in my State of Alaska as a champion, a relentless champion, for civil rights for all Alaskans.

It is on this day, the 16th of February, that the State of Alaska observes Elizabeth Peratrovich Day. In communities across the State, in schools, cultural centers, you are going to be seeing activities to honor this really remarkable Alaska Native leader.

PBS has an award-winning show for children called ''Molly of Denali.'' It is a great TV show, and they recently had an episode highlighting the story of Elizabeth Peratrovich.

It was just 2 years ago, now, that her image was placed on a dollar coin issued by the U.S. Mint. So that recognition has gone beyond the State of Alaska, clearly, to the national and the Federal level.

So as we are celebrating Elizabeth Peratrovich Day back home, I am going to share a little bit of her story with the Senate because it is a legacy of seeking and realizing a more inclusive society and certainly a more representative democracy.

Elizabeth was a Tlingit, a member of the Raven/Sockeye or Lukaax-Adi clan. She was actually born on Independence Day, born in Petersburg, AK, in 1911.

And it was just a year after that, 1912, a group of Native people from across the southeastern part of the State mobilized to form an organization called the Alaska Native Brotherhood, ANB. Then, 2 years later, they formed the Alaska Native Sisterhood. ANB, ANS these are considered the oldest indigenous civil rights organizations in the world, started right there in southeastern Alaska.

ANB and ANS sought to advance equal opportunities for education, for employment, for housing, and they fought to secure Native civil rights.

Elizabeth married Roy Peratrovich, and the two of them became very active in ANB and ANS activities in the 1940s.

In 1941, they had moved to Juneau, and they encountered a level of discrimination in that community against Alaska Native peoples that, as we look at the accounts of the time, paralleled the Jim Crow practices in the South, but it strengthened their resolve. It strengthened their commitment to fight back against the discrimination that they saw.

Through their work with ANB and ANS, Elizabeth and Roy began advocating for an antidiscrimination bill in the Territorial legislature. If you will recall, we didn't become a State until 1959. This is the early forties, and they are talking about an antidiscrimination bill in our legislature. They pointed out to all who would listen that Alaska Natives were paying taxes for a public school system that excluded their children. They weren't part of that school system. They pointed out that Alaska Native men were fighting in World War II, but then on their return, they were denied rights that other veterans enjoyed.

Those fundamental discriminations and many more were what drove their pursuit for equal rights not just for Alaska Natives but for all people in Alaska.

So they had gone to Juneau in 1941. That antidiscrimination bill didn't pass immediately. It was reintroduced in 1945. And there is a lot of discussion about the pivotal moment in time when eyes were opened and, really, minds were also opened in awareness.

This was the time of debate where this antidiscrimination bill had passed the house, had moved over to the senate, and there was a Territorial senator who denounced these efforts to desegregate, and he stood up on the senate floor, and he said:

> Who are these people, barely out of savagery, who want to associate with us whites, with 5,000 years of recorded civilization behind us?

Pretty inflammatory if you are sitting there in those Senate chambers listening to that, certainly—certainly—to an Alaska Native person.

At the end of the debate, the public was offered a chance to express their views in front of the legislature. That is not something that you have happen in most legislatures. We don't have it in our legislature now, but in our Territorial legislature, the public was offered a chance to weigh in here.

And Elizabeth Peratrovich stood in the back of this senate gallery, and in her remarks, she said:

> I would not have expected that I, who am ''barely out of savagery,'' would have to remind the gentleman with 5,000 years of recorded civilization behind them of our Bill of Rights.

And when asked if she thought that the bill would eliminate discrimination, she replied:

> Do your laws against larceny and even murder prevent those crimes? No law will eliminate crimes, but at least you as legislators can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of the present situation and speak your intent to help us overcome discrimination.

Imagine this scene. You are part of this legislative body, and from the back of the gallery, a Native woman stands to speak to address this elected body.

Following her comments, there was a long period of silence, and then there was applause through the gallery and through the senate floor, including from some who had previously opposed the bill.

Alaska's Governor at the time, Ernest Gruening, went on to sign the antidiscrimination act, the Nation's first antidiscrimination act, signed into law on February 16, 1945. This was almost two decades before the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.

So it is something that when we in Alaska think about the history of discrimination that we have had, that certainly Alaska Native people have endured—endured far too long—to have led the country in terms of putting into law the first antidiscrimination act in this country a couple decades before the Civil Rights Act advanced through this Congress.

During an Indian Affairs Committee hearing on Native voting access last October, the president of the Alaska Federation Natives, Julie Kitka, reminded us that these events are not very old, and sometimes we think of Elizabeth Peratrovich as part of our history, but she, Elizabeth, and her husband Roy, and the impact that they had on Alaska and the way that they strengthened our democracy is our current history as well.

So we honor Elizabeth Peratrovich's legacy of standing up for what is right. She is an inspiration because she set the example that when you see something wrong, you speak out and you do something about it.

And she also provided a great example for why we need to listen—why we need to listen to all perspectives and voices, especially those who have been left out or left behind, oftentimes intentionally.

I think of Stella Martin of Kake, AK, a champion of equal rights herself. She described Elizabeth Peratrovich as ''a fighter with velvet gloves.'' And she was truly a fighter. Elizabeth Peratrovich Day is also a timely reminder for those of us here in the U.S. Senate. We all have an obligation to respond to the calls from our constituents who are seeking protection, including through electoral reforms and improvements for voter access.

We all know that we went through a very partisan exercise on voting rights legislation here on the floor earlier this year. Some may say it is hard to see how that advanced the debate on this issue; but it didn't change the underlying fact that we do need to come together to advance good solid policy in this area. I am working with a group of Senators. There are around 16 of us, I think, total. But we are continuing to focus on these issues of election reform. We want to try to determine a bipartisan path forward so that we can actually move important safeguards and clarifications into the law. And it may not be easy to take on some of these complicated issues, particularly when you get the pulls from both sides to not engage to try to come to the middle. But like we did with the infrastructure bill, like we are doing with the Violence Against Women Act, we need to follow a path that allows us to get some things done as opposed to simply sending messages.

As Alaska celebrates Elizabeth Peratrovich, I hope the Senate will look to her legacy for inspiration as we seek unity and follow her example of treating our fellow citizens with respect. We have got too much at stake to operate in any other lesser manner.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his attention.

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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session to 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.

ANNIVERSARY OF PROTESTS IN BAHRAIN

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it has been 11 years since the people of Bahrain gathered in the streets of Manama to urge their leaders to grant them stronger economic, social, and human rights. Bahrainis of all backgrounds called upon their leaders for meaningful change, for a voice at the table in the matters that affected their everyday lives. But their activism was met with brutal repression from the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Journalists and human rights activists have shared with the world how Bahrain's national security forces violently beat unarmed protestors in the crowds, severely injuring and even killing protestors with tear gas, rubber bullets, and other live ammunition. The forces arbitrarily arrested and detained journalists, pursued volunteers who were helping the injured, and spared no one, not even children. This anniversary is stained by the blood of the Bahraini people, and it pains me that despite over a decade of asking for

accountability and reform, there has been little change from their government.

The country's leadership continues to commit and permit appalling human rights violations. Past reports from the U.S. State Department have highlighted the mistreatment of prisoners, including torture, inhumane punishment, and lack of proper access to medical care. Conditions have been further exacerbated by COVID–19, with two major outbreaks in overcrowded prisons last year. Yet the government continues to deny access to human rights experts, including the U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture.

The Bahrain Government has also attempted to silence dissent by imprisoning opposition leaders, outlawing opposition parties, and banning online content as they see fit. The government restricts free speech on social media from their people and requires news and broadcasting outlets to be government-sanctioned, effectively stifling all independent journalism and healthy discourse. Additionally, reports indicate that the Bahrain Government monitors activists and other targets of interest by hacking into their phones.

My father was a journalist, so I know how vital freedom of speech and freedom of press are to a flourishing, stable country. As a staunch defender against government overreach and unwarranted surveillance, I cannot stand idly by as the people of Bahrain live in constant fear of surveillance, arrest, and imprisonment for simply voicing their thoughts.

America must hold Bahrain to a high standard, as we do with all our allies. The United States maintains a strategic relationship with Bahrain, as the country cooperates on U.S. defense initiatives in the region and hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. The United States represents a beacon of hope and democracy to the rest of the world, and we cannot remain silent in the face of over a decade of human rights violations and repression.

This is a key year for change; Bahrain is slated to hold its parliamentary elections later this year. I strongly urge the Bahrain Government to allow peaceful demonstration and dissent, open their doors to independent oversight and international election observers, address their violations of human rights, and cease their attacks on free speech and free press. And during this pivotal year, I also urge the Biden administration to hold the Bahrain Government accountable for their overdue promises of reform.

NATIONAL FFA WEEK

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the National FFA Organization and celebrate National FFA Week, February 19–26, 2022. This is a week to applaud the positive impact FFA has made on our country and acknowledge the accomplishments of its members.

Previously known as the Future Farmers of America, the National FFA Organization was founded in 1928 by a group of young farmers with dreams to develop an organization which would address the challenges of feeding a growing population. These young farmers' leadership, experience, and passion for the industry became a movement that, for nearly 100 years, has adapted to represent the entirety of agriculture, not just farming. The National FFA Organization has been an institution where students can grow as both agriculturists and leaders. Today, there are 735,038 FFA members in 8,817 chapters across all 50 States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, DC. In my home State of Arkansas, FFA has 229 chapters with close to 16,000 members.

FFA is a part of an integrated model that implements classroom agricultural education and hands-on, experiential learning. I commend the more than 13,000 agricultural science teachers and FFA advisers who prepare the next generation of leaders. It is because of them that we can be confident in the upcoming farmers, ranchers, foresters, agriculturalists, scientists, educators, and those who seek a career outside of the agricultural industry.

I have been fortunate to spend some time with these impressive young people. They hail from different parts of the country and come from unique backgrounds, but all possess the same passion for agriculture and service. It is always encouraging hearing FFA members share their experiences and goals for the future. There is no doubt they are prepared to make those goals reality.

FFA is about more than preparing students for careers in agriculture. It teaches leadership skills, instills a sense of service, and places young Arkansans and young people all over the country on the right path for success. After leaving their chapters, these young leaders continue to make a positive difference in the world around them. There are over 8 million FFA alumni. Alumni continue to use the knowledge and skills acquired while they were members. I know this to be true. Currently, I have eight FFA alumni on my staff, including some who received the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization and alumni who served as chapter, State, and national officers.

FFA members inspire those they serve, and I, too, have been impressed by the members and their accomplishments. I am increasingly optimistic about the future of agriculture, especially with passionate, dedicated leaders, like the ones developed by FFA, at the helm. FFA members serve as a reminder that our future is bright. I am honored to applaud the great work of FFA at the local, State, and national level as we celebrate National FFA Week.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ALASKA 2–1–1 SYSTEM

• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, Alaskans recognized February 11 to celebrate the Alaska 2–1–1 system, which connects community resource specialists with Alaskans in need of help finding vital services and resources. The Alaska 2–1–1 system has been instrumental in providing Alaskans with information regarding key health and human services within their community. Alaskans utilize 2–1–1 in emergency situations when barriers to connecting to care are most challenging. The 2–1–1 system has provided information regarding COVID–19 testing sites, vaccine clinics, and other services including childcare, emergency food and shelter services, senior services, and alcohol and drug treatment programs. One of the biggest challenges Alaskans continue to face is not knowing where to turn for help in their communities during a crisis. Having a specialist available at no cost is a critical element in accessing support and services. The Alaska 2–1–1 system helps to bridge that gap for Alaskans. I thank all of those working at Alaska 2–1–1 for their service to our neighbors and State.•

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:10 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 1687(b)(1)(A) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117–81), and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States: Dr. Gloria Chairman Duffy of Santa Clara, California.

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–3247. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2-Isobutyl-2-methyl-1,3-dioxolane-4-methanol; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9418–01–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3248. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fludioxonil; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9482–01–OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3249. A communication from the Chief of the Planning and Regulatory Affairs Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010; Correcting Amendments'' (RIN0584–AE18) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3250. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Brian T. Kelly, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3251. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Financial Stability Oversight Council 2021 annual report to Congress; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3252. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13288 with respect to Zimbabwe; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3253. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3254. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3255. A communication from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Annual Performance Plan and Report, and Budget Overview (FY 2022)''; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3256. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Applicable Schedule Amount'' (31 CFR Part 501) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3257. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Simplification of Deposit Insurance Rules'' (RIN3064–AF27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3258. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rules of Practice and Procedure; Civil Money Penalty Inflation Adjustment'' (RIN2590–AA43) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 7, 2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3259. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and the Acting Assistant Secretary, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the semi-annual Implementation Report on Energy Conservation Standards Activities of the Department of Energy; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3260. A communication from the Acting Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revised 2023 and Later Model Year Light-Duty Vehicle Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards'' ((RIN2060–AV13) (FRL No. 8469–01–OAR)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 7, 2022; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3261. A communication from the Acting Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 5) for Public Water Systems and Announcement of Public Meetings'' ((RIN2040–AF89) (FRL No. 6791–03–OW)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 7, 2022; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3262. A communication from the Acting Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; California; San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District'' (FRL No. 9291–01–R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 7, 2022; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3263. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Determination To Defer Sanctions; Arizona; Maricopa County; Power Plants'' (FRL No. 9426–03–R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3264. A communication from the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Clean School Bus Program: Initial Implementation''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3265. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Secretariat Division, Office of Asset and Transportation Management, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Management Regulation; Art in Architecture'' (RIN3090–AK47) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 7, 2022; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3266. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Study and Report Related to Medicaid Managed Care Regulation''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3267. A communication from the Director of the Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2022 Indexed Qualifying Payment Amount'' (Rev. Proc. 2022–11) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3268. A communication from the Senior Legal Advisor for Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds'' (RIN1505–AC77) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3269. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Section 7436 Notice and Jurisdictional Requirements'' (Rev. Proc. 2022–13) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3270. A communication from the Director of the Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Determination of Substantially Equal Periodic Payments'' (Notice 2022–6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3271. A communication from the Senior Bureau Official, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the authorization of danger pay in Colombia, Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3272. A communication from the Senior Bureau Official, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Visas: Nonimmigrant Visas'' (RIN1400–AF34) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 31, 2022; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3273. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revision of Annual Information Return/Reports'' (RIN1210–AC00) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–3274. A communication from the Chief of the Regulatory Coordination Division, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Exercise of Time-Limited Authority to Increase the Fiscal Year 2022 Numerical Limitation for the H–2B Temporary Nonagricultural Worker Program and Portability Flexibility for H–2B Workers Seeking To Change Employers'' ((RIN1615–AC77) (RIN1205–AC09)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 442. A bill to amend title 40, United States Code, to require the Administrator of General Services to procure the most life-cycle cost effective and energy efficient lighting products and to issue guidance on the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of those products, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117–80).

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. OSSOFF (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 3655. A bill to amend the Civil Rights Cold Case Records Collection Act of 2018 to extend the termination date of the Civil Rights Cold Case Records Review Board; to

the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 3656. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide hereditary cancer genetic testing for individuals with a history of a hereditary cancer gene mutation in a blood relative or a personal or ancestral history suspicious for hereditary cancer, and to provide coverage of certain cancer screenings or preventive surgeries that would reduce the risk for individuals with a germline (inherited) mutation associated with a high risk of developing a preventable cancer; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Ms. ERNST, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 3657. A bill to require the Director of National Intelligence to provide notification to Congress of abandoned United States military equipment used in terrorist attacks; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 3658. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for interest-free deferment on student loans for borrowers serving in a medical or dental internship or residency program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 3659. A bill to exempt premium pay received by semi-retired workers during the COVID–19 pandemic from the Social Security retirement earnings test; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CRAMER, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 3660. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make diapers an allowable expense for purposes of health flexible spending arrangements and health savings accounts; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 3661. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to authorize expedited approval of applications to export natural gas to certain allies of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 3662. A bill to temporarily increase the cost share authority for aqueous film forming foam input-based testing equipment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 3663. A bill to protect the safety of children on the internet; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 3664. A bill to assist in the conservation of the North Atlantic right whale by supporting and providing financial resources for North Atlantic right whale conservation programs and projects of persons with expertise required for the conservation of North Atlantic right whales, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KING):

S. 3665. A bill to authorize certain aliens seeking asylum to be employed in the United States while their applications are being adjudicated; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 3666. A bill to require reports on the adoption of a cryptocurrency as legal tender in El Salvador, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. ROMNEY):

S. 3667. A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the United States African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 3668. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from using biometric recognition technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 3669. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify rules relating to like kind exchanges; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. 3670. A bill to clarify that agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services do not have the authority to regulate the practice of medicine; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CRUZ, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. LEE, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 3671. A bill to apply the Freedom of Information Act to actions and decisions of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information in carrying out the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 3672. A bill to require the head of each agency to establish a plan to resume in-person operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 312

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 312, a bill to expand eligibility for and provide judicial review for the Elderly Home Detention Pilot Program, provide for compassionate release based on COVID–19 vulnerability, shorten the waiting period for judicial review during the COVID–19 pandemic, and make other technical corrections.

S. 435

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 435, a bill to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

S. 773

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 773, a bill to enable certain hospitals that were participating in or applied for the drug discount program under section 340B of the Public Health Service Act prior to the COVID–19 public health emergency to temporarily maintain eligibility for such program, and for other purposes.

S. 819

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 819, a bill to enhance the security of the United States and its allies, and for other purposes.

S. 1024

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1024, a bill to enhance our Nation's nurse and physician workforce during the COVID–19 crisis by recapturing unused immigrant visas.

S. 1079

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1079, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the troops from the United States and the Philippines who defended Bataan and Corregidor, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service during World War II.

S. 1175

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1175, a bill to categorize public safety telecommunicators as a protective service occupation under the Standard Occupational Classification System.

S. 1187

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1187, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to improve the administration of antidumping and countervailing duty laws, and for other purposes.

S. 1302

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1302, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 1401

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1401, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve nutritional and other program requirements relating to purchases of locally produced food.

S. 1536

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1536, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the availability of medical nutrition therapy services under the Medicare program.

S. 1596

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1596, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1596, supra.

S. 1752

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1752, a bill to establish the National Center for Advancement of Aviation.

S. 2036

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2036, a bill to amend the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, to establish the Office of the Special Investigator for Competition Matters, and for other purposes.

S. 2960

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2960, a bill to encourage reduction of disposable plastic products in units of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

S. 2981

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2981, a bill to amend the National Housing Act to establish a mortgage insurance program for first responders, and for other purposes.

S. 3230

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3230, a bill to require the establishment of a working group to evaluate the food safety threat posed by beef imported from Brazil, and for other purposes.

S. 3293

At the request of Mr. CASEY, his name was added as a cosponsor 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. 3360

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3360, a bill to reauthorize title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 3508

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3508, a bill to posthumously award a congressional gold medal to Constance Baker Motley.

S. 3541

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 3541, a bill to improve health care and services for veterans exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3541, supra.

S. 3607

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 3607, a bill to award a Congressional gold medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 3632

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3632, a bill to amend the program for local substance use disorder services.

S. 3650

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3650, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish and maintain a public directory of the individuals occupying Government policy and supporting positions, and for other purposes.

S. 3652

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 3652, a bill to counter the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and Eastern European allies, to expedite security assistance to Ukraine to bolster Ukraine's defense capabilities, and to impose sanctions relating to the actions of the Russian Federation with respect to Ukraine, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 39

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 39, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services relating to ''Vaccine and Mask Requirements To Mitigate the Spread of COVID–19 in Head Start Programs.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Ms. ERNST, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 3657. A bill to require the Director of National Intelligence to provide notification to Congress of abandoned United States military equipment used in terrorist attacks; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 3657

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. NOTIFICATION OF ABANDONED UNITED STATES MILITARY EQUIPMENT USED IN TERRORIST ATTACKS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after any element of the intelligence community (as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003)) determines that United States military equipment abandoned or otherwise left unsecured in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria has been used in a terrorist attack against the United States, allies or partners of the United States, or local populations, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a written notification of such determination that includes any known details relating to—

(1) the equipment used in the attack;

(2) the date on which, and the location from which, the equipment left United States custody;

(3) attribution for the orchestrators of the attack; and

(4) the total number of deaths and casualties caused by the attack.

(b) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Subcommittee on Defense of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Subcommittee on Defense of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 3659. A bill to exempt premium pay received by semi-retired workers during the COVID–19 pandemic from the Social Security retirement earnings test; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Supporting Essential Workers in Retirement Act with my

colleagues Senator BROWN, Senator CASSIDY, and Senator CASEY. Our bill would ensure that workers who stepped up during the COVID–19 pandemic and performed essential work in hazardous conditions, including our first responders and critical supply chain workers, do not have their Social Security benefits reduced for serving our country.

Semiretired workers make invaluable contributions across all sectors of our economy. Workers who retire at age 62 may collect Social Security benefits, but if these workers choose to continue working and earning income, then the retirement earnings test, or RET, will reduce the benefits they earn above a certain threshold.

I have heard from many constituents who stepped up to perform essential work during the pandemic, only to find later that the income they earned during that time unexpectedly put them above the statutory RET threshold. One of my constituents, a teacher aide at an Aroostook County elementary school, is an example of a semiretired worker who was negatively impacted by the RET. She worked extra hours delivering meals to children who were at home learning remotely from March through June of 2020, and as a result she earned more than the RET threshold and had to pay money back to the Social Security Administration. I have also heard from semiretired nurses who agreed to work extra hours as our hospitals were filled with COVID patients and part-time employees who worked overtime to produce desperately needed personal protective equipment and COVID tests. They answered the call to fulfill vital roles when many of us were locked down in the early stages of the pandemic.

Through no fault of their own, these workers' incomes surpassed the RET threshold due to overtime and hazard pay. They must now pay back thousands of dollars in benefits to the Social Security Administration or face a temporary reduction in their benefits until the money is recouped. Meanwhile, the money they earned during this time was to compensate for the exceptional work performed during the pandemic, and these semiretired essential workers did not plan or budget for a reduction in benefits or a sudden expense. Mr. President, this is profoundly unfair for those who aided us during a crisis.

The Supporting Essential Workers in Retirement Act would exempt premium pay earned by essential workers during the COVID–19 pandemic from the RET. We should incentivize essential work, not discourage it. I encourage my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill to ensure that those brave individuals who performed essential work in hazardous conditions to help our country address a global pandemic are not punished for doing so.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KING):

S. 3665. A bill to authorize certain aliens seeking asylum to be employed in the United States while their applications are being adjudicated; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President. I rise today to introduce the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act of 2022 with my colleagues Senator SINEMA and Senator KING. This legislation would allow individuals seeking asylum to be eligible for employment authorizations starting 30 days after applying for asylum, provided their applications are not frivolous; they are not detained; and their identities have been verified, with their names run through the federal—government's terrorist watch lists. This change would allow asylum applicants to work, support themselves, and contribute to society without being as dependent on assistance from local governments while their claims are being adjudicated.

Under current law, asylum seekers must wait extended periods of time after filing their applications before they are allowed to apply for work permits. These long waiting periods were originally adopted by the Clinton administration—and then extended to a full year by the Trump administration—out of concern that some migrants might apply for asylum primarily as a means of getting a work authorization. Clearly, this change has only transferred the burden of care for these asylum seekers onto communities across the Nation.

One such community is Portland, ME. Over the span of several months, a historic surge of asylum seekers has arrived in Portland after crossing our southern border. Currently, hundreds of asylum seekers are being housed in emergency shelters by the city of Portland. These asylum seekers could give a much needed boost to Maine businesses that are facing labor shortages—our State's unemployment rate is just 4.7 percent—but the lengthy work authorization process prevents these asylum seekers from getting jobs, even to support themselves.

While the Federal Government has provided assistance to Portland and other communities around our country dealing with a surge in asylum seekers, it would be a better solution if those seeking asylum were able to join the workforce and achieve self-sufficiency as quickly as possible while awaiting the outcome of their cases.

It is my hope that the changes proposed by our bill will lessen the burden on the budgets of communities hosting asylum seekers, while allowing these individuals and their families to support themselves as they want to do, bringing needed skills to the cities and towns in which they settle. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4927. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4928. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4929. Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. MARSHALL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4930. Mr. BRAUN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4927. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. PROHIBITION ON FEDERAL FUNDING OF SCHOOLS OR CHILD CARE CENTERS WITH STUDENT COVID–19 VACCINE MANDATES.

None of the funds made available under this Act or an amendment made by this Act may be provided or awarded, including by way of grant or subgrant, to any State educational agency, local educational agency, public school (including a public charter school), private or parochial school, child care center, or Head Start facility, that enforces any coronavirus SARS–CoV–2 vaccine mandate that requires a child or student under the age of 19 years to be immunized against COVID–19 as a condition of enrollment or in-person attendance at such school, center, or facility or to participate in any school-based or school-sponsored activities, including extracurricular activities.

SA 4928. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. PROHIBITION ON FUNDING OF VACCINE MANDATES.

None of the funds made available under this Act or an amendment made by this Act may be used to implement or enforce any of the following COVID–19 vaccination mandates:

(1) The emergency temporary standard issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration on November 5, 2021, entitled ''COVID–19 Vaccination and Testing; Emergency Temporary Standard'' (86 Fed. Reg. 61402; relating to requiring COVID–19 vaccination with respect to employers of 100 or more employees).

(2) Executive Order 14042 of September 9, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 50985; relating to ensuring adequate COVID–19 safety protocols for Federal contractors), as amended before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(3) Executive Order 14043 of September 9, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 50989; relating to requiring COVID–19 vaccination for Federal employees), as amended before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(4) The interim final rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services on November 5, 2021, entitled ''Medicare and

Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination'' (86 Fed. Reg. 61555).

(5) The memorandum signed by the Secretary of Defense on August 24, 2021, for ''Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members''.

(6) The interim final rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services on November 30, 2021, entitled ''Vaccine and Mask Requirements To Mitigate the Spread of COVID–19 in Head Start Programs'' (86 Fed. Reg. 68052).

(7) Any other Federal COVID–19 vaccine mandate, including any memorandum, rule, standard, order, or other provision replacing or revising any mandate described in paragraphs (1) through (6).

SEC. _____. PROHIBITION ON FEDERAL FUNDING OF SCHOOLS OR CHILD CARE CENTERS WITH STUDENT COVID–19 VACCINE MANDATES.

None of the funds made available under this Act or an amendment made by this Act may be provided or awarded, including by way of grant or subgrant, to any State educational agency, local educational agency, public school (including a public charter school), private or parochial school, child care center, or Head Start facility, that enforces any coronavirus SARS–CoV–2 vaccine mandate that requires a child or student under the age of 19 years to be immunized against COVID–19 as a condition of enrollment or in-person attendance at such school, center, or facility or to participate in any school-based or school-sponsored activities, including extracurricular activities.

SA 4929. Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. MARSHALL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

After section 101 in division A, insert the following:

SEC. 102. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (division A of Public Law 117–43), as amended by this Act, may be obligated or expended to—

(1) implement or enforce—

(A) section 1910.501 of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation);

(B) Executive Order 14042 of September 9, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 50985; relating to ensuring adequate COVID safety protocols for Federal contractors);

(C) Executive Order 14043 of September 9, 2021 (86 Fed. Reg. 50989; relating to requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 vaccination for Federal employees);

(D) the interim final rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services on November 5, 2021, entitled ''Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination'' (86 Fed. Reg. 61555); or

(E) the memorandum signed by the Secretary of Defense on August 24, 2021, for ''Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members''; or

(2) promulgate, implement, or enforce any rule, regulation, or other agency statement, that is substantially similar to a regulation, Executive Order, rule, or memorandum described in paragraph (1).

SA 4930. Mr. BRAUN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 6617, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 8, strike lines 3 through 6 and insert the following:

(a) POINT OF ORDER AGAINST BUDGET RESOLUTIONS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE A BALANCED BUDGET.—

(1) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a concurrent resolution on the budget that does not reduce the deficit to zero on or before the end of the 9th fiscal year after the budget year.

(2) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Paragraph (1) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under paragraph (1).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 2:30 p.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, February 16, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

The Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the revisions of Public Law 117–81, appoints the following individuals to serve as members of the Senate Delegation to the Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the United States 3+1 Interparliamentary Group: the Honorable ROBERT MENENDEZ, of New Jersey; the Honorable KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, of New York; the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, of Illinois.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, February 17; that following the prayer and the 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 resume consideration of the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 267, H.R. 6617, the continuing resolution; that at 1 p.m., the cloture motion ripen.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 6:20 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 17, 2022, at 10:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 16, 2022:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DAVID A. HONEY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

CELESTE ANN WALLANDER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

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, February 17, 2022 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 2

10 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold an oversight hearing to examine implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act by the Department of Transportation.

SD–106

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S725–S756

Measures Introduced: Eighteen bills were introduced, as follows: S. 3655–3672. **Pages S752–53**

Measures Reported:

S. 442, to amend title 40, United States Code, to require the Administrator of General Services to procure the most life-cycle cost effective and energy efficient lighting products and to issue guidance on the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of those products. (S. Rept. No. 117–80) **Page S752**

Measures Passed:

Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act: Senate passed S. 3541, to improve health care and services for veterans exposed to toxic substances. **Pages S733–35**

Appointments:

Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the United State 3+1 Interparliamentary Group: The Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–81, appointed the following individuals to serve as members of the Senate Delegation to the Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the United State 3+1 Interparliamentary Group: Senators Menendez, Gillibrand, and Duckworth. **Page S756**

Further Additional Extending Government Funding Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, February 17, 2022, Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 6617, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022; and that at 1 p.m., the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed thereon ripen. **Page S756**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 83 yeas to 13 nays (Vote No. EX. 58), Celeste Ann Wallander, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. **Page S747**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 81 yeas to 13 nays (Vote No. EX. 56), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S732**

By 94 yeas to 1 nay (Vote No. EX. 59), David A. Honey, of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. **Pages S747–48**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 93 yeas to 3 nays (Vote No. EX 57), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S732**

Messages from the House: **Page S751**

Executive Communications: **Pages S751–52**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S753–54**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S754–55**

Additional Statements: **Page S751**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S755–56**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S756**

Record Votes: Four record votes were taken today. (Total—59) **Pages S732, S747–48**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:20 p.m., until 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2022. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S756.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

EPA'S RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD PROGRAM

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Environmental Protection Agency's Renewable Fuel Standard program, focusing on challenges and opportunities, after receiving testimony from Cory-Ann Wind, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Portland; and Emily Skor, Growth Energy, Lucian Pugliaresi, Energy Policy Research Foundation, Inc., and LeAnn Johnson Koch, Perkins Coie LLP, all of Washington, D.C.

WESTERN BALKANS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation concluded a hearing to examine the Western Balkans, focusing on supporting peace and prosperity, after receiving testimony from Gabriel Escobar, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State; and Lisa Magno, Deputy Assistant Administrator, United States Agency for International Development.

U.S.-COLOMBIA RELATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine reinvigorating United States-Colombia relations, after receiving testimony from Brian A. Nichols, Assistant Secretary for Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and Todd D. Robinson, Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, both of the Department of State; Marcela Escobari, Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, United States Agency for International Development; and Daniel A. Restrepo, Center for American Progress, and Celina B. Realuyo, The George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs, both of Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported S. 2264, to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996.

INDIAN AFFAIRS LEGISLATION

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S. 3123, to amend the Siletz Reservation Act to address the hunting, fishing, trapping, and animal gathering rights of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, S. 3126, to amend the Grand Ronde Reservation Act to address the hunting, fishing, trapping, and animal gathering rights of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community, S. 3273, to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and S. 3381, to require the Bureau of Indian Affairs to process and complete all mortgage packages associated with residential and business mortgages on Indian land by certain deadlines, after receiving testimony from Kathryn Isom-Clause, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Development for Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Delores Pigsley, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, Siletz; Cheryle A. Kennedy, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Grand Ronde, Oregon; Reid Milanovich, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Palm Springs, California; and Sharon Vogel, Cheyenne River Housing Authority, Eagle Butte, South Dakota, on behalf of the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Sherilyn Peace Garnett, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, and Trina L. Thompson, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, who were both introduced by Senator Padilla, Nina Morrison, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, who was introduced by Senator Schumer, and Paul Monteiro, of Maryland, to be Director, Community Relations Service, Department of Justice, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

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 at 10 a.m. on Friday, February 18, 2022.

Committee Meetings

WHY CONGRESS NEEDS TO ABOLISH THE DEBT LIMIT

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Why Congress Needs to Abolish the Debt Limit''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Education and Labor: Full Committee held a business meeting to approve new subcommittee assignments. Subcommittee assignments were approved.

SERVING ALL STUDENTS: PROMOTING A HEALTHIER, MORE SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Committee on Education and Labor: Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing entitled ''Serving All Students: Promoting a Healthier, More Supportive School Environment''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

CONNECTING AMERICA: OVERSIGHT OF NTIA

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Connecting America: Oversight of NTIA''. Testimony was heard from Alan Davidson, Assistant Secretary, Communications and Information, and Administrator, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce.

AN UNPRECEDENTED INVESTMENT FOR HISTORIC RESULTS: HOW FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR MDIS AND CDFIS HAVE LAUNCHED A NEW ERA FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''An Unprecedented Investment for Historic Results: How Federal Support for MDIs and CDFIs Have Launched a New Era for Disadvantaged Communities''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

BIG DATA: PRIVACY RISKS AND NEEDED REFORMS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Big Data: Privacy Risks and Needed Reforms in the Public and Private Sectors''. Testimony was heard from Hugh Halpern, Director, Government Publishing Office; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1546, the ''Combating Online Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2021''; H.R. 3525, the ''Commission To Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture Act''; H.R. 3540, the ''Chesapeake Bay Science, Education, and Ecosystem Enhancement Act of 2021''; H.R. 4458, the ''KELP Act''; H.R. 4677, the ''New York-New Jersey Watershed Protection Act''; H.R. 5973, the ''Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Reauthorization Act of 2021''; H.R. 6023, the ''Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2021''; H.R. 6142, the ''Buckeye National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Act of 2021''; H.R. 6199, the ''Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act''; H.R. 6201, the ''National Liberty Memorial Preservation Act''; H.R. 6337, the ''Biking on Long-Distance Trails Act''; H.R. 6434, the ''Japanese American World War II History Network Act''; H.R. 6435, the ''Self-Determination Act of 2000 for Fiscal Year 2021''; and H. Res. 641, recognizing and celebrating the 75th anniversary of the National Association of Conservation Districts and their commitment to our lands. H.R. 1546, H.R. 6199, H.R. 6201, H.R. 6337, H.R. 6434, H.R. 6435, and H. Res. 641 were ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 3525, H.R. 3540, H.R. 4458, H.R. 4677, H.R. 5973, H.R. 6023, and H.R. 6142 were ordered reported, as amended.

DEFENDING U.S. ALLIES AND INTERESTS AGAINST RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN EASTERN EUROPE

Committee on Oversight and Reform: Subcommittee on National Security held a hearing entitled ''Defending U.S. Allies and Interests Against Russian Aggression in Eastern Europe''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

FEMA PRIORITIES FOR 2022: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management held a hearing entitled ''FEMA Priorities for 2022: Stakeholder Perspectives''. Testimony was heard from Chris Currie, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

CONGRESS BACK HOME: MODERNIZING DISTRICT OFFICE OPERATIONS

Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Congress Back Home: Modernizing District Office Operations''. Testimony was heard from Danielle Radovich Piper, Office of Representative Perlmutter; Sarah Youngdahl, Office of Representative Reschenthaler; and a public witness.

Joint Meetings

TURKEY

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Commission received a briefing on foreign policy and human rights in Turkey from Soner Cagaptay,

Washington Institute for the Near East Turkish Research Program; and Deniz Yuksel, Amnesty International.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Franklin R. Parker, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Agnes Schaefer, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army, and Ravi Chaudhary, of Virginia, and Frank Calvelli, of Virginia, both to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, all of the Department of Defense, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the state of the American economy, focusing on a year of unprecedented economic growth and future plans, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on the Budget: to hold hearings to examine Warrior Met, focusing on what corporate raiders are doing to workers and consumers, 11 a.m., SH–216/VTC.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine IRS customer service challenges, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the gaps in America's biosecurity preparedness, 10:15 a.m., SD–342/VTC.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider pending calendar business, 9 a.m., SD–106.

HOUSE

Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions, hearing entitled ''Exploring Pathways to Affordable, Universal Health Coverage'', 12 p.m., Zoom.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Americans in Need: Responding to the National Mental Health Crisis'', 11:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn and Webex.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on National Security, International Development, and Monetary Policy, hearing entitled ''The Role of the International Monetary Fund in a Changing Global Landscape'', 12 p.m., Webex.

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Financial Institutions, hearing entitled ''Small Businesses, Big Impact: Ensuring Small and Minority-Owned Businesses Share in the Economic Recovery'', 3 p.m., Webex.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation, hearing entitled ''The Burma Crisis, One Year After the Coup'', 10 a.m., Webex.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight, Management, and Accountability, hearing entitled ''Call to Action: Private Sector Investment in the Northern Triangle and its Impact on Homeland Security'', 2 p.m., Webex.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Oversight of the January 6th Capitol Attack: Ongoing Review of the United States Capitol Police Inspector General Flash Reports'', 3 p.m., 1310 Longworth and Webex.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, hearing entitled ''The Rise in Violence Against Minority Institutions'', 10 a.m., Zoom.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''Securing the Future of Climate Adaptation Science at the United States Geological Survey'', 1 p.m., 1324 Longworth and Webex.

Office of Insular Affairs Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 6504, the ''Native Pacific Islanders of America Equity Act'', 4 p.m., Webex.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled ''H2Success: Research and Development to Advance a Clean Hydrogen Future'', 10 a.m., Zoom.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10:30 a.m., Thursday, February 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 6617, Further Additional Extending Government Funding Act. At 1 p.m., the motion to invoke cloture thereon ripen.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Friday, February 18

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 10 a.m.

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