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Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The 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 P. Casey Pitts, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The Democratic leader is recognized.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Yesterday, Mr. President, I joined with many colleagues from both sides of the aisle for the first of a series of all-Senate briefings solely dedicated to the subject of AI. Yesterday's AI briefing was a huge success. We had a really strong turnout from both parties. It was an important moment for everyone to get into a room and build a foundation of knowledge on this pressing issue.

If I had to describe our mindset leaving yesterday's briefing, it was a mix of urgency and humility: urgency because AI is developing so damn fast and humility because AI is stupendously complex.

Congress has only a limited amount of time to stay proactive on artificial intelligence, and I think yesterday's briefing made that clear. The potential societal benefits from AI are astounding—from medical advances and innovative materials to fusion energy and so much more.

But we also must recognize that AI poses monstrously complex challenges. Even top AI developers will admit they don't have a firm grip on how this technology works now and even less of a grip on how it will work in the future.

One of the topics that has come up in my discussions with experts is

"explainability," or the challenge of making AI's "black box" inner workings understandable. Even this is no trivial matter. It is a cutting-edge technological research question, and it will require immense cooperation between legislators, developers, researchers, academics, and advocates to strike the right balance.

I hope all of my colleagues join for the next two AI briefings the next work period. We will examine where this technology is headed in the near future and get briefed in the SCIF on national security threats that AI already poses.

Again, thank you to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who are already getting to work on this issue both on their own and in committee. The range of proposals show the Senate is taking this matter seriously. Thank you, again, to Senators ROUNDS, HEINRICH, and YOUNG for making these briefings possible.

HONORING SERGEANT WILLIAM JOHNSON

Mr. President, on Fort Johnson, one of the greatest things of our country is the rich legacy of Americans who dedicated their lives to serving their fellow citizens, especially on the battlefield. But for every hero whose memory lives on, countless others become heroes in anonymity. That is why today I am happy to celebrate the legacy of SGT William Henry Johnson—World War I veteran, Albany resident, and Harlem Hellfighter.

Yesterday, Fort Polk in Louisiana was officially renamed in Sergeant Johnson's honor, after many years of advocacy, research, and a fierce push from my office to make sure that this New Yorker got the recognition he has long deserved.

Over a century ago, Sergeant Johnson enlisted to fight with the Allies in World War I. But because of segregation, he served under French command. He was wounded in battle during a German advance. He saved the lives of his fellow soldiers but was permanently

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, Your great Name keeps us from harm. We remember all Your gifts and praise You for Your protection.

Today, guide our Senators. Make their plans succeed as they find wisdom by following Your directions. When they don't know what to do, teach them to be still until You make Your will clear. When they feel alone and fearful, remind them that You will never abandon them no matter how difficult the challenge. Lord, help them to focus on the things that are excellent, commendable, true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

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



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disabled, and Sergeant Johnson never received the recognition he deserved in life because of the color of his skin.

I was honored to lead the push in Congress to have the White House posthumously award the Medal of Honor to Sergeant Johnson. I wrote to former Secretary Hagel, got on the phone with Army Secretary McHugh, and met with senior Pentagon officials. I made a push in 2014 to waive the time restrictions to receive the Medal of Honor, and my staff, amazingly, went deep, deep, deep into the Pentagon archives and discovered previously unknown writings of Sergeant Johnson's acts on the battlefield by his own foxhole partner.

Even General Pershing commented on his bravery, we found, because you needed contemporaneous views of how great Sergeant Johnson was to get the Medal of Honor.

And then, much to the delight and happiness of veterans groups in the Capital Region—Albany, NY—and around New York and the country, President Obama awarded Sergeant Johnson the Medal of Honor in 2015.

When Congress authorized the Naming Commission to provide new names to bases originally named after Confederate leaders, I knew that Henry Johnson was a perfect candidate for this honor. I am overjoyed that Sergeant Johnson has now joined the revered company of American heroes whose names are now affixed to our military bases.

Now a Black American hero is taking the place of a Confederate commander in the South. It is correcting history in a good way. Fort Johnson will forever stand proud as an inspiration for generations to come.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, on the Republican tax plan, yesterday, the Republican-led House Ways and Means Committee advanced a sweeping array of new tax giveaways that reward the wealthy and well connected and leave ordinary families out to dry.

With this latest GOP tax scam, Republicans are showing exactly where their priorities lie: with large corporations, Big Oil polluters, and ultrahigh-earning households.

After the Trump tax law blew a nearly \$2 trillion hole in our national deficit, this new Republican proposal would increase the deficit by another trillion dollars.

This hypocrisy is just astounding. Three weeks ago, we were hearing: Well, we have got to reduce the deficit. Debt is our big problem. We should even default before we would deal with that problem.

And now, all of a sudden, they pass a bill that increases the deficit by another trillion dollars. The hypocrisy of that is bouncing around the walls here. How do they look themselves in the mirror? How do they look themselves in the mirror by bringing us to the brink of default because they wanted the deficit down and debt down, and

now they increase it by a trillion dollars simply to help their ultrarich friends and the biggest, wealthiest corporations that don't pay a fair share of taxes? Republicans push our country to the brink of default in the name of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction, but now the same Republicans want to blow a trillion-dollar hole into the deficit without so much as batting an eye.

Do you know what it shows you? That those Republicans—not all, but them—it shows you they really don't care about the deficit. They simply resent the idea of making the ultra ultrawealthy and the biggest corporations pay their fair share.

The Republicans' latest scam is also bad news for anyone who worries about protecting our planet for future generations. Their proposal would gut billions in clean energy investments that are already creating millions of good-paying green jobs.

Our Inflation Reduction Act has helped to create over 142,000 new—new—good-paying jobs, and more are coming—many more—in the next few years. But Republicans now want to gut those investments completely.

Why? Big Oil. Big Oil. They get a \$10 billion tax break under the Republican plan. And we all know that the Republican Party in the House and in the Senate is under the thumb of Big Oil.

So it is clear that this latest GOP tax scam is more of the same: giveaways to large corporations, giveaways to Big Oil, and another massive hole in the deficit.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on nominations, it has been another busy week here on the Senate floor. Yesterday, we confirmed Hernan Vera to serve as a district judge for the Central District of California and Jared Bernstein to be Chairman of the CEA, the Council of Economic Advisers.

Today, the Senate will continue our work by voting to confirm another district judge, Casey Pitts, for the Northern District of California and advance two more district judges today, Dale Ho for the Southern District of New York and Nusrat Choudhury for the Eastern District of New York.

This week, we will also advance the nomination of Julie Rikelman to be Circuit Court judge for the First Circuit.

It is a big week for judges here in the Senate. I thank my colleagues for their work.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Biden administration has been sending the Senate a dizzying list of radical and unqualified nominees to both the executive branch and the Federal bench. In several cases, the President's picks have been so far outside the mainstream that this Chamber's Democratic majority hasn't even been willing to confirm them.

Right now, our Democratic colleagues are struggling to convince one another to confirm a State employment commissioner who was responsible for tens of billions of dollars in fraudulent unemployment insurance payments, and this nominee has been recommended by the administration for Secretary of Labor. They have had a hard time agreeing to give a lifetime judgeship to a self-described "wild-eyed leftist" who likened hate for conservative Americans to "righteous indignation" and "moral clarity."

All the while, the docket of down-right radical nominees continues to fill. This week, the Democratic leader will file cloture on two new nominations to the Federal bench. First, Nusrat Choudhury is President Biden's latest pick to join the Eastern District of New York. This nominee has made statements ranging from reckless suggestions that crimes like theft do not threaten public safety to false and inflammatory assertions that police kill Black men "every day" in America. Unsurprisingly, these statements have drawn the ire and opposition of law enforcement groups across our country.

And second, Julie Rikelman is nominated to the First Circuit Court of Appeals. Ms. Rikelman has described efforts to limit abortion as a "vicious assault" by "hostile politicians" and has even objected to restrictions on reprehensible practices like sex-selection abortions.

So, Mr. President, these are the nominees of a President who promised to unify our country. I would urge my colleagues to join me in rejecting each of them.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, now on an entirely different matter, as I have discussed repeatedly, Vladimir Putin's brutal escalation in Ukraine has prompted America's European allies to take their commitments to collective defense entirely more seriously. Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, Russia's authoritarian aggression has reinforced a reality our friends in the Indo-Pacific understand all too well.

From communist China's backyard, American partners in Japan, Taiwan, and elsewhere see the clear connection between Ukraine's fight against Putin's Russia and the threats they face closer to home. And they haven't been shy in calling it out.

Last year, Japanese Prime Minister Kishida said:

Ukraine might be East Asia tomorrow. We must show there are consequences to the attack.

The Japanese Defense Minister put it this way.

If the international community somehow allows or condones Russia's aggression . . . it might send a wrong message that such actions can be tolerated in other parts of the world.

Last month, Taiwan's Ambassador delivered the same message:

Support for Ukraine is relevant to us because . . . it helps to deter. It imposes costs on the aggressor.

And Taiwan's Deputy Foreign Minister was even more specific. He recently said support for Ukraine is "the best way"—"the best way to deter China" and that Beijing is "waiting to see" whether the "Western democratic camp will be able to hold their position."

So, Mr. President, take it from our friends with the most to lose from Chinese aggression: Ukraine's fight is not a distraction; it is fundamental to deterring China—fundamental.

Of course, our friends in the Indo-Pacific aren't just telling us; they are showing us. Japan has committed more than \$7 billion to the Ukrainian cause, including drone technology, mine detection systems, support for critical infrastructure, as well as humanitarian aid. And Prime Minister Kishida made a special effort to travel to Kyiv in March.

Taiwan has provided tens of millions of dollars in humanitarian relief to Ukraine, and the island's businesses are stepping up to send lifesaving technologies to the frontlines. And let's not forget the brave citizens of Taiwan, who have literally volunteered for frontline service in Ukraine—Taiwanese citizens going to Ukraine on the frontlines.

So, Mr. President, America's Indo-Pacific partners are standing with the West against today's authoritarian aggression, and our combined efforts are helping the entire free world to prepare to meet tomorrow's threats.

As Taiwan's Foreign Minister pointed out today in Prague, we are drawing critical lessons from Ukraine's successful defense of its territory, allowing vulnerable partners to adjust training, procurement, and tactics accordingly.

We are investing in our own defense industry's capacity here in America to improve our ability to compete with China and to enhance deterrence. And, importantly, America's friends in Europe and the Indo-Pacific are forging closer ties with one another.

Europe increasingly understands that NATO has global interests, that the world's key theaters of competition are connected, and that the challenges we all face from China are simply not confined to Asia. Our European allies will be affected by instability or conflict in Asia as much as the United States, if not actually more so. So I am encouraged by the way NATO is thinking about the scope of the challenges posed by the PRC's aggression. And, particularly, I am glad that NATO has invited our friends in Japan, South Korea, Aus-

tralia, and New Zealand to join the United States and our allies at the Vilnius summit next month.

China may have proxies and client states, but the United States and our allies are friends with shared interests. To paraphrase NATO General Stoltenberg: It is better—better—to have friends.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1995 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, when it comes to what is happening in Washington, DC, it is often the legislation Congress is considering that gets the lion's share of attention, but just as significant are the regulations being put out by the executive branch. Regulations may not seem as significant as legislation, but they can have just as far-reaching an effect as any law and can radically shift Federal policy.

A look at the Presidential administration's regulations can tell you a lot about that administration's approach to government. Over the past 2-plus years, the Biden administration has built a record of regulation that reflects its big-government, big-spending priorities.

Take the President's student loan giveaway, which, if the "forgiveness" portion is not overturned by the Supreme Court, is set to cost taxpayers nearly \$1 trillion over the next decade, or take his overreaching waters of the United States rule, which, if enforced, would give the Federal Government sweeping jurisdiction over most water features on private property, including things like irrigation ditches, ephemeral streams, and even prairie potholes.

The ability to create regulations gives a Presidential administration a lot of power—and the ability to do a lot of damage. Checks do exist on the regulatory power, however, and one check is provided by the Congressional Review Act, which allows Congress to pass resolutions of disapproval that repeal the regulations in question. The President still has to sign the resolution for it to go into effect or else two-thirds majorities in both Houses of Congress have to override his veto. But the tool can be used to check excessive use of regulatory power.

Senate Republicans have been making regular use of the Congressional Review Act this Congress to attempt to address some egregious Biden administration regulations. We have passed nine now resolutions of disapproval of Biden administration actions so far this year, every single one of which has been bipartisan, which goes to show just how extreme the actions in question are.

I mentioned Senator CAPITO's resolution to overturn the administration's

waters of the United States rule. It is an Obama-era relic resurrected by the Biden Environmental Protection Agency. As I mentioned, if enforced, this rule would give the Federal Government jurisdiction over a vast number of water features on private property, including things like irrigation ditches and even prairie potholes—something we are very familiar with in my region of the country.

Farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners could see parts of their land rendered useless for months while the Federal Government determines what restrictions to impose. Landowners could also be faced with huge compliance costs, and the value of their land could plummet.

Now, I say "if enforced." While nine Democrats in the House and five in the Senate joined Republicans to pass a resolution disapproving the President's WOTUS rule, the President vetoed the resolution. But, in a victory for landowners, the Supreme Court recently ruled to clarify and limit the Federal Government's reach under the Clean Water Act, which effectively overturns the President's WOTUS rule.

I also mentioned the President's student loan giveaway. The forgiveness part of the President's student loan giveaway would cost taxpayers somewhere in the neighborhood of half a trillion dollars over the next decade. The President's legal authority to unilaterally forgive student debt is extremely dubious, not to mention how unfair it is to ask the many Americans who worked hard to pay off their loans or who never pursued college in the first place to take on the burden of student debt for individuals who took out loans for college or graduate school and agreed to pay them back.

With Senator CASSIDY's leadership in the Senate, Republicans in the House and Senate, joined by a handful of Democrats, passed a resolution disapproving of the administration's student loan forgiveness overreach, but the President vetoed it. However, the President's forgiveness plan could still be overruled by the Supreme Court, which is set to release his decision on two student loan forgiveness cases as soon as this week.

Another terrible Biden administration regulation that Republicans, through Senator BRAUN's efforts, have attempted to check is the President's rule that allows pension plan fiduciaries—those are the individuals who manage Americans' retirement accounts—to consider so-called environmental, social, and governance factors and not just the rate of return when investing their customers' money.

In other words, the individuals who manage \$11.7 trillion of Americans' retirement are no longer required to make investment decisions based solely on maximizing return. It might come as a surprise to many of the people out there who have funds invested. Instead, they will now be allowed to opt for a less valuable investment if they prefer its environmental profile.

House and Senate Republicans passed a resolution disapproving of this rule, but unfortunately, again, the President vetoed it, meaning that for now retirees may have to accept that environmental goals—environmental goals—can come ahead of giving them a secure retirement.

But it was important to bring attention to this regulation—one of a number of radical environmental regulations from the Biden administration.

Senate Republicans have also passed resolutions from Senators MULLIN and MARSHALL addressing Biden administration overuse of the Endangered Species Act; a resolution from Senator LUMMIS addressing the administration's expansive new definition of "critical habitat," which could have major negative consequences for landowners and businesses; a resolution from Senator FISCHER disapproving of an EPA rule on truck emissions that could drive some smaller trucking companies out of business entirely—and more. We have more resolutions of disapproval in the pipeline.

While, unfortunately, President Biden has predictably vetoed attempts to check his administration's aggressive use of Federal power, we have had some successes.

When Senator CAPITO announced her intention to challenge a Federal Highway Administration memo discouraging States from pursuing highway expansion projects and prioritizing funding for projects that reduce emissions, the Federal Highway Administration withdrew the memo and issued a revised version without the problematic language, which was a win for infrastructure investments in rural areas.

As I mentioned, while the President vetoed the resolution disapproving of his overreaching waters of the United States water rule, the Supreme Court's recent decision effectively overturning this regulation is a win for farmers, for ranchers, and for other landowners—and, honestly, for common sense.

While it wasn't a Biden administration regulation, Senator HAGERTY led a successful charge in the Senate to overturn Washington, DC's crime bill that would have weakened penalties for a number of crimes.

Congress, of course, has the legal authority to block DC ordinances thanks to Federal legislation rooted in the Constitution which gives Congress legislative jurisdiction over the seat of the U.S. Government—namely, Washington, DC.

Republicans' effort to overturn DC's dangerous new crime bill ultimately persuaded the President to change his mind and sign the resolution of disapproval.

As we move forward, Republicans will continue to use the Congressional Review Act to push back against overreaching regulations from the Biden administration. We may not always be successful, but at the very least, we can highlight the true cost of the Biden

administration's regulations and the burdens they place on our economy and on hard-working Americans.

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.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to support the nomination of Ambassador Elizabeth Richard to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism.

Ambassador Richard is an eminently qualified candidate to lead the State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism, and it is well past time that we confirm her nomination. Having already served our country as U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, Ambassador Richard is deeply familiar with the geostrategic and counterterrorism issues facing the Middle East.

Throughout her career, she has worked across the region to advance U.S. national security interests and support the safety of the American people. That is why I believe she is exceptionally qualified to serve as the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, and it is a role that needs to be filled urgently.

The counterterrorism challenges that we currently face and could face in the future are crystalized in the detention and displaced person camps in Syria. Mingled together in camps across northeastern Syria are an estimated 12,000 suspected ISIS fighters and 60,000 women and children who have possible ISIS affiliation. The humanitarian conditions in those detainee camps are dire. And compounding the pressure of ISIS extremists are inadequate medical facilities, insufficient sanitation, and lack of access to schooling.

Last fall, the Syrian Democratic Forces, supported by U.S. troops, completed the 24-day security operation which yielded 300 ISIS operative terrorists and freed 6 women from slavery.

This is a crisis waiting to happen.

I have heard very directly from General Kurilla, who is the head of CENTCOM, about his concerns at the detainee camps. This is another reason why we urgently need a senior official in place to lead the U.S. Government's efforts to work toward closing the camps, to address the humanitarian and security concerns in the camps, and to coalesce the international support that is needed to achieve the enduring defeat of ISIS.

Under the Biden administration, the Coordinator for Counterterrorism has also served as the ISIS Detainee Coordinator. That is a role which my bipartisan legislation, the Syria Detainee and Displaced Persons Act, would cod-

ify. Along with Senators GRAHAM, MENENDEZ, and RISCH, I introduced this legislation to ensure that the U.S. Government has a senior official working to coordinate all lines of effort to address the causes and consequences of the ISIS detainee camps in Syria.

The creation of this position was originally a recommendation of the Syria Study Group, and it would empower the coordinator to lead on all diplomatic engagements and the planning regarding the future of ISIS detainees. But as Ambassador Richard's nomination to be the Coordinator for Counterterrorism has been stalled by Republicans, this important position has been unfilled.

Right now, we have hundreds of general officers who are being held up by one of our Republican colleagues. They can't take their promotions and move on to their next deployments because they are being held up. We have multiple ambassadorial nominees who are being held up, like Ambassador Richard.

We hear that one of our colleagues from Ohio is planning to hold up all nominees to the Justice Department.

These are not games we are playing here. These are not games. These are serious issues that affect the ability of the United States to compete in a global environment, and holding up the people whom we need in positions to address the critical challenges facing this country is really just unacceptable.

I hope we can move Ambassador Richard's nomination, just as I hope our colleagues are going to stop their obstructionism and let us move on the other nominees who are critical to ensuring our national security.

With that in mind, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Calendar No. 144, Elizabeth H. Richard, to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, I agree with the Senator from New Hampshire that this position at the State Department is important, and it should be filled by someone qualified and someone who will use the position to stand up to the terrorists who target Americans all across the world. Unfortunately, Ms. Richard—her record makes her singularly unqualified for this post.

The Biden administration has put forward many troubling and radical nominees during the past 2½ years. Indeed, the nominees who have been put forth by this President are more extreme, are more radical than any nominees I have ever seen in my lifetime.

I will say, unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues will rubberstamp whatever radical is put on this floor, and they have demonstrated an unwillingness to stand up and reject even the most extreme nominees submitted.

If you look at Ms. Richard's record, and in particular her time as Ambassador to Lebanon, her record, catastrophically, when it concerns terrorists, is to downplay the threat of terrorists, to appease the terrorists, and even, astonishingly, to fund the terrorists.

While in Lebanon, Ms. Richard established a clear record of effectively boosting the Iran-backed terrorist group Hezbollah. And for all practical matters, her tenure as Ambassador demonstrates that she aided and assisted Hezbollah rather than standing strong against them.

Let me give you three examples to demonstrate these points. Elizabeth Richard shielded Hezbollah while we were fighting for Amer Fakhoury's release. Ms. Richard consistently sought to downplay the threat posed by Hezbollah.

Take the case of Amer Fakhoury, an American citizen who was held hostage by the Hezbollah-controlled Lebanese Government while he was dying of cancer. The Senator from New Hampshire knows this case well because Mr. Fakhoury and his family are constituents of hers in the State of New Hampshire. She and I worked together closely, aggressively, fighting to secure his release from captivity. Amer Fakhoury was an American citizen, a beloved family man, and a small business owner who traveled to Lebanon in September of 2019. While he was there, he was abducted; he was illegally detained; he was beaten; and he was held hostage. He was suffering from stage IV cancer, and his symptoms were exacerbated by the beatings that he received at the hands of Lebanese security officials who were looking to extract a false confession.

The Senator from New Hampshire and I came together to pressure the Lebanese Government to free Mr. Fakhoury. Together, we introduced legislation to impose sanctions that would have brought down the Lebanese political class unless they immediately released him. When it became public that Senator SHAHEEN and I, together, were advancing our legislation toward passage in the Senate, Mr. Fakhoury was freed. Good news. Success—a bipartisan success, freeing an American hostage in captivity in Lebanon.

Unfortunately, Mr. Fakhoury passed away from cancer just 5 months after he came home to the United States, but at least, together, we were able to ensure that he did so surrounded by his family and not by the Hezbollah-controlled Lebanese Government thugs who had held him hostage.

Why did it take Senator SHAHEEN and me coming together on the floor of the Senate to target the Lebanese Government and force them to release an

American hostage? Well, one of the significant reasons it took action at the Senate level is because the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and our Ambassador there were effectively running interference for the Lebanese Government, were fighting against us and effectively running interference for Hezbollah. And who was our Ambassador at the time? Elizabeth Richard.

I want to read you what Mr. Fakhoury's family says about that and what they say about President Biden's nomination of Ms. Richard. They said:

As the family of the late U.S. hostage, Amer Fakhoury, we are shocked by the news that Ambassador Richard is being confirmed as the next counterterrorism [czar] in the State Department. Our father would still be here today if the U.S. embassy under Ambassador [Richard] prioritized an American citizen's life first instead of catering to the Hezbollah backed Lebanese government.

These are the words of the family of Amer Fakhoury, whom you see here, constituents of the Senator from New Hampshire. And this is what they say about the Senate and about the nominee whom the Senate is being asked to confirm; that this is a nominee who is responsible for accelerating the death of their father because she refused to stand up to Hezbollah.

Second example. Ms. Richard did not just establish a record of downplaying Hezbollah's terrorism. She also consistently sought to appease the Iranian-controlled terror group. At the beginning of 2020, the U.S. Armed Forces killed Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian regime arch-terrorist with blood on his hands of hundreds of American service men and women whom he had murdered.

I will note that the Senate subsequently passed language that I authored specifically praising President Trump and our Armed Forces for the operation taking out Qasem Soleimani. The vote on the floor of the Senate was 64 to 34. One of the "yea" votes was my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator SHAHEEN. Meanwhile, the Trump administration sent a quick response force to our Embassy in Lebanon to protect it from retaliation by Iran and Hezbollah.

Yet again, American citizens' lives were in danger, and what did Ms. Richard do? She secretly sent them away in defiance of the political leadership of the State Department and behind the backs of Secretary Pompeo and the State Department's No. 2 officer, both of whom had been confirmed by this body. She secretly sent them away, directly endangering lives of the men and women in our Embassy.

Now, why did she do that? Well, this deeply troubling incident was first reported by Politico, and Politico explained her reasoning. First and foremost, she said, she didn't want to antagonize Hezbollah. Despite threats to the Embassy and despite an obligation to protect the lives of the Americans who worked there, Ms. Richard left them exposed and vulnerable because her policy over and over again was to

appease and avoid confronting Hezbollah.

Finally, Ms. Richard did not just downplay and appease terrorists; in several cases during her tenure in Lebanon, she actively funded Hezbollah allies.

One of the many corrupt branches of the Lebanese Government is the Internal Security Forces or ISF. According to one Lebanon expert who recently wrote about the group, they are "the Hezbollah auxiliary forces who run counterintelligence for the terror group." They do Hezbollah's "counterintelligence dirty work."

What does that mean in plain language? It means that they break up the Israeli spy networks and espionage rings that our allies use to track Hezbollah's threats and Iran's threats. That is what they do. It is what they have always done. Just recently, they announced that they had broken up 17 Israeli networks. The damage was incalculable to the safety and security of our friend and ally, the State of Israel, and also to the safety and security of America. And in 2022, Hezbollah publicly heaped praise on the ISF for all the work they do.

What did Ms. Richard do when she was in Lebanon? She pushed for policies to fund and boost the ISF with American taxpayer dollars. She even oversaw the building of the ISF academy, funded by American tax dollars.

I wish we had a nominee for this post whom I could enthusiastically support. I wish I were not obliged to come down and object to an extreme nominee whose record demonstrates she is unfit and unqualified to serve in this post, but unfortunately President Biden has not given me that choice.

Having examined Ms. Richard's record, the only conclusion is that her approach to counterterrorism consistently is to downplay terrorism, to appease the terrorists, and even to fund terrorist groups and their enablers. That approach is utterly disqualifying for a nominee for Coordinator of Counterterrorism. It is a policy that has had terrible consequences when she pursued it in the Middle East, and it would have terrible consequences if she took it from Lebanon and applied it globally, appeasing not just Hezbollah but every other terrorist on Earth.

The Iranian regime right now—the Ayatollah right now—is pursuing murderous terrorism, including against Americans, right now. The Ayatollah right now has hired a hit team with the intention of murdering the former Secretary of State of the United States, Mike Pompeo. Secretary Blinken confirmed at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on my questioning, that the State Department is spending \$2 million a month providing security to Secretary Pompeo because Iran is actively trying to murder him.

We need a Coordinator of Counterterrorism who will stand up to Iran, who will stand up to Hezbollah, who will stand up to Hamas, who will stand up

to al-Qaida, who will stand up to al-Nusra, who will stand up to ISIS, who will stand up to every terrorist in the world who seeks to murder American citizens.

We need a Coordinator for Counterterrorism whose record is not so extreme that the grieving family of a hostage is telling the Senate:

Our father would still be here today if the U.S. embassy under Ambassador [Richard] prioritized an American citizen's life first instead of catering to the Hezbollah backed Lebanese government.

For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am very disappointed that Senator CRUZ continues to hold up a nomination that is so critical to our national security.

We need a counterterrorism coordinator in place. We need that to ensure that the complex issues that require a whole-of-government approach have the attention and focus that are needed to advance U.S. policy and to protect this country.

This isn't a partisan issue. As you pointed out, I voted with the majority to condemn Soleimani and to support the strike that took him out. But we have been without a Senate-confirmed coordinator for over 2 years, and it is past time that we confirm Ambassador Richard.

I think my colleague is punishing Ambassador Richard, who served for most of her tenure under a Republican administration, under former President Trump. So if you didn't agree with what she was doing, that was the Trump administration that was in place during most of her years.

I am very familiar with the tragic case of Amer Fakhoury, who was a constituent of mine, and his family I still continue to be in touch with. I worked very hard with his family, with Robert O'Brien, the National Security Advisor under the Trump administration, and I appreciated Senator CRUZ's help on that sanctions legislation. But I don't remember Senator CRUZ on all of those calls we had almost weekly with Ambassador Richard to talk about what else we might be able to do to be able to free Amer Fakhoury.

It is a tragic case, but punishing a former ambassador for U.S. policy in Lebanon is not the way to empower future diplomats to do what we need to have them do. It is ensuring that they get into their position and that they support the policies.

I am afraid that your opposition—just like all of the opposition that we are hearing from our colleague Senator TUBERVILLE on the military promotions and that we are hearing from our colleague J.D. VANCE on holding up judicial appointments—is going to have a chilling effect on the ability of our diplomats to do what they need to do.

In fact, on Ambassador Richard's watch, the United States imposed more

sanctions designations on Hezbollah individuals and entities than it had ever done previously.

I am just going to read some of these because I think they are telling, as you talk about how weak she was on terrorists.

In January 9, 2017, Ali Damush and Mustafa Mughniyeh were sanctioned for support for Hezbollah.

On February 3—I am going to have trouble reading all of these names—Hasan Deghan Ebrahimi, who is an IRGC official who was based in Lebanon at the time, Muhammad Farhat, Yahya al-Hajj, and several affiliated companies in Lebanon were sanctioned for operating a support network for the IRGC-QF.

On May 16, Barly Offshore, a Lebanese-based front company to support transactions from Syria, was sanctioned.

On May 19, Hashem Safieddine was sanctioned for serving as a senior leader in Hezbollah.

On November 1, the Department maintained and amended a prior designation of the Azzam Brigades as a foreign terrorist organization, citing its role in the 2014 attack in Lebanon. That was in 2017.

In 2018, on February 2, Lebanon-based Jihad Muhammad Qansu, Ali Muhammad Qansu, Issam Ahmad Saad, Nabil Mahmoud Assaf, and Iraq-based Abdul Latif Saad and Muhammad Badr-Al-Din for acting for or on behalf of Hezbollah member and financier Adham Tabaja or his company, Al-Inmaa Engineering and Contracting, were sanctioned.

On April 18, Barakat transnational criminal organization—also known as Barakat alien smuggling organization—Syria, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, for smuggling Syrians and Lebanese into the United States across the southwestern U.S. border.

On May 15, Qasir Muhammad—Mohammed Jaafar; AKA Fadi; AKA Gholi, Hossein; AKA Majid; AKA Salah, Shaykh—for acting on behalf of Hezbollah and working with the IRGC-QF to transfer funds.

On May 16, Hassan Nasrallah—I am sure you remember that—the secretary-general of Hezbollah, alongside Naim Qasim, Muhammad Yazbak, Husayn Al-Khalil, and Ibrahim al-Amin al-Sayyid, for their roles in Hezbollah's Shura Council, the primary decision-making body in Hezbollah, were sanctioned.

On May 17—I mean, these go on for three more pages, all of the designations of sanctions that were made during Ambassador Richard's tenure.

So I think the Senator from Texas has a different understanding of what happened in Lebanon. I don't think these are the actions of someone who is soft on Hezbollah.

But, as I said earlier, unfortunately, Ambassador Richard's nomination is not an outlier. Around the world, the

United States faces reduced diplomatic influence because of partisan obstruction by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

When Ambassadors are not in place to advance U.S. interests, it is the American people who pay the price because without confirmed Ambassadors, we cannot effectively advocate on behalf of U.S. businesses that need support or advance democratic reform agendas to secure investments overseas. Without confirmed Ambassadors, we cannot advance our national security interests. Some countries refuse to speak to U.S. representatives without an ambassador in place. Without confirmed Ambassadors, we cannot effectively help detained or imprisoned Americans overseas.

Ambassador Richard did everything in her capacity to secure the release of my constituent, Mr. Fakhoury. As I said, Senator CRUZ may not recognize this because he wasn't on those calls that we did with the Ambassador on a regular basis. But I can tell Senator CRUZ that she did everything she could amid a challenging political environment to bring Mr. Fakhoury home.

But now, instead of confirming Ambassadors, Senator CRUZ would rather prevent American diplomats from doing their jobs.

I would add one other very concerning trend about all of these Ambassadors who are on hold, and that is that so many of them are women.

At one point earlier in the administration, Senator CRUZ was holding the nominations of 23 women, including those nominated to be Ambassadors to France, Spain, and NATO, as well as the heads of the Near East Affairs and Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureaus, at a time when we should be swiftly confirming our Ambassadors.

We just had a hearing in the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, and we were talking about the challenges that we face competing with the PRC and China as we look at their Belt and Road Initiative, as we look at the money they have to spend around the world. One of the points our colleague from South Carolina, LINDSEY GRAHAM, made—he quoted General Mattis, the former Secretary of Defense, who pointed out that if we don't have soft power, if we don't have these Ambassadors in place—that is my addition—then we need more bullets because we don't have the capability to do the diplomacy that deters conflict. That is why we need this nominee in place. That is why we need to move forward, and that is why we need to ensure that we protect the national security of the United States.

I am disappointed because, as my colleague points out, he and I have worked together on a number of issues around national security. So I would have hoped that he would be more supportive of getting a nominee in place who could address counterterrorism.

So, Mr. President, with that, I will yield the floor and continue to come

down to support efforts to put in place the Ambassadors we need to fight back against our adversaries around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING ALICE SANGER AND FLAG DAY

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I often speak of Hoosiers whose service, patriotism, and sacrifice capture the spirit we celebrate on civic holidays. For Flag Day, however, I rise to share the story of a Hoosier who didn't merely embody the occasion. She helped establish it, and she made history too.

Alice Sanger played such an important part in Benjamin Harrison's Presidential campaign in 1888 as a stenographer that he made her an important part of his Presidential staff. So Alice left her home in Indianapolis for Washington, DC, to become the first woman ever to serve on a President's staff.

This historic distinction doesn't quite capture the breadth of Alice's service to the President and to our Nation. Neither did her title of "clerk" or contemporary reporters' descriptions of her, which often dwelled on her looks and her clothes.

So let me share with you what this clerk did in the White House. It is quite remarkable.

A renaissance woman who was skilled with a paintbrush and had an ear for music, Alice could take dictation at 200 words a minute without a single misspelling.

She had a discretion seldom seen in Washington—now or then—and she was known as a "jewel of secrecy" in the White House.

Not only did she type President Harrison's annual address to Congress, she was given sole responsibility of safekeeping it until it was sent here to the Capitol.

She personally read through all of the President's and First Lady Caroline Harrison's correspondence, and she answered much of it in her own hand. During the late 19th century, no woman's signature was better known in America than Alice's.

In 1893, after losing his bid for reelection, Harrison left the White House but Alice remained. You see, she was so essential to the executive branch's function that the new President, Grover Cleveland, from a different political party, asked her to stay on.

In 1894, she moved to the Post Office Department, which was then a significant Cabinet-level Agency. She was no less indispensable in that capacity. For decades, she managed budgets and advertising. She kept track of regulations and postal laws, and she assembled the 700-page directive that guided the operations of every post office in America.

She was a masterful organizer. She planned war bond drives, donations to the Red Cross, and holiday celebrations, including the one we mark today.

Now, the idea of commemorating the day in 1777 when the Continental Congress created our national banner was not her own. Celebrations of the American flag were staged periodically around the country, dating back to the 1860s. But in 1908, Alice, as part of her responsibilities at the post office, planned and staged a grand celebration for Flag Day.

The sound of bands and distinguished speakers lifted out of the Old Post Office building's courtyard, where a giant American flag hung. In the years that followed, other government departments joined in the celebration with their own Flag Day festivities, in large part due to Alice's efforts. States followed suit, many with input from Alice herself, who advised local post offices on appropriate celebrations.

Presidents Wilson and Coolidge recognized Flag Day with proclamations, and, in 1949, the 81st Congress passed and Harry Truman signed legislation formally establishing its observance.

You see, there is some harmony between Alice's career and her work to promote Flag Day. When we look up at the Stars and Stripes, we catch America's reflection. It is a symbol of our ideals, after all. Wherever it waves, on battlefields where we have defended it, alongside the graves of those who have died for it, in front of the places where its democracy lives—courthouses in our towns and statehouses in our cities, the dome under which we meet, and from the homes across the Republic for which it stands—our flag represents the promise of freedom and self-government; that any man or woman can live their life in pursuit of happiness. But it also is a reminder that the work of honoring those ideals goes on.

It is fitting then that, on Flag Day, we remember Indiana's Alice Sanger. This Hoosier served her country so faithfully in an era where pathways for women to do so were so few.

So, on Flag Day, we raise a pair of salutes: one to Old Glory, forever may she fly; and a second to the trailblazing spirit of Americans like Alice, long may it live.

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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 41, P. Casey Pitts, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Tim Kaine, Margaret

Wood Hassan, Ben Ray Lujan, Raphael G. Warnock, Tammy Duckworth, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, John W. Hickenlooper, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Baldwin, Brian Schatz, Christopher Murphy, Tina Smith, Debbie Stabenow.

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 P. Casey Pitts, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called roll.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 159 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hagerty	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeben	Rounds
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Budd	Johnson	Schmitt
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	Marshall	Tuberville
Crapo	McConnell	Vance
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Mullin	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Scott (SC)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 46.

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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 26, Dale E. Ho, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Edward J. Markey, Tammy Duckworth, Ben Ray Lujan, Margaret Wood Hassan, Christopher Murphy, Debbie Stabenow, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Angus S. King, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Raphael G. Warnock, Brian Schatz, Peter Welch, Jack Reed.

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 Dale E. Ho, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 160 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—49

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Hoeben	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	Manchin	Tuberville
Crapo	Marshall	Vance
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Mullin	
Fischer	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—1

Scott (SC)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 49.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Dale E. Ho, of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BROADBAND

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise to talk about something that is unseen but really impacts every aspect of our daily lives, something that has major implications on the future of my State and many rural States just like the Presiding Officer's rural areas, and that is reliable broadband connection and the implementation of service in our unserved and underserved areas.

Internet connection is something that we often take for granted, certainly in the DC area we do—especially in our cities and urban communities. It is a mainstay of so many facets of our life.

So just think about it. We rely on internet connection for our communication with our family and friends, our emergency services, obtaining information. I have already done that about five times today, getting some additional information—banking, conducting business, and as we experienced firsthand during the pandemic, essential aspects of our workforce participation, the education of our children, and I would add in healthcare here. Even as we transitioned back to in-person work and school post-pandemic, these capabilities are so essential and greatly beneficial.

In West Virginia, our State is the only State entirely encompassed by Appalachia, and we are recognized across the world for our mountainous terrain. So we love our mountains in West Virginia, but our topography in West Virginia has dealt us a challenging hand when it comes to adopting needed advancements to connect people to the internet.

So we know one thing: It is expensive, and it is a lot easier said than done. But this lack of broadband connectivity and reliability is one of the biggest concerns that I hear every time I travel in the State. That is because our homes, our schools, our hospitals, our health clinics, our churches, our businesses, if they lack the appropriate level of connectivity or lack it entirely, you are behind. You are behind. You are not participating. You can't get the help that you need. You can't communicate the way you want to. And in a lot of cases, you are not going to live in a place that doesn't have connectivity. So this is something that must change and something that I am committed to changing.

So one of my first initiatives as a U.S. Senator was launching my Capito Connect Plan to help bridge this digital divide that we see in the country. The plan served as a roadmap for bringing affordable, high-speed internet connection and access to our homes, our businesses, and our classrooms throughout the State. Since launching this initiative, we have made a lot of progress—we have—connecting our communities in our State. We have had a lot of conversation, and, really, we have kind of bridged a lot of what we thought would be the impossible.

We have expanded cellular service in Paw Paw, a very remote area, and in

Lincoln County, a very rural area, by initiating searches for providers. We have secured millions of dollars in broadband funding investments through the USDA programs, and we have hosted multiple visits with our FCC officials to bring attention to our State's broadband needs.

Increasing rural broadband funding has been a focus of the Appalachian Regional Commission. I have also supported major broadband builds like Zayo's announcement to connect a fiber optic network right through the North Central part of our State. We have also been receiving critical feedback from listening sessions in all 55 counties, including soliciting all kinds of data back from folks in West Virginia onto our website. Also, when we were leading efforts to craft the bipartisan infrastructure law, I made sure, along with many others, that this was included because this is an essential part of our infrastructure. And we are making a difference.

So we have made a lot of advances. We have. But there is still much more work to accomplish. Now is not the time to look back and see what we didn't do and how maybe we could have done it better. Now is the time to look forward and see where we are and where we are going to be. So we are at a really critical moment here and one we must take advantage of.

We have all prioritized funding and provided funding for broadband in many different pieces of legislation. We have done that every year in appropriations—and I am on appropriations—and I personally have made sure that we have included this not just in the appropriations bill but also in the bipartisan infrastructure package.

So, on Monday, I was back home in West Virginia and got the chance to speak to some of the greatest young men and women in our State at West Virginia Girls State and West Virginia Boys State. It is clear in talking to some of them that our best and brightest are unlikely to stay in our State if they don't have this reliable broadband. It just doesn't make sense. The lack of internet connectivity will impact how they join the workforce, how they further their education or perform the tasks of everyday living that have become so dependent on broadband.

So Congress has a much needed and very important role to play here, and I am confident in our ability to rise to this occasion in the face of this challenge.

But in order to distribute the unprecedented funding that is coming from the bipartisan infrastructure law to the communities and States that need it, we have got to have accurate data.

This has been a flaw in the system. That is why NTIA and FCC have been tasked with developing the National Broadband Map, to determine where the unserved and the underserved communities were located.

Why is that important? Because much of the funding, as it should be, is

not to up your service in an urban area or up my service in Charleston, WV, in a more, I would say, suburban-type area, but it is to go to these unserved and underserved areas. We have to have accurate data. So with accurate data, we can work and distribute funding as we should, as is proper.

There is no doubt that the first maps that came out in November were inaccurate. They failed to properly account for the connectivity needs—I know I can speak for my State, but I am sure it is the same all across the country. And this is something that our State of West Virginia, we really took it personally because we know that this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to really get it right.

So they invited challenges. They said if you can identify a residence or a home or business that is shown as being served, and you are unserved or underserved, then you can challenge the map to say that is an inaccurate recording of the status of broadband activity.

So we had over 120,000 challenges of which 86,000 of these were accepted. That means they went back and looked, and working with our State broadband council that has done a phenomenal job, they went back and looked and found that 86,000 homes or businesses that were recorded as being served in actuality had either no service or very little service—something that was considered underserved. This is going to help us as the distribution of the larger sums of money come to actually provide the dollars to get to those places.

These developments are encouraging and the FCC will continue to improve this and two future versions are being planned.

The need for connectivity remains. Updated mapping shows that over 271,000 locations in my State now remain without service. I think some people watching this would probably say: It can't possibly be that you don't have service. But if you get to some of these remote areas, and sometimes they are not even that remote, you get out into some of the more rural areas where there is maybe one provider or there is no competition, it is not an economic model to serve one home that is 10, 15 miles away.

So there are people. When I get a show of hands in classrooms in West Virginia, I get at least 20 percent to 30 percent of the students in those classrooms do not have good service. Think about doing their homework when they get home. They can't do it. Most of it relies on information that you get from the internet. So it really puts those students and those families behind.

While funding will be allocated by the end of this month, we have to make sure also that it is not wasted. Sadly, we have seen this happen. In our own State in 2010, money was wasted when our first chance came along to be able to connect more people. So we have to make sure that that doesn't happen.

That is why I have introduced the Rural Broadband Protection Act. It is a bill with broad bipartisan support that would improve government programs responsible for connecting people. I look forward to marking up this legislation in committee here soon.

West Virginians have been persistent and diligent and, honestly, I think, quite patient—but are now very frustrated—throughout the process. They can always expect the same from me, as however they are feeling is however I am going to feel, because that is how you are as a representative.

So I will continue my efforts for these broadband capabilities—to go to that last house, that last home, that last business—in this Mountain State. We are on the cusp, I think, of a major breakthrough here—we are all on board on this—and one that I am committing to see through.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to discuss, along with a number of my other colleagues who share the understanding, the importance of broadband access, especially to rural America.

A recent study by the University of Kansas found that up to 1 million Kansans live in regions that lack access to high-speed broadband services. Often, rural areas have the worst quality broadband or, as is too often the case, they have no access to broadband.

The benefits of access to high-quality broadband are clear. They are known. We have worked hard to be in positions here in the U.S. Senate in which we are fully engaged on the issue of making sure that all Americans have access to this service. Broadband access is correlated with more jobs, greater economic growth, better healthcare outcomes, and increased educational performance.

This means our country will be weaker as we confront the economic and security challenges we are facing, including labor shortages, STEM education shortcomings, and the lagging American leadership in key technology areas. When millions are without broadband, we limit our potential as a nation.

Lack of access or lack of access to good-quality broadband is certainly a local issue. It is an individual issue. It is a local business, a local family, a local school, a local library issue. But the consequence of those individuals, those families, those schools being absent broadband service is a detriment to our Nation.

Recognizing the importance of access to high-quality broadband, Congress has allocated significant resources to help bridge the digital divide, but the first step in appropriately allocating those resources is knowing where the money needs to go.

I sponsored the Broadband DATA Act, which was enacted in 2020, to require the FCC to use granular data to

create a more accurate and refined broadband map to better target areas so we know where the new investments are needed. Getting these maps right is critical and has not been easy. The first time I saw the maps that were developed, it was like, this doesn't reflect at all what I know about my home State of Kansas.

Congress has devoted significant resources. We were involved in the effort to allocate additional dollars so that broadband maps could be updated and the data could be improved and hopefully get the information correct. We have been working on this since 2020.

If the FCC maps aren't accurate, a large portion of funding will be poorly used, and areas in need won't get the resources required to increase access to broadband. Millions of dollars in new resources for Kansas rely upon the accuracy of the maps. It would be poor government and a waste of taxpayer dollars if the outcome is that we are only providing money to places that already have broadband service or have quality broadband service and once again forgetting, forgoing those that don't.

The FCC is required to allow Americans to challenge the inaccuracies within the maps, making certain the maps improve over time. After receiving feedback from Kansans over the last few weeks and months, a second version of the map was released at the end of May. I understand from talking with Kansans that this map is more accurate than the one before. Continued oversight of the FCC's work will be necessary, and I continue to work with my colleagues on those efforts.

Now that we know where the need exists—now that we better know where the need exists, we need to make certain that investments are appropriately targeted to those most in need and not waste it on overbuilding existing networks. We also must ensure that the program requirements encourage broadband providers to participate rather than discourage them with burdensome requirements that do not line up with congressional intent.

I also want to make certain that every dollar Congress has allocated to broadband deployment actually goes to broadband deployment, not back to the Treasury. This is why, in a bipartisan way, we have introduced legislation to ensure that broadband grants are not considered taxable income. This is particularly important as critical broadband deployment programs at the Department of Commerce allocate funds at the end of this month, just a few days from now. Every dollar taken back by Treasury represents a community remaining disconnected, and I encourage my colleagues to work with me so this is not the case.

As part of my oversight work as the ranking member of the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee, I invited Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo to Kansas to hear directly from Kansans about the

challenges they face when deploying broadband across our State. She heard from County Commissioner Randy Leis about the benefits broadband access has brought to Meade County, including education and business opportunities. She also heard from a host of rural telephone and telecom providers about what they need from the Department of Commerce to successfully deploy broadband across Kansas.

During this visit, Secretary Raimondo—and I express my appreciation here today on the Senate floor. I appreciate her coming to my State to hear and see what is the circumstance. During this visit, Secretary Raimondo reiterated her commitment to provide every Kansan with access to high-quality broadband services.

To preserve the smalltown Kansas way of life that I and many Kansans and Senators here today value, I look forward to working with Federal and State officials to make certain that Kansas and particularly rural Kansans are connected to quality broadband service. Of all the things we do in my world to try to make sure Kansans have a bright future, one of the important ones is to make sure we have access to the technologies of today and tomorrow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Madam President, over the last several years, much has been made about the digital divide that exists here in America. The more digital the economy becomes, the bigger the divide between big cities and small towns.

As someone who still lives on a family farm in Davie County in North Carolina, I have always made it a priority to stand up for North Carolinians who don't have the advantage of large population centers. Rural Americans across our State and our Nation shouldn't have their economic opportunities diminished because of their ZIP Code.

One of the biggest challenges we face in bridging the digital divide is politicalization. An example of this is the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment—or BEAD—Program. This program provides “over \$42 billion to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs” across the country, but once the Biden administration got a hold of this funding, they began funneling it toward their liberal wish list instead of toward commonsense broadband deployment.

Another example is the Biden administration's Notice of Funding Opportunity, which gives favorable treatment to government-owned networks over private ones, and they load up that funding with climate mandates that drive up costs for these communities. This is fundamentally the wrong approach.

At the end of the day, what rural Americans are looking for is pretty straightforward: They want the highest

quality internet for the most affordable price as quickly as possible.

This is not the time or place for social agendas or for partisan distractions. We have to keep our eye on bridging the digital divide so that rural Americans have a fair shot at opportunities where they can achieve their God-given potential. This is just one more way we can build a strong nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I join my Republican colleagues on the floor today in support of expanding broadband access across rural America.

I recently had the honor of becoming ranking member of the Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development and Energy, which has jurisdiction over the U.S. Department of Agriculture's broadband programs. My top priority as ranking member is expanding broadband access to unserved populations that need it most so our rural communities are not left behind.

In today's economy, people need fast and reliable internet to work, to go to school, have virtual meetings, and even see their doctors through telemedicine. Our farmers need an internet signal to operate their farms, their facilities, drive tractors, irrigate crops, apply pesticides, and implement precision agriculture technologies. Without it, they do not have an opportunity to compete.

Recently, the USDA increased the requirements for sufficient broadband access from speeds of 25 over 3 megabits per second to 100 over 20 megabits per second download and upload speeds. Yet 1 out of 10 people in my State of Alabama didn't even meet the previous 25-over-3 threshold. So why change it? Either don't change it or build better broadband.

I am grateful to the chairman of the Rural Development Subcommittee, Senator WELCH of Vermont, for his hard work and partnership on this bipartisan issue. The subcommittee recently held our first meeting, and it was a success. It was exactly what we needed. We had a great discussion with witnesses and colleagues on the importance of broadband.

Later this year, we will have a farm bill coming up in Congress—very important. We need to ensure that expanding rural broadband is included in this year's farm bill.

Also, earlier this year, I was proud to join a bipartisan group of my colleagues to introduce the Broadband Grant Tax Treatment Act. This bill would amend the Tax Code to ensure that Federal grant funding for broadband isn't considered taxable income. It just doesn't make sense to fund broadband and then tax broadband users for using it.

I want to thank my colleagues who are here on the floor today for their support, and I want to encourage all of my colleagues to join us in this effort.

Rural broadband is vital for the success of our rural communities and for the entire economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, for the past 6 years, my staff, my family, and I have traveled to every corner of the State. We have crisscrossed it multiple times. We have been in every county in Kansas multiple times—town halls and roundtables and listening sessions. In fact, just last week—the last week we were on break—we probably made a dozen stops. At every one of those stops, at every one of those roundtables, I can guarantee you the subject of high-speed internet came up.

Together, we built solutions to address the challenges our rural areas are facing. Together, we built hospitals, municipal water facilities, grocery stores, and critical infrastructure in our State's communities. But despite all of these achievements, many Kansans agree that one job is still not finished, and that is the crucial task of building out high-speed broadband connectivity to every part of the State.

Nothing highlighted the inadequate infrastructure for high-speed broadband across Kansas more than the COVID-19 lockdowns. Our schools and businesses across the State were shut down. Hundreds of thousands of Kansans were sent home to do their jobs and schoolwork. A lackluster internet connection impacted children's education across the State and many families' ability to keep up with remote work.

Rural broadband's impacts go far beyond the classroom for our Kansas communities. In today's quickly evolving cyber world, adequate internet connection is a necessity, not just a luxury. Doctors at my alma mater, KU Med Center in Wichita, are trying to offer clinical trials to rural Kansan participants through secure video checkups. Having a premier healthcare virtual consultation option in communities where there is a shortage of access to quality care can save the patient hours of driving and, in many cases, save their lives.

In addition to healthcare benefits, having high-speed internet brings our farming techniques into the 21st century. In rural areas, the capability of using the best technology available in farming practices depends on a reliable internet connection. Precision agriculture internet apps allow farmers to monitor conditions—hour by hour, second by second—more effectively in the field, and they can track crop yields and feed the world, producing more food with less—more food with less water, more food with less fertilizers.

By utilizing this latest farm equipment, our State's farmers and ranchers are able to leave the land cleaner, healthier, and safer than when we found it.

Madam President, the call for a strong internet connection across Kansas has only grown. That is why I rise

today to highlight the importance of broadband expansion.

There is still so much work to be done to get rural America up to speed, and I realize this work will never be done, just like our roads and bridges that were amplified so much in the 1950s and 1960s. We still have to go back and repair those roads and bridges. There is always one more road and bridge that we need to go back and fix, and that will be the rule with high-speed internet. There is always something bigger and faster out there that we need to keep pace.

I am proud to have played a role as a member of the Kansas House Agriculture Committee in 2018 when we drafted the farm bill, which directed both the USDA and FCC with dollars to fund new and innovative ways to connect rural residents.

In 2018, we authorized the ReConnect Program at the USDA, which awarded funding for broadband connectivity services to under- and unserved areas. ReConnect provided \$5.2 million to connect over 1,300 households, 16 businesses, and 23 farms in Kansas during its first round of funding.

In 2023, we introduced a new effort in the 2023 farm bill, with my colleague and fellow member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator PETER WELCH of Vermont. The ReConnecting Rural America Act provides a minimum speed of 100/100 high-speed internet build-out speeds, prioritizing long-term broadband infrastructure in our most rural communities.

Every Kansan I have spoken to has voiced the need for symmetrical speeds in their community and for increasing investments in fiber to be made by providers. By bolstering broadband infrastructure for our rural communities, we are able to stay up to speed with what is happening in the rest of the world.

Through these Federal efforts, combined with the administration of funds at the State level, I believe that we are getting closer than ever to making a real impact in rural broadband connectivity. Still, we must stay dedicated to the task at hand and ensure that this infrastructure is built to last.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, yesterday, the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law hosted a hearing to examine the rise of artificial intelligence. In the last few months, we have had a lot of conversations here about AI, and I am grateful that we are looking at this issue. Although there are many areas

where we disagree, our colleagues on each side of the aisle are paying close attention to this issue. I would encourage my colleagues to review the high points of yesterday's hearing because it truly demonstrated the scope of the challenges that we find ourselves facing.

We fielded several firsthand accounts of how this technology can be weaponized against human beings in our homes and on a national scale. We heard from Jennifer DeStefano, who was the victim of an attempted AI kidnapping and extortion scheme. Scam artists used AI to clone her 15-year-old daughter Brie's voice and then used this manufactured recording to try and extort \$1 million in ransom.

Fortunately, Jennifer was able to confirm that Brie was safe. But you can see how criminals could, and indeed will, and certainly are beginning to leverage this technology against other families.

We also heard from Jeffrey Cain, an investigative journalist who has witnessed how destructive AI can be in the hands of oppressive governments. He has reported extensively on how the Chinese Communist Party is using AI to enhance their brutal surveillance state.

According to one account, the CCP has used facial recognition to track the movements of Chinese citizens. They have even used it to track their citizens as young as 9 days old. This is how the Chinese Communist Party is using this technology.

One of the things that we have learned is that China and the CCP are trying to control the market for artificial intelligence, just the same that we have learned they are doing for 5G, for quantum computing, and for other groundbreaking technologies.

They said as much back in 2017, when they released their national AI development plan. Their goal is to be the dominant force in artificial intelligence by the time we reach 2030.

But whether we are talking about the threat from scam artists or hostile foreign powers, it is time to prove that the U.S. Senate understands why we must lead in setting the standards for and developing artificial intelligence, rather than ceding this authority and this place to Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party.

That means continuing the work that we started in yesterday's hearing. It is important to note this was a bipartisan hearing. Chairman OSSOFF did a great job in leading this discussion. We had great participation in this hearing.

And we have to continue to look at the uses of artificial intelligence. There are some for good, and there are some for evil, which is what we heard so much about yesterday and how it impacts human rights.

As we think about deploying AI on a broad scale, we need to focus on preserving the freedoms and the democratic values that we hold dear here in

our country. It also means finally enacting a national data privacy standard to govern the collection and the sharing of our personal information.

One of our witnesses, Alexandra Givens, mentioned that this needed to be done as a fundamental foundational element before we begin to look at guardrails for AI, giving individuals the ability to protect their virtual views themselves and their information in the virtual space.

This is something that, as policy-makers, we need to make sure that our existing laws can adapt to meet the challenge that is before us as we look at artificial intelligence.

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

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO "CONTROL OF AIR POLLUTION FROM NEW MOTOR VEHICLES: HEAVY-DUTY ENGINE AND VEHICLE STANDARDS"—VETO

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the veto message on S.J. Res. 11 be considered as having been read and be printed in the RECORD and spread in full upon the Journal.

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

The veto message was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 11, a resolution that would disapprove the rule entitled "Control of Air Pollution From New Motor Vehicles: Heavy-Duty Engine and Vehicle Standards."

This rule amends the Environmental Protection Agency's heavy-duty emissions control program—including its standards, test procedures, and other requirements—to further reduce the air quality impacts of heavy-duty engines. The rule cuts pollution, boosts public health, and advances environmental justice in communities across the country. It will prevent hundreds, if not thousands, of premature deaths; thousands of childhood asthma cases; and millions of missed school days every year.

The resolution would deny communities these health benefits by resulting in weaker emissions standards for heavy-duty vehicles and engines, which are significant sources of pollutants that threaten public health. If enacted,

the resolution would squander \$36 billion in benefits to society—and an opportunity to lead on the defining crisis of our time.

Therefore, I am vetoing this resolution.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 14, 2023.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 11

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the veto message with respect to S.J. Res. 11 be considered at a time to be determined by the majority leader in concurrence with the Republican leader prior to June 23; that there be up to 2 hours for debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; and that the Senate then vote on passage of the joint resolution, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote begin.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

NOMINATION OF PATRICK CASEY PITTS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Patrick Casey Pitts to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. After receiving his B.A. and J.D. from Yale University, Mr. Pitts clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Following his clerkship, Mr. Pitts joined Altshuler Berzon LLP, where he has spent his entire legal career. His practice focuses on advocating on behalf of employees—often from low-income, minority, and underserved communities—and unions in labor disputes. Mr. Pitts has extensive litigation experience, trying one case to judgment and litigating more than 100 matters that were resolved through a decision on the merits. And if confirmed, Mr. Pitts will bring vital demographic diversity to the Northern District of California as the only openly LGBTQ article III judge actively serving in that district. He will also bring professional diversity to the Federal bench as a lawyer who has defended the rights of employees and labor organizations.

The American Bar Association rated Mr. Pitts “qualified,” and he has the strong support of his home State Senators: Mrs. FEINSTEIN and Mr. PADILLA. Mr. Pitts is a seasoned litigator whose

credentials and experience make him an outstanding addition to the Northern District of California.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Pitts's nomination.

VOTE ON PITTS NOMINATION

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

Mr. ROUNDS. 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.

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 161 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hagerty	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rounds
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Budd	Johnson	Schmitt
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	Marshall	Tuberville
Crapo	McConnell	Vance
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Mullin	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Scott (SC)

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 actions.

NOMINATION OF DALE E. HO

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Dale Ho to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. A graduate of Princeton University and Yale Law School, Mr. Ho began his legal career as a clerk for Judge Barbara S. Jones on the Southern District of New York and Judge Robert S.

Smith on the New York Court of Appeals. After working in private practice for 2 years, Mr. Ho pursued a career as a civil rights lawyer, focusing primarily on protecting Americans' right to vote.

Mr. Ho has more than a decade of experience litigating long-running, complex civil matters, giving him great insight into the real-world impact of judicial decision-making and an understanding of the importance of fairly applying the law to the facts. Mr. Ho will be a valuable addition to the bench, given his underrepresented perspective as a civil rights lawyer.

The American Bar Association rated Mr. Ho “well qualified,” and he has the strong support of his home State Senators: Mr. SCHUMER and Mrs. GILLIBRAND. As a highly skilled litigator who has experience in complex civil litigation and has a significant appellate practice, including arguing before the U.S. Supreme Court, Mr. Ho is well-positioned to serve on the Southern District of New York with distinction.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Ho's nomination.

VOTE ON HO NOMINATION

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam 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. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 162 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—49

Barrasso	Ernst	McConnell
Blackburn	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Graham	Mullin
Braun	Grassley	Murkowski
Britt	Hagerty	Paul
Budd	Hawley	Ricketts
Capito	Hoeven	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Collins	Johnson	Rounds
Cornyn	Kennedy	Rubio
Cotton	Lankford	Schmitt
Cramer	Lee	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Lummis	Sullivan
Cruz	Manchin	
Daines	Marshall	

Thune
TillisTuberville
VanceWicker
Young

NOT VOTING—1

Scott (SC)

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). 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.

The Senator from California.

CALIFORNIA JUDICIAL CONFIRMATIONS

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of the great State of California to celebrate several newly confirmed U.S. district court judges.

I am proud to say that just 3 months after I celebrated a confirmation of four highly qualified Federal judges for the State of California, three more have now been confirmed. Today, I hope to share a bit more about each of their stories, the breadth of experience, and their history of dedicated public service.

Early last month, I was proud to see Judge Wesley Hsu confirmed to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. Judge Hsu's path to the Federal bench is a story of hard work, remarkable intelligence, and truly a case study in the American dream.

His father fled communist China, traveling 70 miles to the coast with his mother and developmentally disabled brother as a child. Both of Judge Hsu's parents eventually immigrated to the United States to attend graduate school at Kansas State University before moving to California where Judge Hsu grew up.

After earning his undergraduate degree and his JD from Yale, he worked as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, the same court on which he now serves as a judge. He later served for over a decade and a half as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Central District in the Criminal Division. And from 2017 until just recently, Judge Hsu served as a judge on the Los Angeles County Superior Court, presiding over the Family Law and Criminal Divisions.

I have no doubt that Judge Hsu's strong qualifications and deep experience in the Central District will make him an exemplary district court judge.

That was early last month.

Just yesterday, we confirmed Judge Hernan Vera, another devoted jurist slated to serve on the District Court for the Central District of California. The son of Argentine immigrants, Judge Vera earned his undergraduate degree from Stanford University and his JD from the UCLA School of Law. And since then, he has had a diverse legal career from corporate law to serving 12 years at Public Counsel, our Nation's largest pro bono law firm.

As director and then CEO of the Consumer Law Project, Judge Vera worked tirelessly on behalf of consumers, on behalf of veterans, the elderly, and the

working poor. In 2020, Judge Vera was appointed to the California Superior Court for Los Angeles County where he adjudicated child dependency cases. In every respect, Judge Vera stands out in California's legal community. His diverse legal and professional experience makes him a welcome addition to the Central District's bench.

And, finally, earlier this afternoon, just a couple of hours ago, we confirmed Casey Pitts to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

Born in Minnesota and raised in Fargo, ND, Pitts attended Yale University and, later, Yale School of Law. After law school, he came out west, and he served as a law clerk on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for Judge Stephen Reinhardt before joining the public interest firm Altshuler Berzon, where he has been ever since.

He has represented workers, consumers, and public interest groups, fighting to protect lives and livelihoods of Americans and helping to shape how and for whom our economy and our courts work.

Casey will be the only LGBTQ article III judge currently serving on the District Court for the Northern District of California. His life experience, his credentials, and his record of fighting for the American people will no doubt make him a phenomenal jurist. And I am proud to see him confirmed, as well.

Mr. President, for the past 2½ years, Senate Democrats have worked closely with President Biden to nominate and confirm a record number of Federal judges. I have made it a personal priority to try to fulfill the expectations of Americans all over the country who deserve a trusted, highly qualified, and, yes, diverse Federal judiciary. With these three confirmations, we are proving that our judiciary benefits when people from diverse backgrounds are on the Federal bench. Whether the child of immigrants who sought a better life in the United States or an LGBTQ kid from Fargo, ND, whether an assistant U.S. attorney or a lawyer defending consumers and veterans, all these backgrounds should be represented in our judiciary.

We can't say this often enough: Our Nation is beautifully diverse, and we are a stronger Nation because of it. And so it should be for our Federal judiciary. So I thank you, colleagues, for confirming these three nominations, and I am so grateful to each and every one of them for their public service on behalf of our Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

CELEBRATING THE 246TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, I rise today to share a resolution of support for the Pledge of Allegiance as an expression of patriotism and to honor the 246th anniversary of the creation of our U.S. flag.

Today, we celebrate Flag Day. As we pause to recognize all that our flag represents, let us also honor those who have sacrificed everything to defend it.

In 2002, Senator Tom Daschle raised a similar resolution with unanimous support from the Senate. It passed on the floor uneventfully. Today, I ask this body to reaffirm our support of the Pledge of Allegiance.

I rise today also to honor a Hoosier who understood the innate value of the Pledge of Allegiance to our civic education. In 1969, Red Skelton, the American entertainer who was well known for his program "The Red Skelton Hour," wrote a speech on the importance of the pledge. Reflecting on his time in Vincennes, IN—not many miles from where I was born and raised in Jasper—he spoke about the values instilled in the students by one of his high school teachers. After the performance of the speech, CBS received 200,000 requests for copies. The speech would go on to be sold as a single by Columbia Records and performed at the White House for President Nixon. To honor Mr. Skelton's memory and the importance of the pledge, I will recite his speech today on the Senate floor.

In the words of Mr. Red Skelton, as applicable today as it was many years ago:

When I was a small boy in Vincennes, Indiana, I heard, I think, one of the most outstanding speeches I ever heard in my life. I think it compares with the Sermon on the Mount, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and Socrates' speech to the students.

We had just finished reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and he [Mr. Lasswell, the Principal of Vincennes High School] called us all together and he says: '[U]h boys and girls, I have been listening to you recite the Pledge of Allegiance all semester, and it seems it has become monotonous to you. Or, could it be, you do not understand the meaning of each word?'

If I may, I would like to recite the pledge and give you a definition for each word.

I—Me; an individual; a committee of one.

Pledge—Dedicate all of my worldly good to give without self-pity.

Allegiance—My love and my devotion.

To the Flag—Our standard. "Old Glory"; a symbol of courage. And wherever she waves, there is respect, because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts, "Freedom is everybody's job."

"Of the United"—That means we have all come together.

States—Individual communities that have united into 48 great States; 48 individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose; all divided by imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common cause, and that's love of country—

And, of course, 48 States dates when that was done—

Of America.

And to the Republic—A Republic: a sovereign state in which power is invested into the representatives chosen by the people to govern; and the government is the people; and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people.

For which it stands.

One Nation—Meaning “so blessed by God.” Under God.

Indivisible—Incapable of being divided.

With Liberty—Which is freedom; the right of power for one to live his own life without fears, threats, or any sort of retaliation.

And Justice—The principle and qualities of dealing fairly with others.

For All—For All. That means, boys and girls, it's as much your country as it is mine.

Afterwards, Mr. Lasswell asked his students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance together with newfound appreciation for the words.

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.

I call upon the U.S. Senate to recommit to the meaning of these words. This is why today, on National Flag Day, I am requesting unanimous consent from my colleagues that my resolution expressing support of the Pledge of Allegiance is passed.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 252, which is at the desk.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 252) celebrating the 246th anniversary of the creation of the flag of the United States and expressing support for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 252) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

Mr. BRAUN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

OSWALDO PAYÁ WAY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, this week the Senate unanimously passed my bipartisan legislation to rename the street in front of the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC, “Oswaldo Payá Way.”

Oswaldo Payá was a dissident and a fighter for freedom in Cuba of unrelenting passion and dedication. He was someone who stood up against the Castro regime. He had incredible courage. He spoke up for human rights. He spoke up for free speech. He spoke up

for democracy. And 11 years ago, Oswaldo Payá was murdered by the Cuban communist government.

On July 22, 2012, Payá left his house with three other people, including Harold Cepero, to go visit friends. From the start of the journey, their car was followed. On the way, the Cuban security services drove Payá's car off the road, killing both him and Cepero.

There has never been any doubt about who was responsible for these murders. Indeed, just this week, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights released its long-awaited report on the case. The determination was clear and conclusive in confirming what we have known all along.

Payá had long been a thorn in the side of the Castros and the regime, even from a young age. He was the only person at school who refused to join the Communist Youth. As a teenager, he publicly opposed the communist crackdown on protesters in Czechoslovakia who were fighting for freedom, and he was punished with 3 years in prison.

Payá went on to found the Varela Project, which sought a referendum on Cuba's communist system. Their demands were simple: democratic government, religious liberty, freedom of expression, and the economic freedom to start businesses. Payá managed to get 11,000 signatures to support the Varela Project to petition the regime to hold a referendum. And, eventually, over 20,000 people supported the cause, but the Cuban regime refused to hold it.

Payá's fight for freedom made him a target of the Communist Party in Cuba. They harassed him. They tried to intimidate him. They arrested him numerous times and, ultimately, they murdered him.

Payá's friend and the driver of the car said that when he awoke after the crash, he was confronted at the hospital by a regime operative, and the hospital was flooded with uniformed military personnel. Under extreme duress, drugged, and threatened with death by regime officials, he signed a document falsely exonerating the regime.

That is how important it was to the communists to immediately try to hide their crimes and avoid accountability. It is imperative that they fail in this task.

I am heartened that, yesterday, the Senate unanimously passed this bipartisan legislation that I led to rename the street in front of the Cuban Embassy here in Washington, DC, after Payá.

I want to thank Senator DURBIN, who led this effort with me, along with Senator RUBIO, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator RICK SCOTT, and Senator CARDIN—all who joined with me in this bipartisan effort. This week the Senate spoke in one unanimous voice, and it was a voice speaking out for freedom.

I also want to acknowledge the tireless work of Payá's daughter, Rosa Maria, who has fought tenaciously and

never wavered in pursuing and advocating her father's legacy. She is an incredible, courageous, powerful leader in her own right, and together we have sat down and discussed ways of advancing the cause of justice in Cuba. We will continue doing so.

This is the second time that the Senate has passed this bipartisan legislation. In the previous Congress, the House of Representatives declined to take it up. But I urge our colleagues in the House to take it up and pass it this year, and I have a high level of confidence that the House will do that. We need to make this a law, to put it on Joe Biden's desk, and to rename the street outside of the Cuban Embassy.

Now, when we change the street name, we are not merely changing signs. It can be a reminder—indeed, a forceful one—that shines a light of truth on the regime. Changing the name of the street means that anyone who wants to write to the Cuban Embassy will have to write Oswaldo Payá's name, or, if you need to go there, you will have to look up the address and see his name. Members of the Cuban regime who deal with the embassy will have to acknowledge that Payá existed. Their efforts to erase his existence and his legacy failed.

I have told this story before, but it is worth retelling because it illustrates just how much of an impact renaming a street in front of an embassy can be.

A few years ago, I introduced legislation to rename the street in front of the Chinese Embassy “Liu Xiaobo Plaza,” after the famed Nobel peace laureate and democracy activist in China who was wrongfully imprisoned in China.

After multiple iterations on the Senate floor, my bill ended up passing the Senate—a Democrat Senate with a Democrat majority. My bill passed the Senate unanimously. Unfortunately, the House of Representatives failed to take that bill up as well. It was infuriating.

However, at the beginning of the Trump administration, in 2017, I was having breakfast with Rex Tillerson, then the new Secretary of State, at his office at Foggy Bottom. We were talking about the challenges facing America, and he had recently just met with his counterpart, the Chinese Foreign Minister.

Secretary Tillerson said that the Foreign Minister from China told him that China had three critical foreign policies, at which point Rex shook his head and said: Ted, it was the damndest thing. One of their top three priorities was stopping you from renaming the street in front of their Embassy in DC.

That is how concerned—that is how terrified—Xi and his communist cronies were of the world being reminded on a daily basis about Liu Xiaobo.

Ultimately, I told Secretary Tillerson the following, which is that Liu Xiaobo had passed away at that point but that his widow, Liu Xia, was

still in China. China would not let her leave. She had never gone to collect the over \$1 million that she was due for her husband winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

So I told Secretary Tillerson: You tell the Chinese Government, if they release Liu Xia—if they allow her to leave and escape to freedom—I will stop pushing this particular bill, but if they don't, I will keep pushing it, and we will pass it into law. You can let him know it is not a bluff, because I have already passed it unanimously through the Senate once and will do it again, and this time the House will pass it as well.

Within a matter of weeks, the communist government in China released Liu Xia and let her escape. That is how powerful shining a light of truth on a despotic regime can be.

Renaming the street outside of the Cuban Embassy sends a powerful message to the Cuban people that their struggle for freedom will not go unnoticed or be forgotten; that the world is watching, and their heroic efforts are not in vain. Their fight for freedom resonates deeply with people across the globe.

By passing this legislation, the U.S. Senate has made a powerful statement of solidarity with the people of Cuba and is a resolute condemnation of the oppressive regime that silenced a brave voice for freedom. The Senate has spoken with one voice, and that voice has demanded “Cuba libre”—a free Cuba—an end to the totalitarian and despotic state.

I urge our colleagues in the House to take up this bill and pass this bipartisan legislation swiftly.

Let us come together as one, as the U.S. Congress, and force the communist regime to do what utterly terrifies them—to say Oswaldo Payá's name—to say his name.

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.

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

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks before the vote starts.

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

REMEMBERING JOHN MCCOY

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor distinguished Washington State senator, Tribal leader, and my friend John Richard McCoy.

State Senator McCoy dedicated his life and career to public service. John served in the Air Force for two decades. He was a steadfast and fearless leader for the Tulalip Tribes in the State of Washington. And he was one of

the longest serving Native legislators in Washington State history.

His story is an inspiration and testament. He overcame unbelievable odds. And most importantly, he showed what one person can achieve in the service of others. John led a life and career that will be remembered for generations.

He was born in 1943 in Washington. He was born in the middle of World War II and started his career as a commercial fisherman in Puget Sound before he joined the Air Force. He served in the Air Force for 20 years, retiring as a technical sergeant at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, near here.

He was then recruited as a computer programmer before computer programming was really hip and was assigned to staff the Reagan White House situation room. His skills as a computer programmer and technical expertise led the late Stan Jones—one of our other Tribal legends who was then Chair of the Tulalip Tribes—to recruit him back to Washington to help transform the Tribe's communications system. At the time, the Tribe was struggling to build the infrastructure that was needed to take advantage of economic development and continue to move forward with their plans.

But John took this project and telecommunications infrastructure and helped the Tribe build one of its greatest economic successes. The Quil Ceda Village is about a 500-acre unique business park that was approved in 2001. It was so successful that in 2005, the Puget Sound Business Journal named him Executive of the Year for his contributions to the successful project. He not only brought computers and high-speed internet access to the village, he made the whole thing a reality for the Tribe.

John McCoy never lost his ideas about public service. In 2003, he was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives, and he served our State legislature for 17 years. Senator McCoy served the 38th Legislative District in Northwest Washington covering Tulalip, Everett, and Marysville. During that time, he became a stand-out legislator for the State of Washington. He was a tireless advocate for K–12 education, healthcare, the environmental policies, and, most importantly, he was outspoken on Tribal issues.

One important piece of legislation John championed and created was the “Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State” curriculum which is now taught in all Washington State public schools. “Since Time Immemorial,” endorsed by all of Washington State's 29 federally recognized Tribes, is a curriculum that focuses on their history in the State of Washington. The lessons help students understand the importance of treaties, the history of Tribes in the Pacific Northwest, and the challenges of reservation life. It also teaches students the influence of geography and where Tribes are located in the State

of Washington—and, importantly, the distinct cultures of the 29 federally recognized Tribes in Washington State. The knowledge our students are gaining about Tribes is invaluable. And this is just one example of Senator McCoy's leadership in the State of Washington.

He also helped expand dental care. He passed legislation requiring telecommunications companies to provide call location information to emergency responders. He helped emergency responders locate victims and patients more quickly. And he passed a bill that allowed our State to provide jurisdiction to Tribes over criminal and civil matter on Tribal lands to Federal and Tribal governments. These were all important roles, and we can never give enough thanks to him and his family for his contributions.

He also served in leadership roles. Senator McCoy was elected by his colleagues to serve as caucus chair for the then Washington State Senate Democrats. He served as chair of the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators, playing a Tribal leadership role nationally. And something he always took pride in was not only serving the Tribe he grew up in, but he took great pride in serving the rest of Everett and Marysville. He never lost sight of what it meant to represent the people of the 38th District. That is the kind of person he was, dedicated to his Tribe, but also dedicated to all his neighbors.

He retired from the Washington State Senate in April of 2020, and he said, “Through the changes in committees, leadership roles and even chambers over the course of my legislative career, it was always an immense privilege to represent my neighbors . . . I am deeply grateful for that privilege.”

Senator John McCoy will go down in our State's history as one of our most effective local leaders, someone who came up against roadblocks and found ways to bypass those roadblocks to get progress for our State.

He will be missed by all of us, especially his wife of 58 years, Jeannie McCoy—my heart goes out to her and her family—his siblings; his children: Angela McCoy, Sheila Hillaire, and Cara Tohanniep; and his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

We all thank you for sharing your father with us. He will be missed not only as a leader in our State, but also a leader that helped us across the United States to better understand Indian Country and certainly the leadership of the Tulalip Tribe.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote occur immediately.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 29, Nusrat Jahan Choudhury, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Tim Kaine, Margaret Wood Hassan, Ben Ray Lujan, Raphael G. Warnock, Tammy Duckworth, Jack Reed, John W. Hickenlooper, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Baldwin, Brian Schatz, Christopher Murphy, Tina Smith, Debbie Stabenow, Sheldon Whitehouse.

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 Nusrat Jahan Choudhury, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas Mr. (COTTON), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 163 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—47

Barrasso	Graham	Murkowski
Blackburn	Grassley	Paul
Boozman	Hagerty	Ricketts
Braun	Hawley	Risch
Britt	Hoeven	Romney
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Rubio
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Manchin	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Vance
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—3

Cotton	Schmitt	Scott (SC)
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 47.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Nusrat Jahan Choudhury, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination, Calendar No. 75; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Stephen K. Eberle, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Marshal for the Western District of Pennsylvania for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

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

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT RULE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on another topic, last week, President Biden did something he has done only five times: He vetoed a resolution passed by Congress.

And let me say: Thank goodness. The proposal he vetoed would have blocked the administration's student loan forgiveness program. This program will be a financial lifeline for millions of student borrowers across the country so that working Americans can start a business, buy a first home, or, simply, keep a roof over their heads. And there is one group of student borrowers in particular who are in desperate need of this financial relief: That is the hundreds of thousands of students who have been ripped off by for-profit colleges. Just listen to this: Even though for-profit colleges enroll only 8 percent of college students, they account for 30 percent of all Federal loan defaults.

Thankfully, just a few weeks ago, the Biden administration took another

crucial step to support these student borrowers. The Department of Education announced that it will reinstate what is known as the gainful employment rule—or the GE rule. This rule would create accountability standards for for-profit colleges to qualify for Federal student aid. If they want to receive taxpayer dollars—in the form of Federal student aid—then they need to meet their statutory obligation to prepare students for gainful employment.

I don't think that is too much to ask. This GE rule is years in the making, first introduced by the Obama administration, after years of deliberation, but it was rescinded under former Secretary Betsy DeVos. As a result, executives of for-profit colleges have lined their pockets with taxpayer dollars, while students were left to fend for themselves.

Let me tell you about one of these predatory for-profit schools: the American Intercontinental University. Five of its programs failed the GE rule—five—at one school, including a bachelor's degree in fashion and apparel design. The company claims it is one of their "career-focused degree programs . . . designed to provide students with the foundational skills required to apply their creative vision in the real world."

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? Wrong. Because here is the reality: The total cost over 4 years is nearly \$55,000. Seventy-four percent of students who attend this school borrow Federal student loans. And the median total debt is \$31,000.

Here is the biggest problem: The graduation rate is only 19 percent. And the students who do graduate are hardly any better off. According to the 2015 GE earnings data, the median annual earnings of a fashion and apparel design graduate were \$18,896. So even if you earn your degree from this fraudulent program, you do not even have a chance to earn enough to pay off your loans. That is why it is so important that the Biden administration has proposed to reinstate the GE rule. And this new version will provide the strongest accountability and transparency framework to date.

Under the proposed rule, for-profit colleges would have to prove that graduates make enough to pay back their loans. So what would happen to a school like American Intercontinental University if it does not improve its failing programs? Well, under the new GE rule, the company would lose access to Federal student aid for its failing programs. I am glad the Department of Education is holding the for-profit industry accountable for its lies and protecting students and taxpayers.

JUNETEENTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this coming Monday is Juneteenth, our newest national holiday, a day set aside to celebrate the triumph of freedom over slavery in America.

The name “Juneteenth” is a combination of two words, “June nineteenth.” That was the day, in 1865, that the U.S. Army’s “General Order No. 3” was issued, finally informing the people of Texas of the Emancipation Proclamation—and that all of the remaining enslaved people in that State were free.

Sadly, on this Juneteenth—even as our Nation celebrates—we are witnessing the most concerted effort in decades to erase from our history America’s long and still unfinished struggle to fully end racism, the odious lie on which slavery was built. Last year, according to the American Library Association, there were 1,269 demands to ban books in school libraries in various States. That is more than double the number of book bans sought in 2021. And it is the greatest number of book bans demanded in the 20 years that PEN America, an organization dedicated to the freedom of expression, has kept records on this troubling trend.

What is the most frequent target of these new bans? Books involving, or even just mentioning, issues of race. And what are the books that these censors are demanding be pulled from the shelves of school libraries?

Here are some examples: “To Kill a Mockingbird” is one. Another is a biography of Jesse Owens, the great American runner who won four gold medals at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1936, shattering the Nazi myth of racial supremacy. In Florida, the book banners demanded that school textbooks containing the story of Rosa Parks remove race and racism as reasons she refused to move to the back of the bus. Such efforts to erase history are an attack on the freedom to read and learn.

This week, my State of Illinois became the first State in the Nation to ban this form of censorship by public libraries. I hope more States will stand up for history—and that on the eve of this Juneteenth, Americans will commit ourselves firmly to truth.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN DAVID OSBORN

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Capt. David Osborn, for his service to our Nation in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Captain Osborn entered the Marine Corps as a young man during World War II. After training as a pilot, he was deployed to the Pacific Theater where he was engaged in active combat. During his tenure in the Marine Corps, Captain Osborn flew vitally important but deeply dangerous missions, including several for which, he indicated, he volunteered. In all, Captain Osborn’s service contributed to the American military successes in the Pacific Theater. After the war, Captain Osborn continued his service as a flight in-

structor in Corpus Christi, TX. Captain Osborn was honorably discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in March of 1958.

This year, Captain Osborn will celebrate his 100th birthday. He lives in Weston, CT, with his wife of 41 years, and cherishes time spent with his children and grandchildren. His honorable service is a model for all of us and will leave an enduring legacy.

We all owe our veterans a great debt of gratitude for fighting for our freedom and safety, and I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking Captain David Osborn for his remarkable history of service to our Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND JOSEPH BAKER

• Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise to commend Rev. Joseph Baker of St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church for his lifetime of service to the Chattahoochee River Valley and the State of Georgia. For the past 30 years, Pastor Baker has been a beacon of hope and service for members of the communities he has served since answering the call to preach in 1993. After relocating to Atlanta from Orlando to continue his higher education journey, Pastor Joseph Baker served as senior pastor of Saint Paul AME Church in Canton, GA, and both Saint Mary’s AME and Townsley Chapel AME Churches in Savannah, GA. Since July 2013, Pastor Baker has served the Columbus community as the 52nd pastor of St. James AME Church at the local, conference, and episcopal levels. He also serves as dean of the Southwest Georgia Annual Conference Board of Examiners and as a member of the Southwest Georgia Annual Conference Board of Trustees, Support of Presiding Elders and Ministerial Classification.

A product of the Suwannee County School System, the University of Central Florida in Orlando, and Turner Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Pastor Baker continues to find ways to open doors of opportunity for others through access to education. For example, Pastor Baker established a partnership with Columbus Technical College to offer GED studies at St. James AME.

As Georgia’s U.S. Senator, I commend and recognize St. James AME pastor Rev. Joseph Baker for a lifetime of service on behalf of the State of Georgia.●

TRIBUTE TO MOISES VELEZ

• Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise to commend Moises Velez of Macon, GA, for his years of service to Georgia’s Latino community.

Twenty-five years ago, Mr. Velez founded “Que Pasa,” the first Spanish newspaper in the Macon community. Mr. Velez’s vision of keeping newly arrived immigrants informed about vital services available to them in Middle

Georgia and across the State quickly transformed the newspaper into a trusted news source for the Latino community on important issues like health care, immigration, and education. “Que Pasa” keeps the growing Latino community in Middle Georgia informed about news and events statewide. Mr. Velez’s success led to his recognition as one of Georgia’s 50 most influential Latinos by the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in 2022. Mr. Velez is a representation of the extraordinary contributions of Georgia’s Latino community.

As Georgia’s U.S. Senator, I commend and recognize Moises Velez for his contributions to Georgia’s Latino community and years of service to the Macon community.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Kelly, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE VETO OF S.J. RES. 11, A RESOLUTION THAT WOULD DISAPPROVE THE RULE ENTITLED “CONTROL OF AIR POLLUTION FROM NEW MOTOR VEHICLES: HEAVY-DUTY ENGINE AND VEHICLE STANDARDS”—PM 15

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, spread in full upon the Journal, and held at the desk:

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 11, a resolution that would disapprove the rule entitled “Control of Air Pollution From New Motor Vehicles: Heavy-Duty Engine and Vehicle Standards.”

This rule amends the Environmental Protection Agency’s heavy-duty emissions control program—including its standards, test procedures, and other requirements—to further reduce the air quality impacts of heavy-duty engines. The rule cuts pollution, boosts public health, and advances environmental justice in communities across the country. It will prevent hundreds, if not thousands, of premature deaths; thousands of childhood asthma cases; and millions of missed school days every year.

The resolution would deny communities these health benefits by resulting in weaker emissions standards for heavy-duty vehicles and engines, which are significant sources of pollutants that threaten public health. If enacted, the resolution would squander \$36 billion in benefits to society—and an opportunity to lead on the defining crisis of our time.

Therefore, I am vetoing this resolution.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 14, 2023.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1615. An act to prohibit the use of Federal funds to ban gas stoves.

H.R. 3099. An act to establish in the Department of State the position of Special Envoy for the Abraham Accords, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House of Representatives having proceeded to reconsider the resolution (H.J. Res. 42) disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022, returned by the President of the United States with his objections, to the House of Representatives, in which it originated, it was resolved, that the said resolution do not pass, two-thirds of the House of Representatives not agreeing to pass the same.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803(a)), and the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional Award Board: Mr. Hudson of North Carolina. And, in addition: Dr. Vipul Dev of Bakersfield, California.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 3099. An act to establish in the Department of State the position of Special Envoy for the Abraham Accords, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 1615. An act to prohibit the use of Federal funds to ban gas stoves.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. TESTER, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, without amendment:

S. 112. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to strengthen benefits for children of Vietnam veterans born with spina bifida, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. CARPER for the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

*Jeffery Martin Baran, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2028.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. WELCH, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1963. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to ensure College for All; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 1964. A bill to abolish the Office of Financial Research; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. LEE):

S. 1965. A bill to prohibit airport improvement grants funds from being used for contracts with entities that have violated intellectual property rights of United States entities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1966. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to increase transparency and reporting on sexual violence in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 1967. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish requirements relating to the responsibility of pharmacy benefit managers under Medicare part D; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TUBERVILLE (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 1968. A bill to modify the annual and aggregate limits of Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans for graduate and professional students, and to terminate Federal Direct PLUS Loans for graduate and professional students, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. VANCE):

S. 1969. A bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to require reciprocity with respect to de minimis entries of articles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1970. A bill to modify requirements relating to financial aid disclosures; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 1971. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for loan repayment simplification and income-driven re-

payment reform; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. TUBERVILLE):

S. 1972. A bill to increase college transparency and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1973. A bill to require the purchase of domestically made flags of the United States of America for use by the Federal Government; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1974. A bill to amend the Export Control Reform Act of 2018 to require export controls with respect to certain personal data of United States nationals and individuals in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. KING, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1975. A bill to require a GAO study on the compliance of discharge review boards with statutory provisions and directives related to liberal consideration of certain conditions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 1976. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to clarify congressional intent and preserve patient access to home infusion therapy under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1977. A bill to modify the method for calculating the basic allowance for housing to more accurately assess the housing costs of junior members of the uniformed services; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1978. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to develop requirements for military tenant advocates for privatized military housing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1979. A bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration of disputes involving age discrimination; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1980. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense to provide housing accommodations for members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who are on military housing waitlists; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1981. A bill to modify the Iran Nuclear Weapons Capability and Terrorism Monitoring Act of 2022; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

By Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 1982. A bill to amend chapter 511 of title 51, United States Code, to modify the authority for space transportation infrastructure modernization grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WELCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SANDERS, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 1983. A bill to require non-Federal prison, correctional, and detention facilities holding Federal prisoners or detainees under a contract with the Federal Government to make the same information available to the public that Federal prisons and correctional facilities are required to make available; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 1984. A bill to ensure that United States currency is treated as legal tender to be accepted as payment for purchases of goods and services at brick-and-mortar businesses throughout the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. RICKETTS, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. 1985. A bill to prohibit the flying, draping, or other display of any flag other than the flag of the United States at public buildings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 1986. A bill to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Plano, Texas, as the "U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson Memorial VA Clinic"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 1987. A bill to provide for the settlement of the water rights claims of the Fort Belknap Indian Community, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 1988. A bill to expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. FETTERMAN (for himself and Ms. SMITH):

S. 1989. A bill to require training for State and regional employees of the Department of Agriculture on the rural housing and development programs of the Department; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 1990. A bill to impose a tax on certain trading transactions to invest in our families and communities, improve our infrastructure and our environment, strengthen our financial security, expand opportunity and reduce market volatility; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. McCONNELL:

S. 1991. A bill to reauthorize certain programs under the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Ms.

ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 1992. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the earned income and child tax credits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1993. A bill to waive immunity under section 230 of the Communications Act of 1934 for claims and charges related to generative artificial intelligence; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1994. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to share certain data with State cancer registries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1995. A bill to support public health infrastructure; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 1996. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to allow a volunteer pilot organization to reimburse a volunteer pilot for certain aircraft operating expenses incurred by the pilot when making a flight in support of the volunteer pilot organization's mission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 1997. A bill to promote peace through strength in Taiwan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 1998. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to include Indian Tribes in certain provisions relating to priority resource concerns; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WELCH, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. REED, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BENNET, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. WARNER, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 1999. A bill to protect an individual's ability to access contraceptives and to engage in contraception and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide contraceptives, contraception, and information related to contraception; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 2000. A bill to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish and carry out a program that assists military spouses in establishing small business concerns, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 2001. A bill to require certain flags of the United States to be made in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2002. A bill to establish the Interagency Group on Large-Scale Carbon Management in the National Science and Technology Council and a Federal Carbon Removal Initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S.J. Res. 33. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to prohibit the use of slavery and involuntary servitude as a punishment for a crime; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. CRAPO):

S.J. Res. 34. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 251. A resolution celebrating the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, and expressing priorities related to transatlantic security and the NATO Strategic Concept; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. VANCE, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. Res. 252. A resolution celebrating the 246th anniversary of the creation of the flag of the United States and expressing support for the Pledge of Allegiance; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. Res. 253. A resolution designating June 16, 2023, as National Service and Conservation Corps Day; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 8

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 8, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand eligibility for the refundable credit for coverage under a qualified health plan, to improve cost-sharing subsidies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and for other purposes.

S. 26

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 26, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the amendments made to reporting of third party network transactions by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

S. 133

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 133, a bill to extend the National Alzheimer's Project.

S. 217

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 217, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special rule for certain casualty losses of uncut timber.

S. 349

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) were added as cosponsors of S. 349, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to authorize the appointment of spouses of members of the Armed Forces who are on active duty, disabled, or deceased to positions in which the spouses will work remotely.

S. 869

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 869, a bill to amend the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to reauthorize and improve the community development financial institutions bond guarantee program, and for other purposes.

S. 971

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 971, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to remove the Medicaid coverage exclusion for inmates in custody pending disposition of charges, and for other purposes.

S. 1141

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1141, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

S. 1273

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1273, a bill to require a study on Holocaust education efforts of States, local educational agencies, and public elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes.

S. 1334

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr.

KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1334, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to develop, in cooperation with allies and partners in the Middle East, an integrated maritime domain awareness and interdiction capability, and for other purposes.

S. 1459

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1459, a bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue regulations concerning accommodations for powered wheelchairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1467

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1467, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refundable tax credit against income tax for the purchase of qualified access technology for the blind.

S. 1527

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1527, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their families have access to the contraception they need in order to promote the health and readiness of all members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. 1558

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1558, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the brave women who served in World War II as members of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and U.S. Navy Nurse Corps.

S. 1631

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1631, a bill to enhance the authority granted to the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice with respect to unmanned aircraft systems and unmanned aircraft, and for other purposes.

S. 1669

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) were added as cosponsors of S. 1669, a bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 1698

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor

of S. 1698, a bill to require group health plans and group or individual health insurance coverage to provide coverage for over-the-counter contraceptives.

S. 1706

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1706, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the deduction for qualified business income.

S. 1754

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1754, a bill to reduce spending on nuclear weapons and related defense spending and to prohibit the procurement and deployment of low-yield nuclear warheads, and for other purposes.

S. 1775

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1775, a bill to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to require recipients of Federal awards to collect and report data relating to subawards granted to entities outside of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1811

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1811, a bill to ensure treatment in the military based on merit and performance, and for other purposes.

S. 1820

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1820, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide a consistent standard of health care to incarcerated individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 1848

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1848, a bill to establish State-Federal partnerships to provide students the opportunity to attain higher education at in-State public institutions of higher education without debt, to provide Federal Pell Grant eligibility to DREAMer students, and for other purposes.

S. 1854

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1854, a bill to amend the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 to require the information on the ForeignAssistance.gov website to be searchable.

S. 1855

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1855, a bill to reauthorize

the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 Diabetes and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.

S. 1866

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1866, a bill to establish minimum dimensions for seats on passenger aircraft, and for other purposes.

S. 1920

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1920, a bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to assess certain fees on shipping and other vessels, and for other purposes.

S. 1946

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1946, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to allow the owner or operator of a small hub airport that is reclassified as a medium hub airport to elect to be treated as a small hub airport, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 32

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 32, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to "Small Business Lending Under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (Regulation B)".

S. RES. 208

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 208, a resolution expressing support for the designation of November 12, 2023, as "National Warrior Call Day" and recognizing the important of connecting warriors in the United States to support structures necessary to transition from the battlefield, especially peer-to-peer connection.

S. RES. 243

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 243, a resolution recognizing the month of June 2023 as "Immigrant Heritage Month", a celebration of the accomplishments and contributions of immigrants and their children in making the United States a healthier, safer, more diverse, prosperous country, and acknowledging the importance of immigrants and their children to the future successes of the United States.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 1991. A bill to reauthorize certain programs under the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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. 1991

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 "Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023" or the "CAREER Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. TREATMENT, RECOVERY, AND WORKFORCE SUPPORT GRANTS.

Section 7183 of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (42 U.S.C. 290ee-8) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by inserting "each" before "for a period";

(2) by amending subsection (c)(2) to read as follows:

"(2) RATES.—The rates described in this paragraph are the following:

"(A) The amount by which the average rate of drug overdose deaths in the State, adjusted for age, for the period of 5 calendar years for which there is available data, including if necessary provisional data, immediately preceding the grant cycle (which shall be the period of calendar years 2018 through 2022 for the first grant cycle following the enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023) is above the average national overdose mortality rate, as determined by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for the same period.

"(B) The amount by which the average rate of unemployment for the State, based on data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the period of 5 calendar years for which there is available data, including if necessary provisional data, immediately preceding the grant cycle (which shall be the period of calendar years 2018 through 2022 for the first grant cycle following the enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023) is above the national average for the same period.

"(C) The amount by which the average rate of labor force participation in the State, based on data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the period of 5 calendar years for which there is available data, including if necessary provisional data, immediately preceding the grant cycle (which shall be the period of calendar years 2018 through 2022 for the first grant cycle following the enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023) is below the national average for the same period.";

(3) in subsection (g)—

(A) in paragraphs (1) and (3), by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(C) by striking "An entity" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—An entity"; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.—An entity receiving a grant under this section may use the funds for providing transportation for individuals to participate in an activity sup-

ported by a grant under this section, which transportation shall be to or from a place of work or a place where the individual is receiving vocational education or job training services or receiving services directly linked to treatment of or recovery from a substance use disorder.";

(4) in subsection (j)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting "for each grant cycle" after "grant period"; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking "the preliminary report" and inserting "each preliminary report"; and

(II) by inserting "for the grant cycle" after "final report"; and

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking "(g)(3)" and inserting "(g)(1)(C)"; and

(5) in subsection (k), by striking "\$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023" and inserting "\$36,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028".

SEC. 3. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE RECOVERY HOUSING PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8071 of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (42 U.S.C. 5301 note; Public Law 115-271) is amended—

(1) by striking the section heading and inserting "RECOVERY HOUSING PROGRAM";

(2) in subsection (a), by striking "through 2023" and inserting "through 2028";

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act" and inserting "not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023"; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)—

(i) in subclause (I), by striking "for calendar years 2013 through 2017" and inserting "for the period of 5 calendar years for which there is available data, including if necessary provisional data, immediately preceding the grant cycle (which shall be the period of calendar years 2018 through 2022 for the first grant cycle following the enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023)";

(ii) in subclause (II), by striking "for calendar years 2013 through 2017" and inserting "for the period of 5 calendar years for which there is available data, including if necessary provisional data, immediately preceding the grant cycle (which shall be the period of calendar years 2018 through 2022 for the first grant cycle following the enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023)"; and

(iii) in subclause (III), by striking the period at the end and inserting "for the period of 5 calendar years for which there is available data, including if necessary provisional data, immediately preceding the grant cycle (which shall be the period of calendar years 2018 through 2022 for the first grant cycle following the enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery through Effective Employment and Reentry Act of 2023)."; and

(4) in subsection (f), by striking "For the 2-year period following the date of enactment of this Act, the" and inserting "The".

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (Public Law 115-271; 132 Stat. 3894) is amended by striking the item relating to section 8071 and inserting the following:

"Sec. 8071. Recovery Housing Program."

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself,
Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr.

CASEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1995. A bill to support public health infrastructure; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, they say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and the COVID pandemic showed us just how painfully true that is when it comes to public health.

Our public health system is our frontline defense—not only against deadly diseases and pandemics; it also aids in addressing the opioid and fentanyl crisis, preventing chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease, protecting our food and water supply, and a lot more.

But despite our public health system's central role in protecting our communities, keeping our families safe and healthy, and preventing major disruptions in our lives, our public health system was sorely underfunded before COVID struck, and it has been seriously overwhelmed ever since. We have—thank goodness—gotten a much better grasp on COVID, but who in their right mind would look at the last few years and think funding public health is probably something we can put on the back burner?

We have to do better. We have to apply the lessons we learned and start thinking ahead now so we are never caught unprepared again. We have to end this cycle of crisis and complacency when it comes to building and maintaining strong public health infrastructure because the simple fact of the matter is public health infrastructure saves lives, and the better funded and prepared our public health system is before a crisis, the more lives we will save during one.

And make no mistake, the question is not whether there will be a new threat; it is: When is the next crisis going to strike? Will we be ready next time?

We cannot afford to treat public health like a one-and-done issue, which is why I am here today reintroducing my bill to provide \$4.5 billion in dedicated annual funding to support core public health capabilities at every level so we can protect our public health system from complacency and hostage-taking and drastic cuts.

The Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act would make much-needed investments at the CDC, and, crucially, it would establish a grant program to support health departments all across our country. This funding would meet a wide variety of needs in communities across America. Health departments could use it to make sure they do robust contact tracing and stop outbreaks in their tracks, have adequate lab capacity to address public health threats, and have a surge work-

force available in an emergency to save lives.

This funding would empower our public health departments to make sure lifesaving information reaches everyone: people who don't speak English, people with disabilities, or people who don't have access to the internet. It would help officials conduct public awareness campaigns and fight misinformation and get really basic but essential information out, like when and where to find a vaccine clinic.

Public health departments could also use this funding as they update their IT and data systems to help them more quickly identify threats before they become full-blown outbreaks. And it would help us collect more consistent, comprehensive demographic data so we can see and address gaps in our responses and get the resources where they are needed the most.

It would also help our departments hire and train and retain the people they need. That is really important. A recent survey actually showed that nearly half of all our State and local public health workers left their jobs between 2017 and 2020, citing harassment or retirement. Post COVID, public health workers are more burnt out than ever and in dire need of reinforcements. This funding will help provide that and a lot more.

And, critically, this would be dedicated annual funding. That would do so much to help take the possibility of cuts and chaos off the table and put us on track to build the kind of world-class public health system that our communities deserve, the kind our families need to keep them safe.

And here is the thing: Every dollar that we invest now saves us much more in the long run. When we tackle public health threats now—staving off major outbreaks, major disruption—we save in a really big way down the line. We should all know by now we can't take public health for granted. We have seen real momentum and support for this from communities who understand all too well we need a strong public health system at every level.

It is time for Congress to show we get it too. It is time for us to invest in prevention, invest in public health in a serious way, because when we say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, we are talking about stopping the next global pandemic and the next global economic crisis in its tracks, which will save lives and livelihoods.

So let's not make public health funding partisan. I urge my Republican colleagues to support this legislation. If you are skeptical, talk to me. A nominal investment in public health is a major payoff in terms of economic security and keeping our families safe and healthy. It seems like a pretty good deal to me.

I hope we can all work together and pass the Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 251—CELEBRATING THE 2023 NATO SUMMIT IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA, AND EXPRESSING PRIORITIES RELATED TO TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY AND THE NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 251

Whereas the United States signed the North Atlantic Treaty, done at Washington, D.C., April 4, 1949 (commonly known as the "Washington Treaty"), to provide collective security and strengthen security and political cooperation with allies of the United States;

Whereas the United States and its allies recognized that security cooperation was a necessary precursor to enhanced political and economic stabilization and engagement;

Whereas, in 1991, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (commonly known as "NATO" and the "Alliance") issued an unclassified Strategic Concept for the first time, outlining the basic principles and plans of the Alliance to address security challenges and strategic threats;

Whereas, in 1994, NATO established the Partnership for Peace to enable partner countries to share information and modernize and democratize their political and security infrastructure with NATO;

Whereas, in 1999, NATO established the Membership Action Plan to facilitate the accession of aspiring member countries by providing advice, assistance, and support in meeting the political and military principles of the Alliance;

Whereas any country that wishes may pursue NATO membership consistent with the 1995 Study on Enlargement and Article 10 of the Washington Treaty by—

(1) pursuing formal accession talks with the Alliance;

(2) sending a letter of intent to NATO, including a timeline for the completion of necessary reforms recommended by the Alliance;

(3) working with member countries so that accession protocols are signed and ratified by such member countries;

(4) receiving an invitation from the Secretary General of NATO to accede to the Washington Treaty; and

(5) acceding to the Washington Treaty in accordance with national procedures and by depositing instruments of accession;

Whereas, following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time, calling on the Alliance to provide for collective defense;

Whereas Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which were among the first Eastern European nations to declare independence from the Soviet Union, formally joined NATO in 2004 and have provided notable support for NATO operations, including—

(1) operations in Iraq and Afghanistan;

(2) operations that have been enhanced in response to increased threats; and

(3) operations in response to the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in February 2022;

Whereas, in 2006, the Alliance agreed that each member country would commit at least 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product to defense spending to ensure sustained readiness;

Whereas the Alliance consists of 31 independent member countries, including Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States;

Whereas, in response to the unprovoked and illegal war on Ukraine by the Russian Federation, Finland and Sweden applied for NATO membership in May 2022;

Whereas, during the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, Spain, NATO formally extended an invitation to Finland and Sweden to join the Alliance;

Whereas Finland formally ascended to the Alliance on April 4, 2023, as the most recent country to join NATO;

Whereas the accession of Sweden into NATO awaits final ratification by Hungary and Türkiye;

Whereas NATO—

(1) leads operations in Kosovo and other countries in the Mediterranean region to maintain peace and stability;

(2) supports operations around the world, including in Europe and the African Union, to advance priorities of the Alliance; and

(3) facilitates a training mission in Iraq to develop the capacity of the security infrastructure of Iraq;

Whereas, since the further invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, which followed the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, the Alliance is the strongest and most united it has ever been;

Whereas, as the Russian Federation illegally attacks the sovereignty of Ukraine, individual members of the Alliance have contributed essential military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, including through the Ukraine Defense Contact Group established by the United States;

Whereas, in response to the brutal war on Ukraine by the Russian Federation, NATO enhanced its presence on the eastern flank of the Alliance by reinforcing existing multinational battlegroups and establishing new multinational battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia;

Whereas efforts by NATO to bolster the security of the eastern flank and to counter aggression by the Russian Federation followed efforts in 2016 by establishing NATO forward presences in the northeast and southeast of the Alliance;

Whereas the Alliance recognizes the strategic importance of the Black Sea region, which the Russian Federation has tried to weaponize, including by attempting to block shipments of grain from Ukraine through the Black Sea, bringing the world to the brink of a global food security crisis;

Whereas, for the first time in history, the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept recognized that the stated ambitions and coercive policies of the People's Republic of China challenge the interests of the Alliance;

Whereas the Alliance recognizes that deepening ties between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation have resulted in immediate and long-term challenges to the rules-based international world order;

Whereas NATO is prepared to respond to existing and emerging threats to transatlantic security;

Whereas Vilnius, Lithuania, will host the 2023 NATO Summit following the 700-year jubilee of the city on January 25, 2023;

Whereas the 2023 NATO Summit will highlight the leadership of the Baltic States in NATO and as supporters of democratic values globally;

Whereas Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are among the top 5 per capita contributors of assistance to Ukraine;

Whereas, despite continued belligerence by the Russian Federation, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have welcomed exiled opposition leaders from the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation;

Whereas the choice of Vilnius as the location for the 2023 NATO Summit underscores the Baltic States as vital NATO members and further demonstrates the strength of the Alliance; and

Whereas the 2023 NATO Summit is an opportunity to build upon the work of previous summits to continue strengthening the Alliance and pave the way for new NATO member countries that can join in upholding democratic values: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms that, for 74 years, the unity and strength of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (commonly known as “NATO” and the “Alliance”) has contributed to peace and stability in Europe and around the world;

(2) celebrates that the 2023 NATO Summit will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11 and 12, 2023;

(3) acknowledges individuals around the world who have served in NATO missions and operations since the Alliance was founded;

(4) supports the sovereignty of all nations to decide whether to pursue membership to the Alliance;

(5) urges Hungary and Türkiye to ratify the accession of Sweden to NATO without further delay;

(6) recognizes that Sweden would bring new and unique capabilities to NATO, which would enable the Alliance to respond to existing and emerging threats to transatlantic security;

(7) encourages the Alliance to operationalize the 2022 Strategic Concept, including by countering the aggressive and coercive behavior exhibited by the People's Republic of China;

(8) expresses support for the decision of NATO to open an office in Tokyo, Japan, to address pacing challenges to transatlantic security in the Indo-Pacific Region;

(9) asserts that NATO members should consider the commitment to spend 2 percent of Gross Domestic Product as the lowest percent contribution to ensure the sustainability, resilience, and readiness of the Alliance;

(10) emphasizes that the Alliance should continue to support Ukraine as it fights for freedom, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and

(11) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to meet obligations as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty, done at Washington, D.C., April 4, 1949.

SENATE RESOLUTION 252—CELEBRATING THE 246TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. VANCE, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 252

Whereas, on June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress approved the design of a flag of the United States;

Whereas, over the years, the flag of the United States has preserved the standards of the original design comprised of alternating red and white stripes accompanied by a union consisting of white stars on a field of blue;

Whereas, on May 30, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued Presidential Proclamation 1335, an announcement asking the people of the United States to observe June 14 as Flag Day;

Whereas, on August 3, 1949, President Harry Truman signed into law House Joint Resolution 170, 81st Congress, a joint resolution designating June 14 of each year as Flag Day;

Whereas, on August 21, 1959, President Dwight Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10834 (24 Fed. Reg. 6865), an order establishing the most recent design of the flag of the United States;

Whereas the Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy, a Baptist minister, and first published in the September 8, 1892, issue of *The Youth's Companion*;

Whereas, in 1954, Congress added the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance;

Whereas, for more than 60 years, the Pledge of Allegiance has included references to the United States flag, to the United States having been established as a union “under God”, and to the United States being dedicated to securing “liberty and justice for all”;

Whereas, in 1954, Congress believed it was acting constitutionally when it revised the Pledge of Allegiance;

Whereas the United States was founded on principles of religious freedom by the Founders, many of whom were deeply religious;

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States embodies principles intended to guarantee freedom of religion through the free exercise thereof and by prohibiting the Government from establishing a religion;

Whereas patriotic songs, engravings on United States legal tender, and engravings on Federal buildings also contain general references to “God”;

Whereas, in *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow*, 542 U.S. 1 (2004), the Supreme Court of the United States overturned the decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in *Newdow v. U.S. Congress*, 328 F.3d 466 (9th Cir. 2003), a case in which the Ninth Circuit concluded that recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by a public school teacher violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

Whereas the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit subsequently concluded that—

(1) the previous opinion of that court in *Newdow v. U.S. Congress*, 328 F.3d 466 (9th Cir. 2003) was no longer binding precedent;

(2) case law from the Supreme Court of the United States concerning the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States had subsequently changed after the decision in *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow*, 542 U.S. 1 (2004); and

(3) Congress, in passing the new version of the Pledge of Allegiance, had established a secular purpose for the use of the term “under God”; and

Whereas, in light of those conclusions, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit upheld the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by public school teachers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

- (1) celebrates the 246th anniversary of the creation of the flag of the United States;
- (2) recognizes that the Pledge of Allegiance has been a valuable part of life for the people of the United States for generations; and
- (3) affirms that the Pledge of Allegiance is a constitutional expression of patriotism and strongly defends the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

SENATE RESOLUTION 253—DESIGNATING JUNE 16, 2023, AS NATIONAL SERVICE AND CONSERVATION CORPS DAY

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 253

Whereas there exists a network of more than 150 Service and Conservation Corps across the United States that provides education, workforce development, and support services to approximately 22,000 young adults and post-9/11 veterans annually;

Whereas the Service and Conservation Corps are locally-based organizations that engage young adults between 18 and 30 years of age and veterans younger than 35 years of age in service projects that address recreation, conservation, disaster response, and community needs;

Whereas the Service and Conservation Corps are direct descendants of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a Great Depression-era Federal work relief program in existence from 1933 to 1942 that—

- (1) mobilized 3,000,000 young men to dramatically improve the public lands of the United States;
- (2) provided participants with food, shelter, education, and a \$30 per month stipend; and
- (3) planted 3,000,000,000 trees and helped build trails, roads, campgrounds, and other park infrastructure still in use today;

Whereas April 5, 2023, was the 90th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps with a presidential Executive order (Executive Order 6101 (relating to relief of unemployment through the performance of useful public work));

Whereas, unlike the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was a large, Federal program that was only open to young men, while Black and Native American participants faced discrimination, modern Service and Conservation Corps are equitable, diverse, and inclusive;

Whereas most modern Service and Conservation Corps are nonprofit organizations or are operated by units of State or local government;

Whereas, through public-private partnerships, Service and Conservation Corps work with a range of organizations, government agencies, and institutions to engage Corps participants in meaningful projects that address local and national issues;

Whereas, throughout a term of service that could last from a few months to a year, Corps participants experience the “Corps Model” by—

- (1) gaining work experience and developing in-demand skills;
- (2) serving on crews alongside other young adults, or in “individual placement” or internship positions, that provide additional capacity to Federal, State, and local resource management agencies;
- (3) receiving a stipend or living allowance and often an education award or scholarship upon completion of service; and

- (4) receiving educational programming, mentoring, and access to career and personal counseling;

Whereas some Service and Conservation Corps operate or partner with charter schools to help Corps participants earn their high school diploma or GED certificate;

Whereas Corps participants complete thousands of community improvement, resilience, and resource conservation projects every year;

Whereas Service and Conservation Corps have longstanding partnerships with Federal, State, and local community development and resource management agencies to engage Corps participants in meaningful and necessary projects across the United States;

Whereas Corps projects include—

- (1) enhancing neighborhoods and community public spaces, including urban gardens;
- (2) preserving and protecting public lands, shorelines, waterways, habitats, and wildlife;
- (3) preserving historic structures;
- (4) providing access to and enhancing recreation on public lands and waters;
- (5) enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters;
- (6) mitigating, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters, including hurricanes and wildfires;
- (7) improving energy efficiency and resource conservation; and
- (8) building and maintaining alternative transportation and sustainable infrastructure;

Whereas the United States urgently needs to transition to more sustainable infrastructure, respond to decades of deferred maintenance on public lands and waters, restore critical ecosystems, and make communities more resilient to climate change;

Whereas unemployment and barriers to opportunity affect millions of young people in the United States and disproportionately affect young people of color; and

Whereas the existing network of more than 150 Service and Conservation Corps is ready to meet the needs of young people in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

- (1) designates June 16, 2023, as National Service and Conservation Corps Day;
- (2) congratulates the existing network of more than 150 Service and Conservation Corps on their contributions to the United States;
- (3) urges the people of the United States to recognize the importance of national service; and
- (4) supports the continuation and expansion of the national network of Service and Conservation Corps.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 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, June 14, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 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, June 14, 2023, at 3:15 p.m., to conduct a classified briefing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND SPENDING OVERSIGHT

The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 1615

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1615) to prohibit the use of Federal funds to ban gas stoves.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be

read for the second time on the next legislative day.

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF CAPITOL GROUNDS FOR THE GREATER WASHINGTON SOAP BOX DERBY

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 43, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 43) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 43) was agreed to.

NATIONAL SERVICE AND CONSERVATION CORPS DAY

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 253 submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 253) designating June 16, 2023, as National Service and Conservation Corps Day.

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

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 253) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 15; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two

leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Choudhury nomination postcloture and that all time be considered expired at 11:15 a.m.; further, that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Rikelman nomination occur at 1:45 p.m. and that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday's session, the motions 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.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator LEE.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

REINS ACT

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, it has been a long time coming, but it is with enormous pride that I stand to celebrate the passage of the REINS Act in the House of Representatives today.

This landmark legislation represents a significant step forward toward reining in the ever-expanding Federal Government. I am immensely grateful to House Republicans, to the House Freedom Caucus, and to Representative KAT CAMMACK, for their unwavering persistence in championing this desperately needed reform legislation.

The journey of the REINS Act began years ago with profound recognition that something was fundamentally wrong with our Federal regulatory system.

We realized the power wielded by these faceless Agencies was unfolding unchecked, eroding the very foundations of our Republic, rendering it unaccountable.

The notion that a small group of unelected individuals could impose far-reaching regulations that affected every aspect of our lives was itself an affront to the principles upon which this great Nation was built—certainly, contrary to the rules established and embodied in the Constitution, which govern the way our government operates.

Year after year, the proponents of regulatory reform within the Federal system have fought against the odds, facing resistance from those who have defended the status quo. We knew that the American people deserved better, that their voices should be heard, and that their elected representatives should have the final say.

Throughout its evolution, the REINS Act has undergone refinements, fine-

tuning its provisions to maintain the cutting edge, while ensuring democratic accountability. It is about reining in unchecked power, bringing spending under the watchful eye of our elected representatives, and restoring the principles of transparency and accountability.

The tenets of the REINS Act are rooted in common sense in a way that every American can grasp. If you understand the concept of no taxation without representation, then it should be easy to understand the REINS Act. But what exactly does the REINS Act mean for hard-working families?

Well, the entrepreneurial spirit runs deep within our country—the entire country—and certainly within my home State of Utah, driving economic growth and fostering innovation across various industries. From tech startups to local artisans, Utahns have a strong inclination to pursue their passions, start their own businesses, and create opportunities for themselves, their families, and their communities.

However, this entrepreneurial spirit often faces significant hurdles, sometimes insurmountable hurdles, due to overregulation by this or that Federal Agency. It is like the feeling you get when you try to assemble a new piece of furniture from a certain Swedish retail store, and you are not quite sure if you have purchased the kejserlig or the plogfara. Yet you are bombarded with a thousand-page jargon-filled instruction manual. Federal regulations often feel like those convoluted instruction manuals, but with much higher stakes, though the titles are a little easier to pronounce.

The REINS Act seeks to change that. The term "REINS" is an acronym that stands for Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny, and its purpose is simple: to ensure that unelected bureaucrats cannot impose major regulations on us without the consent of our elected representatives.

It is about putting power back into the hands of the people and their elected representatives, where it rightfully belongs. You see, this isn't just a good idea. It is a good idea that has been embedded within the Constitution. The very first operative provision of that document—article I, section 1, clause 1—makes this clear:

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

The meaning of that is clear and simple: to make law, you have to go through the Congress. There is no other way to make law. Legislative powers are powers to make law, and all legislative powers granted in the Constitution are Federal laws. Therefore, to make a Federal law, you have to follow the formula prescribed in article I, section 1.

Article I, section 7 explains exactly how that has to happen. You have the same legislative proposal that has to

pass the House and the Senate, in identical text, before it can then be presented to the President for signature, veto, or acquiescence.

The point of this is simple: The power to make law is inherently dangerous and volatile. It can harm people, just as it can protect others. For that reason, it is not to be entrusted to any branch of government other than the branch of government most accountable to the people at the most regular intervals.

You see, regulatory reform is more than just some esoteric concept that exists solely within Capitol Hill or in Washington, DC. Its impact reverberates across our daily lives, affecting everything from the cost of goods and services to the livelihoods of hard-working individuals and families.

That is why it is about a whole lot more than just what the Constitution says and what it should be interpreted and understood to mean. It is about how this affects individuals and families. By requiring congressional approval for major regulations, for enactment of a new major rule or regulation, as if it were a legislative proposal, rather than just allowing executive branch Agencies to make new laws themselves, the REINS Act brings accountability and transparency to the rulemaking process, injecting a much needed and constitutionally prescribed dose of common sense into our bureaucratic system.

The REINS Act articulates and imagines a world where small businesses are free from the weight of onerous regulations, detached from any common sense, where parents can provide for their children without being bogged down by unnecessary redtape, and where innovation and entrepreneurship thrive without the suffocating grip of excessive government control. That is the world we strive to create with the passage of the REINS Act.

Now, to be clear, even with the REINS Act, from time to time some Federal regulations would end up being approved and enacted in the law by Congress. Congress, after all, can and does make mistakes, but there is a big difference when Congress makes that mistake. Members of Congress who vote for that mistake can be held accountable.

Currently, they cannot. In fact, by design, they are insulated from the process, left only in a position where the best they can do is write a harshly

worded letter, beating their chest, and calling the people who wrote this or that regulation at this or that Federal Agency barbarians.

But, after all, our job is not about writing letters. It is about making law. Insofar as we have got other entities that are not us, run by people who are not elected by voters in our State or in any State, that is a problem, and it is a problem that we have to fix.

Today, we celebrate this victory—this victory for freedom, for common sense, and for the hard-working families who deserve a government that serves, not stifles them. We owe an immense debt of gratitude to the House of Representatives and, in particular, to the House Republicans who voted for this, specifically, most notably, the Members of the House Freedom Caucus for their tireless efforts in pushing this legislation forward, reminding us all that persistence and unwavering dedication can yield remarkable results.

I stand before you humbled and honored to witness this historic moment. Together, we can continue to fight for this needed reform, not just as an abstract concept, not just as something that the Constitution already requires, but also as a tangible path toward a brighter, more prosperous future for all Americans.

All Americans benefit from this, but it is especially those Americans who struggle who will benefit the most from this. You have to remember that these regulations, when they are put in place, come at a cost. They are not free.

It has been a few years since anyone has undertaken a comprehensive effort to estimate the total cost of complying with Federal regulations. But according to one study that I saw—it has been several years ago now since this study was produced—they estimated that the cost, while impossible to calculate in its entirety, was at least \$2 trillion. When adding a whole lot of Federal regulations, including some very costly Federal regulations since that study was done, one can surmise from that that the cost is now somewhere between \$2 trillion and \$3 trillion. This is an enormous sum of money.

Now, let's not deceive ourselves. Let's not minimize this by assuming that those costs are borne simply by wealthy Americans, by big blue-chip corporations, by someone whom we can imagine in our mind's eye as a Monopoly game piece wearing a monocle,

dressed up like Mr. Peanut. No, that is not who pays for this. Who pays for this are hard-working Americans, disproportionately America's poor and middle class, who pay dearly for this. That 2 or 3 trillion-dollar figure is supported by you and me and, disproportionately, by those who are near the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. Those people who are working hard, living paycheck to paycheck, find that, as a result of these regulations, everything they buy—from cornflakes to cars, from groceries to gasoline, and everything in between—becomes more expensive. They also pay for it through diminished wages and unemployment.

Those are real people who are being harmed by these things. The least we can do is, before subjecting them to even more regulations that are going to cost America's poor and middle class even more money, we owe it to them to have the decency to at least vote on these regulations before they have to comply, before they have to pay through the nose, yet again, for more and more products.

Inflation has many causes, but one of the significant ones is excessive Federal regulation. Those regulations won't go away with the REINS Act, but when the REINS Act becomes law, we will at least be doing the American people the basic courtesy of voting on regulations before they have to comply. It is not too much to ask.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:24 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate June 14, 2023:

THE JUDICIARY

DALE E. HO, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

P. CASEY PITTS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

STEPHEN K. EBERLE, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.