

at the head of an organization intended to support the ability of workers to organize and to press for a fair share.

It is unthinkable that this nominee would ever even come to this Chamber. It is certainly part of an endless stream of attacks by the rich and powerful on working Americans that have kept their wages flat and declining for four decades. When are we going to see an end to this sort of oppression by the powerful class against the workers of the United States of America?

There is one act after another by this administration—President Trump and his team—undermining fair wages for workers in this Nation. It is outrageous. This nomination is outrageous, and I encourage my colleagues to vote no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

#### NOMINATION OF WILLIAM WEHRUM

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, President Trump has been in office now for more than 9 months. He has laid out his agenda to cut punishing regulations, to grow the economy, and to help hard-working Americans.

President Trump's administration has already taken important steps to roll back the regulatory rampage of the last 8 years. During the last administration, the Environmental Protection Agency issued harmful and punishing, overreaching regulations that hurt workers in my home State of Wyoming.

According to the chamber of commerce, from 2008 to 2016, the EPA issued regulations that cost our economy over \$60 billion each year—significantly more than any other Federal agency. These rules had real-life impacts. The Obama administration's so-called Clean Power Plan would have closed powerplants and cost America jobs. We can have both clean air and a growing economy. We have proven it.

My goal is to make American energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising costs on American families. President Trump shares that goal. That is why EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has led the charge in cutting redtape. The EPA has taken important steps to roll back the Clean Power Plan and other punishing EPA regulations.

It is interesting. The annual cost of high-impact rules by agencies from 2008 to 2016—there were 13 rules by the EPA—in the red right here, billions and billions and billions—over \$60 billion.

Administrator Pruitt needs his full leadership team in place at the Agency to complete the task, so today the Senate is going to vote on cloture so we can consider the nomination of Bill Wehrum. He has been nominated to serve as EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation. Mr. Wehrum has more than three decades of experience in environmental policy. He has worked as an environmental engineer, a public servant at the EPA, and is an environmental

lawyer. His time at the EPA includes 2 years of service as the Acting Administrator of the Office of Air and Radiation—the same office he has now been nominated to lead.

EPA's Office of Air and Radiation is critically important in terms of a division within the Agency. It develops national programs, policies, and regulations for limiting air pollution and radiation exposure. One of the responsibilities of this office is implementing the Clean Air Act, and it is a big job.

Here is a chart. Most EPA regulatory burdens come from EPA air regulations; 94.5 percent from the Office of Air and Radiation regulatory burden in 2014; only 5.5 percent from all other EPA offices' regulatory burden of that same year. So under the Obama administration, the air office was one of the biggest regulatory abusers. According to the Office of Management and Budget, the EPA's air regulations were responsible for 95 percent of the cost of the Agency's regulations. Now Mr. Wehrum is going to play a key role in undoing this redtape.

The American people need a qualified leader in the EPA air office. Bill Wehrum is the right man for the job. Don't take my word for it; former environmental Obama Justice official John Cruden said this of Mr. Wehrum: "I believe he is committed to achieving clean air for all citizens and carefully following sound and current science." Marcus Peacock, an EPA Deputy Administrator during the Bush administration, praised Mr. Wehrum, saying that his "understanding of the Clean Air Act may be second to none. His desire to pull up his sleeves and actually make the Clean Air Act work as a practical matter is second to none."

Mr. Wehrum's expertise and experience will be tremendously helpful as he pursues policies that will protect America's air, undo regulatory overreach, and allow our economy to grow. I urge all Senators to vote for cloture on Mr. Wehrum's nomination.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as President Trump continues to undermine worker protections and prioritize corporate profits, it is very critical that the NLRB is independent and is committed to promoting collective bargaining.

When corporations try to take advantage of their employees, workers should be able to turn to the NLRB to intervene. Unfortunately, Mr. Robb's career as a corporate lawyer fighting against workers gives me great concern he will not have workers' best interest at heart in this role. So I will be voting no on this nomination, and I urge my colleagues to stand up for workers and do the same.

I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) would have voted "yea."

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 266 Ex.]

#### YEAS—49

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

#### NAYS—46

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

#### NOT VOTING—5

Cruz	Paul	Tester
Menendez	Roberts	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided.

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the nomination of William Wehrum to be EPA's Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation.

President George W. Bush nominated Mr. Wehrum for the very same job in 2005. He was not confirmed then but was able to serve in that role on an acting basis—something he could not lawfully do today. At the time, I voted against Mr. Wehrum's nomination because I feared he would impede efforts to clean our air and protect the health of Americans. Sadly, my fears have been proved well-founded. Twenty times, the courts found that clean air regulations that Mr. Wehrum helped craft did not follow the law or protect public health.

Since leaving EPA in 2007, Mr. Wehrum has spent his time suing the Agency.

Mr. Wehrum was elusive in answering our questions. When asked which clean air regulations he supports, he could not name a single one—not one.

Mr. Wehrum's extreme views are not good for public health and, quite frankly, the legal uncertainty that stems from his judgment would not be good for American businesses. That is why I call on all of my colleagues to join me in opposition to this nomination.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, Mr. Wehrum has been nominated to serve as the EPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation. He has more than three decades of experience in environmental policy. He has worked as an environmental engineer. He has been a public servant at the EPA as an environmental lawyer. His time at the EPA includes years of service as the Acting Administrator of the Office of Air and Radiation, the same office to which he has now been nominated.

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

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of William L. Wehrum, of Delaware, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mitch McConnell, Orrin G. Hatch, Thom Tillis, John Barrasso, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Lindsey Graham, Roy Blunt, John Cornyn, John Thune, John Boozman, Cory Gardner, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, Mike Rounds, James M. Inhofe, John Hoeven.

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 William L. Wehrum, of Delaware, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) would have voted "yea."

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 46, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 267 Ex.)

#### YEAS—49

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

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

#### NOT VOTING—5

Cruz	Paul	Tester
Menendez	Roberts	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

#### HEALTHCARE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, healthcare is on the minds of the American people. According to the Washington Post, in the elections in Virginia yesterday, it was by far the biggest issue in voters' minds. Maine expanded Medicaid.

In my home State of Tennessee, because of the Affordable Care Act's structure, premiums have gone up 176 percent over the last 4 years and another 58 percent, on average, for 2018 is predicted.

Tennesseans, like millions of Americans, are going through open enrollment and have sticker shock when they see the prices of the health insurance they might buy, and the 178 mil-

lion people who are getting their insurance on the job—that is 60 percent of us—know they might lose their job, they might change their job, and they might be in the individual market themselves and might find themselves exposed to these skyrocketing premiums and the chaos that results from them.

This is especially difficult for Americans who have no government subsidy to help them buy insurance. In 2016, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, there were about 9 million of those Americans.

There are 350,000 people in Tennessee who buy insurance on the individual market. That means they don't get it on the job. They don't get it from the government. They go out and buy it themselves, and 150,000 of those pay the whole brunt. So if insurance costs go up 176 percent over 4 years, another 58 percent this year, that means the songwriter, the farmer, the self-employed person has a very difficult time buying insurance. It is a terrifying prospect. That is why healthcare is on the minds of the American people.

One would think the American people might turn around and look at Washington and ask: Why doesn't the President of the United States and why don't Members of Congress—Republicans as well as Democrats—get together and do something about the skyrocketing premiums?

Well, what would you think if I told you that last month the President of the United States, President Trump, called me and asked me to do just that?

He said: I don't want people to be hurt over the next couple of years while we are continuing to debate the long-term structure of healthcare on the individual market. So why don't you get with Senator MURRAY from Washington—she is the ranking Democrat on the Senate HELP Committee—and why don't you try to work something out so people will not be hurt during these 2 years.

He said: I have to cut off the cost-sharing payments because the court has said they are not legal, but we can put them back. Go negotiate. See what you can do. Try to get some flexibility for the States.

Fortunately, Senator MURRAY and I were already working on that and to have the President's call was encouraging to me. He called me three more times over the next 2 weeks, and the long and short of it is we produced a result.

Here is what the result looks like—and I am going to talk about it from the point of view of why Republicans are supporting it. Senator MURRAY and Democratic Senators were here earlier saying why they were supporting it. Senator ROUNDS from South Dakota, a former Governor of that State, a man who understands insurance very well and helped develop this proposal—we are here today to say this happens to be one of those bills where there are