

Based on Dr. Esper's qualifications and experience, as well as his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, I will vote in favor of his nomination to be the next Secretary of the Army.

Dr. Esper's unique perspective will enable him to tackle many challenges facing the Army head-on, and I trust that as the next Secretary of the Army, he will do his best to lead the men and women, and their families, who serve this Nation so ably and courageously.

Once again, I would like to say that with his experience as an infantry platoon leader at the front, with soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division, he knows—as few people do—the real cost of our national security and the real challenge of being in our Army. It is keeping faith with those men and women and it is doing everything they can and we can to protect this Nation. With that experience, I am very confident that he will be an extraordinary Secretary of the Army.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF DAVID ZATEZALO

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to make a statement about the second vote we are going to have, and I urge my colleagues to vote against the nomination of David Zatezalo as the Mine Safety and Health Administrator.

MSHA is responsible for protecting the safety and health of miners in this country and for holding companies that put their workers' lives at risk accountable. So it really is disappointing to me that President Trump nominated one of the industry's worst health and safety offenders to lead this critically important agency.

This is, unfortunately, just another in a long list of decisions by President Trump that jeopardizes workers' health, safety, and financial security in order to prioritize corporations and special interests.

I really hope our colleagues will join me in rejecting President Trump's extreme agenda and this nominee.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak on the

nomination of Dr. Mark Esper to be Secretary of the Army.

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

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I rise today to support the nomination of Dr. Mark Esper to be Secretary of the Army. Perhaps more than any other service, our Army is experiencing the strain of 16 years of continuous conflict. From our troops on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq to recent headlines about the tragic loss of four soldiers in Niger, there are constant reminders that we remain a nation at war. And with rising threats around the world, the operational tempo is not slowing down.

We owe our young men and women in uniform leadership that fits their service. I am confident that Dr. Esper will provide our Army with that leadership. His record of service in the Army, in the Pentagon, and on Capitol Hill provides the foundation for the leadership our soldiers deserve. I am also confident that he will call upon his experience in the private sector to bring a reform mindset to the many challenges facing our Army, such as the readiness crisis and the urgent gaps in capabilities and modernization.

Dr. Esper began his career as an Infantry officer in the 101st Airborne Division, serving with distinction in the first Gulf war. He later served on active duty in Europe, and on the Army staff in Washington, DC, before transitioning to the National Guard and retiring after 21 years of service. He was an Airborne Ranger and recipient of the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, and Meritorious Service Medals, among other awards and qualifications.

Dr. Esper also worked national security issues on Capitol Hill with many of my colleagues here. He was a professional staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Armed Services Committee. Later, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense.

I will not hold it against him that he is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He also holds degrees from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and George Washington University.

Our soldiers continue to prove their commitment, courage, skill, and determination. In return, we owe them the same kind of leadership. I believe Dr. Esper will provide that leadership.

I am proud to support Dr. Esper's nomination, and I ask my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 274 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Flake	Nelson
Baldwin	Franken	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blumenthal	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hassan	Reed
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Brown	Heinrich	Roberts
Burr	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cantwell	Heller	Rubio
Capito	Hirono	Sasse
Cardin	Hoeven	Schatz
Carper	Inhofe	Schumer
Casey	Isakson	Scott
Cassidy	Johnson	Shaheen
Cochran	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Stabenow
Coons	King	Strange
Corker	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Tester
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Manchin	Udall
Daines	McCaIn	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	McConnell	Whitehouse
Durbin	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	Wyden
Ernst	Murphy	Young
Fischer	Murray	

NAYS—6

Gillibrand	Markey	Sanders
Harris	Merkley	Warren

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Feinstein	Tillis
Cruz	Menendez	

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is considered expired.

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the votes following the first vote in this series be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

Mr. WICKER. 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 New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 275 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Strange
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Harris	Peters
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Brown	Heitkamp	Schatz
Cantwell	Hirono	Schumer
Cardin	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Udall
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Markey	Warner
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—2

Booker	Menendez
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Zatezalo nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Under the previous order, with respect to the Esper nomination, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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 Joseph Otting, of Nevada, to be Comptroller of the Currency for a term of five years.

Mitch McConnell, John Barrasso, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, John Kennedy, Luther Strange, Roger F. Wicker, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, John Bar-

rosso, John Thune, James M. Inhofe, Bob Corker, John Cornyn.

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 Joseph Otting, of Nevada, to be Comptroller of the Currency for a term of five years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 276 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cassidy	Heller	Rounds
Cochran	Hoeven	Rubio
Collins	Inhofe	Sasse
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Strange
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Enzi	McCain	Toomey
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Reed
Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Brown	Heinrich	Schatz
Cantwell	Hirono	Schumer
Cardin	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Franken	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—2

Booker	Menendez
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 44.

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 Joseph Otting, of Nevada, to be Comptroller of the Currency for a term of five years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, all year the majority has tried to ram through legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with proposals that, in effect, cut healthcare for mil-

lions of people to finance tax cuts for those who make millions of dollars in income. All year the American people have made it perfectly clear that this was the opposite of what they wanted. Fortunately, those repeal efforts failed.

Now, instead of listening to the American people and learning from that failure, the majority has doubled down on its tax plan. Like healthcare, they have made no attempt to bring both sides together. In the Senate, we only saw the bill last Thursday. I am on the Finance Committee. I have been on there for years. It wasn't even in legislative language on Thursday.

I remember back in the healthcare debate, 9 years ago, when people were saying: Read the bill. Read the bill. We came to the markup yesterday to offer amendments. There still wasn't a bill. There was not a bill.

Thomas Jefferson used to say—and it didn't happen—that he hoped that when these legislatures were put together in the U.S. Congress, you would have to introduce a bill and, then, it would take 365 days before it could be enacted into legislation. Maybe that is where the tea party got the idea in 2009. Where are they now? We have not had a single hearing on this bill.

Now they are marking up the most consequential tax policy in 31 years, one affecting every single American and moving around trillions of dollars in this economy.

Remember back during the healthcare debate when it was 16 percent of our economy and people were saying: Read the bill. You had better read this bill. There is not a school board in Colorado that would accept this process. There is not a city council that would accept this process. We have more process for a small decision about where parking meters should go than we have had in this process.

People are upset for good reason. When you rush big things, when you don't listen to different views, you get bad policy. I have heard the majority leader say that on this floor.

There is a reason why they are trying to rush it through. There is a reason why they don't want America to have a chance to read the bill or for their representatives to this Chamber to read the bill. That is because, just like the healthcare proposals they made, the majority's tax plan is fundamentally flawed. Over the course of the campaign, President Trump—then Candidate Trump—promised the American people: "No cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid." That is not fake news. That is what he said.

He said that "everybody's got to be covered," speaking of health insurance.

He said:

Everybody's got to be covered. . . . Everybody's going to be taken care of much better than they're taken care of now.

He promised the public: "You're going to end up with great healthcare for a fraction of the price." That is what he told the American people.