



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 167

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021

No. 12

Senate

The Senate met at noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You are our shelter from the storm. Keep us from shame.

Lord, You often answer prayers in mysterious ways. As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are Your thoughts higher than our contemplation.

Inspire our Senators to be so sensitive to Your Spirit that they can recognize Your gentle nudge. Make them glad that You are near.

Lord, equip our lawmakers with wisdom and foresight for these challenging times. May Your peace go with them as they seek to do Your will.

We pray in Your strong 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is nice to see you back in that position.

Yesterday, Mr. President, we began a new chapter in the history of our Nation. On the same steps stormed by domestic terrorists 2 weeks ago, we held a ceremony to the enduring power of our democracy. It was a symbol to the world that America is back and a mes-

sage to those domestic terrorists that they will never prevail.

Even as the festivities were in full swing, our new President and this new Senate commenced the work of rebuilding our country and healing its wounds. With the stroke of a pen, President Biden started the process of rejoining the United States to the Paris accords. He extended the pause on student loan payments, put an end to the Muslim travel ban, reinstalled safeguards for our Nation's Dreamers, and put a halt on the ineffective border wall.

Crucially, President Biden signed a number of orders to refocus the Federal Government's efforts on fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The United States has rejoined the World Health Organization. A mask mandate has been issued for all Federal properties. And President Biden has named a new coronavirus response coordinator to manage vaccine distribution, which is so desperately needed and was such a failure under the Trump administration.

Our country has suffered deeply from the chaotic, lackluster, and incompetent Federal response to COVID-19. As we cross the grim milestone of 400,000—American fatalities from COVID, the Biden administration is wasting no time in marshaling the resources of the Federal Government into action and today released a national strategy to defeat the pandemic.

What a concept—a President who actually takes the defining crisis of our time seriously. What a change—and how great is the need.

Here in the Senate, the first order of business is to fulfill our constitutional duty to advise and consent on the President's appointments to his Cabinet. Last night, the Senate confirmed the President's selection for the Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines. We appreciate the bipartisan cooperation to get her confirmation done yesterday, and we should continue in that spirit today.

Traditionally, the Senate has confirmed several national security nominees for an incoming administration during their first few days. Even as power changes hands from one administration to the other, the work of keeping our Nation safe must not be paused or be disrupted. Foreign adversaries will seek to exploit this period of transition, and we cannot allow America's military, intelligence, and national security policy to be disrupted by staffing delays.

In 2017, President Trump had his Defense Secretary and Secretary of Homeland Security in place on Inauguration Day. President Biden deserves his national security team in place as soon as possible, as well as key officials in charge of responding to the current health and economic crises. With the cooperation of our Republican colleagues, we can and should confirm the Secretaries of Defense, State, Homeland Security, and Treasury without much delay.

While national security is paramount, I would remind my colleagues that we are in the middle of an economic crisis. The sooner we confirm a Treasury Secretary, the better.

And so, as we begin the process of bringing our country back together, let the first week of this Congress be a collaboration between our two parties to confirm President Biden's Cabinet.

INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Inaugural Ceremony proceedings be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the proceedings of the Inaugural Ceremony were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

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

INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Inauguration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., January 20, 2021, 10:33 a.m.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark A. Milley, assembled on the President's platform.

Leadership of the United States House of Representatives: Republican whip, the Honorable Stephen Scalise; and majority whip, the Honorable James E. Clyburn, assembled on the President's platform.

Leadership of the United States Senate: President pro tempore emeritus, the Honorable Patrick Leahy, and Mrs. Marcelle Leahy; Democratic whip, the Honorable Dick Durbin, and Ms. Reema Dodin; majority whip, the Honorable John Thune, and Mrs. Kimberley Thune; Democratic leader, the Honorable Charles Schumer, and Mrs. Iris Weinshall Schumer; President pro tempore of the Senate, the Honorable Chuck Grassley, and Ms. Jennifer Heins assembled on the President's platform.

Former Vice President, the Honorable Dan Quayle, assembled on the President's platform.

The 42nd President of the United States, the Honorable William J. Clinton, and the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton assembled on the President's platform.

The 43rd President of the United States, the Honorable George W. Bush, and Mrs. Laura Bush assembled on the President's platform.

The 44th President of the United States, the Honorable Barack H. Obama, and Mrs. Michelle Obama assembled on the President's platform.

The Chief Justice of the United States, the Honorable John G. Roberts, Jr., and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court assembled on the President's platform.

The children of Vice President-Elect Harris and Mr. Douglas Emhoff, Cole Mackin Emhoff and Ella Rose Emhoff, assembled on the President's platform.

The children of President-Elect Biden, Robert Hunter Biden II and Ashley Blazer Biden and the grandchildren of the President-elect, assembled on the President's platform.

Accompanying the Vice President: The Secretary of the Senate, the Honorable Julie Adams; and Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, Catherine Szpindor, assembled on the President's platform.

The Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Michael R. Pence, and Mrs. Karen Pence assembled on the President's platform.

Accompanying the Vice President-elect: the Chief of Inaugural Ceremonies, Maria Miller Lohmeyer; the Acting Deputy House Sergeant at Arms, Kevin Grubbs; and the Acting Deputy Senate Sergeant at Arms, U.S. Capitol Police Officer, PFC Eugene O. Goodman, assembled on the President's platform.

The Vice President-elect of the United States, Kamala Devi Harris, and Mr. Douglas Emhoff assembled on the President's platform.

The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies: staff representative Alexandra Gourdikian Diccio, accompanying the House Republican leader, the Honorable Kevin McCarthy; staff representative Bridget Brennan, accompanying House majority leader, the Honorable Steny Hoyer, and Ms. Yvette Lewis; staff representative Kate Knudsen, accompanying Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, and Mr. Paul Pelosi; staff representative Lindsey Kerr, accompanying the Honorable Amy Klobuchar and Mr. John Bessler; staff representative Stefanie Hagar Muchow, accompanying Senate majority leader, the Honorable Mitch McConnell, and the Honorable Elaine L. Chao; and staff representative Rachelle Graves Schroeder, ac-

companying the chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, the Honorable Roy Blunt, and Mrs. Abigail Blunt, assembled on the President's platform.

Accompanying the President-elect, the staff director of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, Fitzhugh Elder IV; the Acting House Sergeant at Arms, Tim Blodgett; and the Acting Senate Sergeant at Arms, Jennifer Hemmingway, assembled on the President's platform.

The President-elect of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and Dr. Jill Biden assembled on the President's platform.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Vice President Pence, Mr. President-elect, Madam Vice President-elect, Members of Congress and the judicial branch, former Presidents and First Ladies, Vice Presidents, leaders from abroad, and a whole bunch of Bidens, America, welcome to the 59th Presidential Inauguration, where in just a few moments Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will take their solemn oaths.

This ceremony is the culmination of 244 years of a democracy. It is a moment when leaders, brought to this stage by the will of the people, promise to be faithful to our Constitution, to cherish it, and defend it. It is a moment when they become, as we all should be, guardians of our country.

Have we become too jaded, too accustomed to the ritual of the passing of the torch of democracy to truly appreciate what a blessing and a privilege it is to witness this moment? I think not.

Two weeks ago, when an angry, violent mob staged an insurrection and desecrated this temple of our democracy, it awakened us to our responsibilities as Americans. This is the day when our democracy picks itself up, brushes off the dust, and does what America always does: It goes forward as a nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

(Applause.)

This conveyance of a sacred trust between our leaders and our people takes place in front of this shining Capitol dome for a reason. When Abraham Lincoln gave his first inaugural address in front of this Capitol, the dome was only partially constructed, braced by ropes of steel. He promised he would finish it. He was criticized for spending funds on it during the Civil War. To those critics, he replied, "If the people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on." And it did, and it will.

Generations of Americans gave their lives to preserve our Republic in this place. Great legislation to protect civil rights and economic security and lead the world was debated and crafted under this dome. Now, it falls on all of us—not just the two leaders we are inaugurating today—to take up the torch of our democracy, not as a weapon of political arson but as an instrument for good.

We pledge today never to take our democracy for granted as we celebrate its remarkable strength. We celebrate its resilience, its grit. We celebrate the ordinary people doing extraordinary things for our Nation, the doctors and nurses on the frontline of this pandemic, the officers in the Capitol, a new generation never giving up hope for justice.

We celebrate a new President, Joe Biden, who vows to restore the soul of America and cross the river of our divides to a higher plane.

We celebrate our first African-American, first Asian-American, and first woman Vice President, Kamala Harris, who stands on the shoulders of so many on this platform who have forged the way to this day. When she takes the oath of office, little girls and boys across the world will know that anything and everything is possible.

In the end, that is America: our democracy, a country of so much good. Today, on these Capitol steps and before this glorious field of flags, we rededicate ourselves to its cause.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

It is now my honor to introduce to you the Senator who has worked with me and so many others to make this ceremony possible, my friend and the chair of the Inaugural Committee, Missouri Senator Roy Blunt.

(Applause.)

Mr. BLUNT. Well, I should have known when Senator Klobuchar got involved, at least, there would be a touch of snow up here this morning. Of all the things we had considered, I don't think snow was on my agenda until I walked out the door a moment ago.

But thank you, Senator Klobuchar, and thanks to the other members of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Inauguration as we officially begin the 59th inaugural ceremony. I also want to thank the joint committee staff and our partners, particularly our security partners, for the way they have dealt with unprecedented circumstances.

When I chaired the inauguration 4 years ago, I shared President Reagan's 1981 description of this event as "commonplace" and "miraculous." It is "commonplace" because we have done it every 4 years since 1789; it is miraculous because we have done it every 4 years since 1789. Americans have celebrated this moment during war, during depression, and now during pandemic.

Once again, all three branches of our government come together as the Constitution envisions. Once again, we renew our commitment to our determined democracy, forging a more perfect union.

The theme for this inauguration, "Our Determined Democracy: Forging a more perfect union," was announced by the joint committee before the election with the belief that the United States can only fulfill its promise and set an example for others if we are always working to be better than we have been.

The Constitution established that determined democracy with its first three words, declaring the people as the source of the government. The Articles of Confederation hadn't done that. The Magna Carta hadn't done that. Only the Constitution says the government exists because the people are the source of the reason it exists.

They immediately followed those first three words with the words "to form a more perfect union." The Founders did not say to form a perfect union; they did not claim that in our new country nothing would need to be improved. Fortunately, they understood that always working to be better would be the hallmark of a great democracy.

The freedoms we have today and the Nation we have today is not here just because it happened, and they aren't complete. A great democracy is working through the successes and failures of our history, striving to be better than it had been. We are more than we have been, and we are less than we hope to be. The assault on our Capitol at this very place just 2 weeks ago reminds us that a government designed to balance and check itself is both fragile and resilient.

During the last year, the pandemic challenged our free and open society and called for extraordinary determination and sacrifice and still challenges us today. Meeting that challenge head on have been and are our healthcare workers, scientists, first responders, essential frontline workers, and so many others we depend on in so many ways.

Today, we come to this moment; people all over the world, as we are here, are watching

and will watch what we do here. Our government comes together. The Congress and the courts join the transition of Executive responsibility. One political party is more pleased today and on every inaugural day than the other. But this is not a moment of division; it is a moment of unification. A new administration begins and brings with it a new beginning; and with that, our great national debate goes forward, and a determined democracy will continue to be essential in pursuit of a more perfect union and a better future for all Americans. What a privilege for me to join you today.

Thank you.
(Applause.)

I am pleased to call to the podium a longtime friend of the President-elect and his family, Father Leo O'Donovan, to lead us in an invocation.

Please stand if you are able and remain standing for the national anthem and the pledge to our flag.

Father O'DONOVAN. Gracious and merciful God, at this sacred time, we come before you in need, indeed on our knees. But we come still more with hope and with our eyes raised anew to the vision of a more perfect union in our land, a union of all our citizens to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

We are a people of many races, creeds, and colors, national backgrounds, cultures, and styles, now far more numerous and on land much vaster than when Archbishop John Carroll wrote his prayer for the inauguration of George Washington 232 years ago.

Archbishop Carroll prayed that You, a Creator of all, would "assist with your Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness and be eminently useful to Your people."

Today, we confess our past failures to live according to our vision of equality, inclusion, and freedom for all; yet we resolutely commit still more now to renewing the vision, to caring for one another in word and deed, especially the least fortunate among us, and so becoming a light for the world.

There is a power in each and every one of us that lives by turning to every other one of us, a trust of the spirit to cherish and care and stand by others and, above all, those most in need. It is called love, and its path is to give ever more of itself. Today, it is called American patriotism, borne not of power and privilege, but of care for the common good, with malice toward none and with charity for all.

For our new President, we beg of you the wisdom Solomon sought when he knelt before you and prayed for an understanding heart so that "I can govern your people . . . and know the difference between right and wrong."

We trust in the counsel of the letter of James:

In any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Pope Francis has reminded us how important it is to dream together. "By ourselves," he wrote, "we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together."

Be with us, Holy Mystery of Love, as we dream together. Help us under our new President to reconcile the people of our land, restore our dream, and invest it with peace and justice and the joy that is the overflow of love.

To the glory of Your name forever. Amen.
(Performance of the National Anthem by Lady Gaga, accompanied by the U.S. Marine Band.)

(Fire Captain Andrea M. Hall, of the South Fulton Georgia Fire and Rescue Department,

president of the International Association of Firefighters Local 3920 recited the Pledge of Allegiance.)

(Applause.)

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. What you are all about to be part of, America, is a historic moment of firsts.

To administer the oath to our first African-American, our first Asian-American, and our first woman Vice President, Kamala Harris, it is my great privilege to welcome to the inaugural stage the first Latina to ever serve on the Supreme Court of the United States of America: Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

The Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, SONIA SOTOMAYOR, administered to the Vice President-elect the oath of office prescribed by the Constitution, which she repeated as follows:

I, KAMALA DEVI HARRIS, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

(Applause.)

(Jennifer Lopez performed "This Land Is Your Land" and "America the Beautiful" accompanied by the U.S. Marine Band.)

(Applause.)

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Well, that was great.

The Sun is shining and, Mr. President-elect, this is the first inauguration in the history of America where J-Lo was the warmup act for Chief Justice Roberts.

With that, it is now my distinct honor to introduce the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, John Roberts, to administer the Presidential oath to the next President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden.

(Applause.)

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, JOHN G. ROBERTS, JR., administered to the President-elect the oath of office prescribed by the Constitution, which he repeated, as follows:

I, JOSEPH ROBINETTE BIDEN, JR., do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God.

The CHIEF JUSTICE. Congratulations, Mr. President.

(Applause.)

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. My fellow Americans—a moment we have all been waiting for—it is now my great privilege and high honor to be the first person to officially introduce the 46th President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDENT. Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Vice President Pence, and my distinguished guests, my fellow Americans, this is America's day. This is democracy's day—a day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve.

Through a crucible for the ages, America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge. Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The people—the will of the people—has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded.

We have learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile, and at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed.

(Applause.)

Now, on this hallowed ground, where just a few days ago violence sought to shake the Capitol's very foundation, we come together

as one Nation under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries.

As we look ahead in our uniquely American way—restless, bold, optimistic—and set our sights on a nation we know we can and we must be, I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

(Applause.)

I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength—the strength of our Nation—as does President Carter, who I spoke with last night, who cannot be with us today, but whom we salute for his lifetime in service.

I have just taken the sacred oath each of those patriots have taken, the oath first sworn by George Washington. But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us—on we, the people, who seek a more perfect union. This is a great nation. We are good people. Over the centuries, through storm and strife, in peace and at war, we have come so far, but we still have far to go.

We will press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibilities—much to repair, much to restore, much to heal, much to build, and much to gain. Few people in our Nation's history have been more challenged or found a time more challenging or difficult than the time we are in now. A once-in-a-century virus that silently stalks the country has taken as many lives in 1 year as America lost in all of World War II.

Millions of jobs have been lost, and hundreds of thousands of businesses closed. A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer.

(Applause.)

A cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now—the rise of political extremism, White supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat.

(Applause.)

To overcome these challenges, to restore the soul and secure the future of America requires so much more than words; it requires the most elusive of all things in a democracy: unity. Unity.

In another January on New Year's Day in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. When he put pen to paper, the President said:

If my name ever goes down in history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it.

My whole soul is in it today, on this January day. My whole soul is in this: bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our Nation. I ask every American to join me in this cause.

(Applause.)

Uniting to fight the foes we face—anger, resentment and hatred, extremism, lawlessness, violence, disease, joblessness, and hopelessness—with unity, we can do great things, important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs. We can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome the deadly virus. We can reward work and rebuild the middle class and make healthcare secure for all. We can deliver racial justice, and we can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world.

I know, speaking of unity, it can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real, but I also know they are not new. Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal, that we all are created equal, and the harsh ugly reality

that racism, nativism, fear, and demonization have long torn us apart. The battle is perennial, and victory is never assured.

Through Civil War, the Great Depression, World War, 9/11, and through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks, our better angels have always prevailed. In each of these moments, enough of us—enough of us—have come together to carry all of us forward, and we can do that now.

History, faith, and reason show the way, the way of unity. We can see each other not as adversaries, but as neighbors. We can treat each other with dignity and respect. We can join forces, stop the shouting, and lower the temperature. For without unity, there is no peace, only bitterness and fury; no progress, only exhausting outrage; and no nation, only a state of chaos. This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward, and we must meet this moment as the United States of America.

If we do that, I guarantee you we will not fail. We have never, ever, ever, ever failed in America when we have acted together. So, today, at this time, in this place, let's start afresh—all of us. Let's begin to listen to one another again, hear one another, see one another, and show respect to one another. Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war, and we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.

(Applause.)

My fellow Americans, we have to be different than this. America has to be better than this, and I believe America is so much better than this. Just look around. Here we stand in the shadow of the Capitol dome, as was mentioned earlier, completed amid the Civil War when the Union itself was literally hanging in the balance; yet we endured. We prevailed.

Here we stand, looking out on the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream. Here we stand, where 108 years ago, at another inaugural, thousands of protesters tried to block brave women marching for the right to vote. Today, we mark the swearing in of the first woman in American history elected to national office, Vice President Kamala Harris. Don't tell me things can't change.

(Applause.)

Here we stand, across the Potomac from Arlington Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace. Here we stand, just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, and to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen. It will never happen, not today, not tomorrow, not ever—not ever.

(Applause.)

To all those who supported our campaign, I am humbled by the faith you placed in us. To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart. If you still disagree, so be it. That is democracy. That is America. The right to dissent peaceably within the guardrails of our Republic is perhaps this Nation's greatest strength; yet hear me clearly. Disagreement must not lead to disunion, and I pledge this to you: I will be a President for all Americans—all Americans.

(Applause.)

I promise you, I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did.

(Applause.)

Many centuries ago, St. Augustine, a saint in my church, wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common action of their

love, defined by the common objects of their love. What are the common objects we, as Americans, love that define us as Americans? I think we know: opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honor, and, yes, the truth.

Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth, and there are lies, lies told for power and for profit. Each of us has a duty and a responsibility as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders—leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our Nation—to defend the truth and defeat the lies.

(Applause.)

Look, I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand, like my dad, they lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling, wondering: Can I keep my healthcare? Can I pay my mortgage? Thinking about their families and about what comes next. I promise you, I get it.

But the answer is not to turn inward and to retreat into competing factions, distrusting those who don't look like you or worship the way you do or don't get their news from the same sources you do. We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts, if we show a little tolerance and humility, and if we are willing to stand in the other person's shoes, as my mom would say. Just for a moment, stand in their shoes.

Because here is the thing about life: There is no accounting for what fate will deal you. Some days, you need a hand. There are other days when we are called to lend a hand. That is how it has to be. That is what we do for one another. If we are this way, our country will be stronger, more prosperous, more ready for the future, and we can still disagree.

My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we are going to need each other. We need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter. We are entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus. We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one Nation—one Nation.

(Applause.)

And I promise you this, as the Bible says: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We will get through this together—together.

(Applause.)

Look, folks, all my colleagues I serve with in the House and the Senate up here, we all understand the world is watching, watching all of us today. So here is my message to those beyond our borders: America has been tested, and we have come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again—not to meet yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's challenges—and we will lead not merely by the example of our power but by the power of our example.

(Applause.)

We will be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress, and security.

Look, you all know we have been through so much in this Nation. In my first act as President, I would like to ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer. Remember all those who we lost in this past year to the pandemic, those 400,000 fellow Americans—moms, dads, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. We will honor them by becoming the people and the Nation we know we can and should be. I ask you, let's say a silent prayer for those who have lost their lives and those left behind and for our country.

(Moment of silence.)

Amen.

Folks, this is a time of testing. We face an attack on our democracy and on truth, a raging virus, growing inequity, the sting of systemic racism, a climate in crisis, and America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways, but the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this Nation with one of the gravest responsibilities we have had.

Now, we are going to be tested. Are we going to step up, all of us? It is time for boldness, for there is so much to do. And this is certain: I promise you, we will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these cascading crises of our era. Will we rise to the occasion is the question. Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children?

I believe we must. I am sure you do as well. I believe we will. When we do, we will write the next great chapter in the history of the United States of America—the American story—a story that might sound something like a song that means a lot to me. It is called "American Anthem." There is one verse that stands out, at least for me, and it goes like this:

The work and prayers of centuries have brought us to this day, which shall be our legacy, what will our children say? Let me know in my heart when my days are through, America, America, I gave my best to you.

Let us add our own work and prayers to the unfolding story of our great Nation. If we do this, then when our days are through, our children and our children's children will say of us: They gave their best, they did their duty, they healed a broken land.

My fellow Americans, I close today where I began, with a sacred oath. Before God and all of you, I give you my word. I will always level with you. I will defend the Constitution. I will defend our democracy. I will defend America, and I will give all—all of you—keep everything I do in your service, thinking not of power but of possibilities, not of personal interest but of public good. And together, we shall write an American story of hope, not fear; of unity, not division; of light, not darkness; a story of decency and dignity, love and healing, greatness and goodness—may this be the story that guides us, the story that inspires us, and the story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history. We met the moment. Democracy and hope, truth and justice, did not die on our watch but thrived, that America secured liberty at home and stood once again as a beacon to the world. That is what we owe our forebearers, one another, and generations to follow.

So, with purpose and resolve, we turn to those tasks of our time sustained by faith, driven by conviction, and devoted to one another and the country we love with all our hearts. May God bless America, and may God protect our troops.

Thank you, America.

(Applause.)

(Garth Brooks performed "Amazing Grace.")

Mr. BLUNT. It is hard not to be reminded of President Obama singing that same song at the Mother Emanuel Church, a song that in our country is as close to both poetry and prayer as you could possibly come, and we are going to finish with those two things.

Let me introduce Amanda Gorman, our Nation's first ever National Youth Poet Laureate.

Ms. GORMAN. Mr. President, Dr. Biden, Madam Vice President, Mr. Emhoff, Americans, and the world:

When day comes we ask ourselves,

where can we find light in this never-ending shade?

The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single
mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cul-
tures, colors,
characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands
between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put
our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is
true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, vic-
torious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine
and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare
It's because being American is more than a
pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into and how we repair
it
We've seen a force that would shatter our na-
tion
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delay-
ing democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically de-
layed
it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth
in this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us
This is the era of just redemption
We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power to author a
new chapter
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catas-
trophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly

prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next genera-
tion

Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a won-
drous one

We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the
west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolu-
tion

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of
the midwestern states,

we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
afire and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it.

(Applause.)

Mr. BLUNT. Thank you, Amanda Gorman.

Now, for our benediction, I am pleased to
introduce the Reverend Dr. Silvester
Beaman, pastor of the Bethel African Meth-
odist Episcopal Church in Wilmington, DE, a
friend of President Biden for 30 years.

Reverend BEAMAN. As a nation and people
of faith gathered in this historical moment,
let us unite in prayer.

God, we gather under the beauty of Your
holiness and the holiness of Your beauty. We
seek Your face, Your smile, Your warm em-
brace.

We petition You once more in this celebra-
tion. We pray for divine favor upon our
President, Joseph R. Biden, and our First
Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, and their family. We
further ask that You would extend the same
favor upon our Vice President, Kamala D.
Harris, and our Second Gentleman, Doug
Emhoff, and their family. More than ever—
more than ever—they and our Nation need
You.

We need You, for in You we discover our
common humanity. In our common human-
ity, we will seek out the wounded and bind
their wounds. We will seek healing for those
who are sick and diseased. We will mourn
our dead. We will befriend the lonely, the
least, and the left out. We will share our
abundance with those who are hungry. We
will do justly to the oppressed, acknowledge
sin, and seek forgiveness, thus grasping rec-
onciliation.

In discovering our humanity, we will seek
the good in and for all our neighbors. We will
love the unlovable, remove the stigma of the
so-called untouchables. We will care for our
most vulnerable, our children, the elderly,
emotionally challenged, and the poor. We
will seek rehabilitation beyond correction.
We will extend opportunity to those locked
out of opportunity. We will make friends of
our enemies. We will make friends of our en-
emies.

People—Your people—shall no longer raise
up weapons against one another, who will
rather use our resources for the national
good, and become a beacon of life and good
will to the world, and neither shall we learn
hatred anymore. We will lie down in peace
and not make our neighbors afraid.

In You, oh, God, we discover our humanity,
and in our humanity, we discover our com-
monness. Beyond the difference of color,
creed, origin, political party, ideology, geog-
raphy, and personal preferences, we will be-
come greater stewards of Your environment,
preserving the land, reaping from it a sus-
tainable harvest, and securing its wonder
and miracle-giving power for generations to
come.

This is our benediction, that from these
hallowed grounds where slaves labored to
build this shrine and citadel to liberty and
democracy, let us all acknowledge—from the
indigenous Native Americans to those who
recently received their citizenship, from the
African American to those whose foreparents
came from Europe and every corner of the
globe, from the wealthy to those struggling
to make it, from every human being, regard-
less of their choices—that this is our coun-
try.

As such, teach us, oh, God. As such, teach
us, oh, God, to live in it, love in it, be healed
in it, and reconcile to one another in it, less
we miss kingdom's goal.

To Your glory, majesty, dominion, and
power forever, hallelujah. Glory hallelujah,
in the strong Name of our collective faith.
Amen.

(Performance of "The Stars and Stripes
Forever" by the U.S. Marine Band.)

(Performance of "Let Freedom Ring" by
the U.S. Marine Band.)

(The Inaugural Ceremony was concluded at
12:33 p.m.)

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr.
President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr.
BOOKER). You are welcome.

Mr. SCHUMER. A new politeness
from the Chair.

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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Re-
publican leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for
this 117th Congress, the American peo-
ple chose an evenly split Senate—50
Republicans and 50 Democrats. With
the election of Vice President HARRIS,
that means the Democratic leader will
act as majority leader.

So I want to congratulate my col-
league from New York. His pride and
emotion were palpable yesterday as
this self-described "kid from Brooklyn
[and] son of an exterminator and a
housewife" became the first Jewish
Member of Congress to lead either
Chamber—a historic milestone.

Now, the Senate has handled an even split before. Twenty years ago, faced with the same scenario, the two leaders brokered a power-sharing agreement so the institution could function smoothly.

The Democratic leader and I are discussing a similar agreement now. I have been heartened to hear my colleague say he wants the same rules from the 2000s to apply today, because, certainly, 20 years ago there was no talk—none whatsoever—of tearing down longstanding minority rights on legislation.

The legislative filibuster is a crucial part of the Senate. Leading Democrats, like President Biden himself, have long defended it. Democrats themselves just spent 6 years using it, literally, to block bills from Senator TIM SCOTT's police reform to coronavirus relief.

And less than 4 years ago, when it was Republicans who held the Senate, the House, and the Presidency, 27 current Democrats plus Vice President HARRIS signed a letter insisting this longstanding rule should not be broken.

So if the talk of unity and common ground is to have meaning and, certainly, if the rules from 20 years ago are to be our guide, then I cannot imagine the Democratic leader would rather hold up the power-sharing agreement than simply reaffirm that his side won't be breaking this standing rule of the Senate.

I appreciate our ongoing, good-faith discussions and look forward to finding the solution together.

Our side takes a great deal of pride in the accomplishments that three consecutive Republican Senates have delivered for the American people.

In 2014, our majority was elected to check and balance the last years of a lameduck Presidency.

In 2016, we were reelected to help ignite a real, all-American economic comeback, rebuild and modernize our military, and fight for the forgotten corners of our country. Together with the Trump administration and a Republican House, we did just that.

In 2018, we were rehired again on those strong results, especially the historic job market for American workers and our commitment to the judiciary.

And now, even as voters chose President Biden for the White House, they simultaneously shrunk Democrats' House majority and elected this evenly divided Senate.

The 2020 election was as far from a sweeping mandate for ideological transformation as any election we have seen in modern history. The American people stunned the so-called experts with the number of Republicans they sent to the House and to the Senate to make sure commonsense conservative values have a powerful say in the government.

So our side is ready to share ideas and work with the Biden administration, applying common sense to find common ground for the common good.

But if and when our Democratic friends depart from common sense, when they retreat from common ground or their proposals harm the common good, then we will use the power the American people have given us to push for what we think is right.

On the Biden administration's very first day, it took several big steps in the wrong direction. The President reentered the failed Paris climate agreement, a terrible bargain that would set us up to self-inflict major economic pain on working American families with no assurance that China or Russia would honor their commitments. In fact, the United States has already been reducing carbon emissions, while China and other nations in the agreement have kept increasing theirs. Rejoining will just set us up to kill American jobs while our competitors continue to roar on by.

The President also unilaterally canceled the Keystone XL Pipeline. The day-one priority was to kill thousands of American jobs, including union jobs, disappoint our strong ally Canada, and reverse some of our progress toward energy security. This is a project that the liberal Canadian Government and Prime Minister Trudeau support—an investment in North American energy. Even the Obama State Department concluded it would not harm the climate. But because canceling the pipeline project just feels like the green thing to do, the new administration killed all these jobs. This was not the day one the American workers deserved.

The new administration has also sketched out a massive proposal for blanket amnesty that would gut enforcement of American laws while creating huge new incentives for people to rush here illegally at the same time. This kind of failed approach will invite another humanitarian crisis on our border and privilege powerful interests ahead of American workers.

For all the talk about norms within government, last night brought a truly unprecedented move at the National Labor Relations Board. The President fired the Board's independent general counsel almost a year before the end of his term. Even leftwing activists called the unprecedented move "aggressive."

Now, it is still early. There is still plenty of time for President Biden to remember that he does not owe his election to the far left. The President can and should refocus his administration on creating good-paying American jobs, not sacrificing our people's livelihoods to liberal symbolism. Senate Republicans will be ready, willing, and eager to help make that happen.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The majority whip.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am happy to be standing here today on the Senate floor during an exciting week and one that really provides us with hope for the future. I welcome President Biden and, of course, Vice President HARRIS to their new roles and look forward to their leadership that they will provide in these difficult times.

We can never forget that America is still in the midst of a deadly pandemic. Tragically, we lost over 400,000 Americans. In my State of Illinois, we have seen more than 1 million COVID cases, and 18,398 of my neighbors and friends in Illinois have died due to this deadly virus.

As we continue to try to stop the spread of this pandemic, I am glad that the vaccine rollout has been able to help some in my State—537,000 people in Illinois have received vaccines. It is a refreshing and long overdue sight to have the President and White House fully engaged in addressing this pandemic with a focus on science and racial equity.

On his first day yesterday, President Biden signed several important Executive actions, including instituting a mask mandate for all Federal facilities and buildings.

Secondly, he moved to rejoin the World Health Organization. This was one of the most confounding decisions by the Trump administration. In the midst of a global pandemic, President Trump opted to remove the United States from the World Health Organization, which was focusing on the spread of this pandemic and its impact on nations around the world.

Finally, President Biden created an office to coordinate a national response to the pandemic. Today he is outlining a strong plan to provide a national strategy to liberate us from this threat.

I must say that I was disappointed in the transition when at first President Trump refused to acknowledge that he lost the election, and then his Agencies dragged their feet when it came to informing the Biden administration of the status quo in America. Thus,

today, we learn that we were not as prepared as we should have been when it came to distributing the vaccines that were being manufactured across this country. Now we almost have to start from zero to find a way to meet President Biden's challenge of 100 million Americans vaccinated in the first 100 days that he is in office. I pray that he is successful. We should do everything in our power on both sides of the aisle to give him the resources and the cooperation he needs.

The fact sheet of things that will be done by the Biden administration on COVID-19 is lengthy and impressive. The President, on the first day, established a White House COVID-19 Response Office and Coordinator, as I mentioned, required mask wearing and social distancing in Federal facilities, and rejoined the World Health Organization.

Today, President Biden also unveiled a national strategy to leverage Federal resources. It outlines detailed plans for a comprehensive vaccination strategy. If there was cheering—and there should have been—for the Warp Speed project developing successful vaccines in a short period of time, it was followed by some disappointment that even with these vaccines and the knowledge of how to make them, we are not producing them in the quantities necessary, and we are not addressing the logistics of spreading these vaccines across America where they are needed the most.

The President is setting out to restore trust by leading with experts for public outreach, and he is relying on science. That is refreshing. It is hard to imagine something that basic is as refreshing as it is. He is providing resources and guidance to reopen most K-8 schools in 100 days. Wouldn't that be a blessing? There isn't a parent or grandparent in this country who won't cheer that particular goal. He is addressing supply gaps and State capacity. We are finding them virtually all across the United States. And he is focusing on vulnerable populations, including those in long-term care facilities and communities of color.

To implement this plan, President Biden will sign Executive orders today to direct agencies to exercise all authorities, including the Defense Production Act, to accelerate the manufacturing and delivery of vaccination, testing, and medical supplies. Let me say, I have never understood why President Trump refused to use this Defense Production Act to its full capacity, to use his leadership as President to marshal the resources of production and distribution of vaccines and other absolutely necessary medical devices.

President Biden also is directing FEMA to increase Federal reimbursement to States from 75 to 100 percent for emergency supplies, such as PPE, and National Guard personnel. He is establishing a Healthy Equity Task Force to provide recommendations on

how to allocate and address racial and ethnic disparities that have been magnified by this crisis.

We know the economic damage of this virus continues to linger. Nearly one in four people in my State in renter households reports being behind on rent, and one in three households reports having difficulty just covering usual household expenses.

We continue to see historic numbers of Americans filing for unemployment, including more than 100,000 people in Illinois who applied for unemployment last week. But to fully address the health and economic toll of the pandemic, Congress needs to build upon the work we did in December and heed the call of the \$1.9 trillion plan that President Biden outlined last week.

I was part of a bipartisan group of Senators who met several months ago. We talked about following on the CARES Act with some measure of COVID relief. We proposed a plan of \$908 billion, which was then embraced by the leaders on both sides of the aisle and the White House, and they negotiated further. That resulted in the measure we passed just a few days ago. But make no mistake, that was not the end of the story, nor did we envision that it would be. This was done on a temporary emergency basis to cover the first quarter; that is, the first 3 months of this calendar year. I pray that this pandemic and all of the problems it has caused will soon be gone, but I doubt that it will happen in the next 3 months.

We have more work to do, and President Biden knows it. I think we all do. We need to come together again on a bipartisan basis.

The first CARES Act passed the Senate by a vote of 96 to nothing. There were no dissenting votes. The second measure, I believe, had 91 or 92 votes in favor of it. So we have shown real bipartisanship. We can't quit on this challenge.

Janet Yellen has been named as the Treasury Secretary designate by President Biden. I had a conversation with her 2 weeks ago. We talked about the perilous state of the economy. It is naive for us to believe that the worst is behind us. We have to face the reality that we may have darker days ahead, and we have to be prepared to deal with them—first, with the pandemic and, second, with the economy. Even the Chairman of the Federal Reserve has encouraged us not to take our foot off the accelerator, lest we lapse into a recession or worse.

Let's take this seriously. Let's help the businesses, help the workers, help the families, and do our best to get this economy back on its feet.

Illinois has spent \$843 million in our health departments to expand testing and vaccine delivery from the December package. But with half a million people vaccinated so far in a State of 13 million, more resources and support are needed. That means providing the \$20 billion for vaccine distribution and

\$50 billion for testing that President Biden has asked for as part of his rescue package so we can finally, once and for all, crush this virus, get the economy back on its feet, and get our kids back in school.

It also means investing in the health workforce, such as through a bill I have introduced with Senator MARCO RUBIO, Republican of Florida, to provide scholarship and loan repayment through the National Health Service Corps for doctors and nurses to serve in communities with a shortage of providers.

I say to the Presiding Officer, I am sure you are personally aware that there are fewer African-American doctors in the United States today than there were 10 years ago. I am sorry to report that. It should be just the opposite. We should have so many more, for many reasons, not the least of which is to overcome health inequity.

This scholarship program that Senator RUBIO and I are proposing builds on the model of the National Health Service Corp, which tracks young doctors to come and serve in underserved areas and to help underserved populations, and then helps pay off their student loans. We take this approach: Keep that; it is good. Expand it where we can, but let's look at another aspect. What if we provided scholarship assistance and really directed it toward minority candidates to become doctors and dentists and nurses and healthcare professionals? All of those aspects would be encouraged if people knew that they had a scholarship through the National Health Service and the promise that they would serve where they were needed after they graduated. We hope this will be included in any measure that is passed in the near future.

The President's plan sets out additional relief measures that will float to those in need. I am especially encouraged by making the child tax credit fully refundable. That is going to benefit 1 million kids in my State.

Also, the Biden plan aims to safely open schools, businesses, and travel while protecting workers in these areas and committing to protecting our most vulnerable populations.

I am ready to continue pushing for COVID relief. The job isn't finished by any means. We must provide American families and workers the tools they need to survive in this difficult economic time.

As Chair Yellen said earlier this week, "Without further action, we risk a longer, more painful recession now—and long-term scarring of the economy later."

Let's do this, America. Let's do it together. Let's let the spirit of unity that we saw on the West Front of the Capitol yesterday bring us together here in the Senate and the House in a joint effort to help the American people with the resources they need to survive this pandemic and this lengthy financial hardship.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of the quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I want to start by congratulating President Biden and Vice President HARRIS, who took office yesterday. We have a team of former Senators in the White House.

Yesterday was a hopeful day. The Capitol Building, so recently besieged by violence and lawlessness, resumed its rightful place as the seat of our democracy and backdrop for the peaceful transfer of power from one President to the next that is a hallmark of our system of government. The faith of many Americans has been shaken in recent weeks. But yesterday reminded us that our democracy still stands and our Nation endures—bruised, maybe, but unbroken.

I also want to express my profound gratitude to the Capitol Police officers and other law enforcement who, though outnumbered and overrun, defended this Capitol on January 6, and to the soldiers and the law enforcement who have guarded this building in the days since. We live in peace and freedom because of the service and sacrifice of our military and our police officers.

After the election of November, President Biden gave a victory speech in which he pledged to be “a President who seeks not to divide, but to unify. Who doesn’t see Red and Blue states, but a United States. And who will work with all my heart to win the confidence of the whole people.”

He reiterated that commitment in yesterday’s speech, stating: “On this January day, my whole soul is in this: Bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our nation.”

That is what we need right now—a President who will unite us. If President Biden can truly be a President who governs for all Americans, who respects all Americans, and who works to win the confidence of the whole people, he will have done our Nation a great service.

And I do think President Biden is capable of doing this, but I do want to sound a cautionary note. It is common to talk about unity at Presidential inaugurations. But all too often that commitment to unity is forgotten—by the President or by the members of his party. I hope this commitment will be backed up with action and that Democrat leaders in Congress will embrace the President’s words. That means respecting those Americans who didn’t vote for President Biden as well as those who did.

It means working together to confront our Nation’s challenges, instead of adopting an “our way or the highway” approach. It means preserving minority rights in the Senate when it comes to legislation, the heart—the heart—of what makes the Senate special and something Republicans, I might add, defended during our time in the majority.

For the President, it means nominating individuals who represent a majority of Americans, not the far left fringes of his party. I have seen some hopeful actions from President Biden. Several of his nominees for important posts, while perhaps not those whom I would have chosen, are public servants whom I believe will serve our country well in positions like Director of National Intelligence, whom we voted on yesterday. And the President has demonstrated both his leadership and his concern for all Americans by prioritizing the pandemic and focusing on getting Americans vaccinated.

But there have been troubling things as well. While the President has nominated some mainstream candidates, other nominations raise serious concerns on issues like overregulation of the economy and life and conscience protections.

While I applaud the President’s focus on the pandemic, I am concerned that a number of the measures in his pandemic relief proposal are heavily partisan—and, certainly, not things that should be rushed through Congress without serious consideration of the long-term impact they would have on our economy and American families.

If there was any mandate given in this election, it was a mandate for moderation. A historic number of Americans voted for President Biden, but a historic number voted for President Trump as well. Democrats lost seats in the House of Representatives, and the Senate is evenly divided.

I hope—I really hope—that Democrat leaders and the President will remember that and not allow the far left, which has sought to hijack the Democratic Party in recent years, to determine their agenda. We have a chance—a chance—for a new day here in this country, and I believe that President Biden is committed to leading us there.

I pray that that commitment will endure and that we can spend the next months and years working together, legislating together, and ensuring the voices of all Americans are respected and heard.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, there have been few other times in American history when the need for economic growth through strategic, responsible, pro-business policies has been as great as it is today. Nothing is more important to a family than a

good-paying job. That is where the American dream begins.

Today, as our Nation fights to overcome the horrendous health and economic impacts of COVID-19, we must balance our approach. We have to protect American families and individuals who have been hurt by this crisis, support commonsense public health policies and an aggressive vaccine distribution effort, while also keeping businesses open, incentivizing future growth of businesses, large and small, and standing up to our economic adversaries, like Communist China, by reshoring our supply chain back home.

We also need to continue cutting regulations to make it easier for businesses to operate and for entrepreneurs to create jobs.

President Biden and his Cabinet have the important task of revitalizing our economy amid one of our Nation’s worst economic crises. In my 8 years as Governor of Florida, we balanced our budget each year, cut \$10 billion in taxes, paid off one-third of our State debt, and Florida companies added nearly 1.7 million jobs. But instead of looking to innovation and approving policies of States like Florida that will create jobs and help Americans and small businesses, the Biden administration is already making promises to go in the opposite direction—promises that are being championed by his nominee for Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen.

Let me be clear. I support targeted relief to help our small businesses and individuals who are hurting because of the coronavirus. With the start of a new administration, I was hoping to hear some fresh, new ideas on how to accomplish our shared goal of addressing this crisis. But that is not what we are hearing from the Biden administration. Their answer is the same as it always has been for Democrats: more government, more spending, higher taxes, no accountability.

Voters are befuddled by the claim that while families cannot borrow without limits or consequences, somehow the Federal Government can. It is irresponsible, and I won’t stand for it. We have to get serious about how we are spending taxpayer dollars. We already have more than \$27 trillion in Federal debt.

If interest rates return to their 50-year average, the interest on our Federal debt will make it impossible to fund our military, Medicare, and Social Security.

President Biden wants to spend more than \$350 billion to bail out wasteful, liberal States for their decades of mismanagement, and his nominees, including Ms. Yellen, support this nonsense.

Andrew Cuomo has threatened the New York wealthy that if they don’t help him get a Federal Government bailout, he will raise their taxes.

I was elected Governor of Florida when Cuomo was elected Governor of New York. While Governor of Florida, I lowered taxes each year. Cuomo raised

taxes. Since we were both elected, families and businesses have increasingly left New York for lower taxes, better schools, better roads, and warmer weather in Florida.

Asking taxpayers to bail out failed politicians in liberal States like New York and Illinois and save them from their own bad decisions isn't fair to the taxpayers in fiscally responsible States like Florida. After all, many Florida taxpayers left New York because of Cuomo's tax policy.

It makes no sense. Congress has already allocated more than \$4.5 trillion to address this crisis. Think about it. We just passed a nearly \$1 trillion relief package 4 weeks ago. This is all borrowed money. The Federal Government doesn't have savings for a rainy day, and we still don't know how much money is unspent from the previous coronavirus relief packages. How can we possibly justify spending more money right now? We don't even know what we might need to spend money on.

And for States like California, we know they don't need it. California's tax revenues for this fiscal year is running \$9 billion, or 18 percent, above projections. Personal income tax revenue in October was \$1 billion—15 percent higher than in the previous October, and sales taxes were up 9.2 percent. For the last 4 months, overall revenue in California has exceeded spring forecasts and even 2019 collections. But that hasn't kept Governor Newsom and his far left buddies in Congress from keeping their hands out for more money.

We cannot simply throw massive spending at this with no accountability to the current and future American taxpayer. It is shameful.

We have also heard the Biden administration and its nominees call for a new national minimum wage of \$15 an hour. It is clear that these folks haven't talked to business owners. Small businesses in America are struggling like never before, especially in liberal States, where repeated lockdowns have exacerbated their work to stay open. And President Biden believes now is the time to slap another mandate on their back and drive even more Americans chasing the dream of this country out of business? I am not sure how you could possibly be more detached from reality.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, a federally mandated \$15 minimum wage would cost as many as 3.7 million Americans their jobs.

Let me tell you, I know what it is like to be poor, to live in public housing, to not have enough money to afford healthcare for a family member. I watched my parents struggle for work. I don't want any family to go through what I went through.

I ran for office because I wanted to help struggling families like the one I grew up in to have the chance to live the American dream. So when I hear folks like Ms. Yellen say that job loss

from a minimum-wage mandate is "very minimal, if anything," it really leaves me at a loss. Watching 3.7 million Americans lose their jobs will not be minimal.

Adding insult to injury, we have heard great praise for the implementation of a carbon tax. Let's remember, this was part of the Green New Deal, which would be a disaster if passed. According to estimates from the Heritage Foundation, a carbon emissions tax would cost the country 1.4 million jobs while decreasing our GDP by \$3.9 trillion and reducing income for a family of four by \$40,000, with disproportionate costs falling on low-income families. Again, how can this be seen as the logical step when so many in our Nation are simply trying to recover and rebuild from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic?

If the administration has its way, Americans should prepare for higher taxes, less income, less opportunity, and more government mandates.

Ms. Yellen seems to think the solution to America's economic woes is more government, more taxes, more regulation, not more individual opportunity. That is wrong and will only send us further into debt and our families further into despair.

Based on what I have heard, I am concerned and, frankly, disturbed by what is being offered as the future of America's economic policy. When I ran for the Senate, I did so to fix Washington's broken way of doing things. We have to address Washington's unconscionable need to waste tax dollars on things that don't actually help or even hurt American families, especially working families and those on fixed incomes. I will never give up this fight.

In 2018, Ms. Yellen was quoted speaking about the unsustainable U.S. debt and said: "If I had a magic wand, I would raise taxes." We know that is not the real answer to solving our debt issue. It is simply the lazy, liberal approach.

It is time to get value out of every dollar we spend and make hard choices that actually help families and ensure a strong economic future for our Nation.

I cannot support the nomination of a candidate who proudly promotes Joe Biden's policies to mortgage our kids' and grandkids' futures with irresponsible and shortsighted tax spending.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FILIBUSTER

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, there is a lot going on in the Senate, a lot of activity behind the scenes right now. Leadership of both parties is negotiating a 50-50 power-sharing agreement, which is very important for the Senate and very important for our Nation.

One issue that is being discussed is the status of what is going to happen, possibly—hopefully, nothing is going to happen—with a really important element of the U.S. Senate: the legislative filibuster—something that has been a hallmark of this body almost since the founding of the Republic. This shouldn't be a hard issue.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter, led by Senator COLLINS and Senator COONS, dated April 7, 2017, to the then-majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER.

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

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, April 7, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Democratic Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER SCHUMER: We are writing to urge you to support our efforts to preserve existing rules, practices, and traditions as they pertain to the right of Members to engage in extended debate on legislation before the United States Senate. Senators have expressed a variety of opinions about the appropriateness of limiting debate when we are considering judicial and executive branch nominations. Regardless of our past disagreements on that issue, we are united in our determination to preserve the ability of Members to engage in extended debate when bills are on the Senate floor.

We are mindful of the unique role the Senate plays in the legislative process, and we are steadfastly committed to ensuring that this great American institution continues to serve as the world's greatest deliberative body. Therefore, we are asking you to join us in opposing any effort to curtail the existing rights and prerogatives of Senators to engage in full, robust, and extended debate as we consider legislation before this body in the future.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Collins, Orrin Hatch, Claire McCaskill, Lisa Murkowski, Christopher A. Coons, Joe Manchin, III, John McCain, Patrick J. Leahy, Roger F. Wicker, Luther Strange, Angus S. King, Jr., Michael F. Bennet, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Martin Heinrich, John Boozman, Lindsey Graham, Richard Burr, Mark R. Warner, Jerry Moran.

Roy Blunt, Marco Rubio, Jeanne Shaheen, Thom Tillis, Sherrod Brown, Shelley Moore Capito, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Brian Schatz, Michael B. Enzi, Dean Heller, Cory A. Booker, Mazie Hirono, Dianne Feinstein, John Thune, Bill Cassidy, Heidi Heitkamp, Jeff Flake, Chuck Grassley, Maria Cantwell, Rob Portman.

Lamar Alexander, John Kennedy, Jon Tester, Thomas R. Carper, Pat Roberts, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tammy Duckworth, Jack Reed, Thad Cochran, Joe Donnelly, Ben

Sasse, Todd Young, Kamala D. Harris, Bill Nelson, Johnny Isakson, Edward J. Markey, Mike Lee, Debbie Stabenow, Sheldon Whitehouse, Robert Menendez, Tim Kaine.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Over 60 Senators in the U.S. Senate—the majority of Republicans and the majority of Democrats—sent this letter to who was then leadership of the Senate, writing, in essence: Don't change the legislative filibuster.

A bunch of Democrats and a bunch of Republicans—I was going to read the names, but they know who they are—the majority on both sides in this body, from both parties, in 2017 said: Don't change it. This shouldn't be something the U.S. Senate changes.

Part of the reason this was going on was that, at the time, then-President Trump was pressing Senators, particularly Majority Leader McConnell, to change the filibuster. The filibuster requires 60 votes to move legislation in the Senate. It requires compromise. It requires bipartisanship. It is what makes us different from the House. At the time, then-Republican President Trump was saying: Change it. I want legislation to move more quickly.

The Republicans and then-Majority Leader McConnell said that it was not a good idea. As a matter of fact, most of us said that it was not a good idea, so we didn't do anything. We didn't change it because we didn't want to change the nature of the U.S. Senate.

This is one of the issues being discussed right now, but it shouldn't be a difficult issue because, as I said, the vast majority of Senators in this body, a couple of years ago, said: Don't do it. We don't want the Senate to just become a smaller version of the House, because that is what would happen if you were to get rid of the legislative filibuster.

I do want to extend my congratulations to the new majority leader as of yesterday, Senator Schumer, but to the new majority leader: This should not be a difficult issue. This should not be something that we are having a problem with in terms of the negotiations between the Democrats and the Republicans that delays the power-sharing agreement. This should be a piece of cake. Just a couple of years ago, the vast majority of Democrats and Republicans said: Don't change the legislative filibuster. We want to make sure that remains the case.

I think, for the new majority leader, this would be an act of statesmanship, an act of compromise, and would certainly make the statement that he is going to keep the Senate the same as it has been for decades, for centuries. Changing the legislative filibuster would change the entire structure, history, and precedent of this very important body in our country, so it shouldn't be hard. The vast majority of the Democrats and Republicans has already agreed to this.

To our new majority leader: Do what you know is right—an act of statesmanship and compromise. We have all

been talking about it. It should not be a difficult decision, particularly given that so many Senators on both sides of the aisle feel strongly enough to have written Senator Schumer and Senator McConnell just a couple of years ago on this.

To all of my colleagues who signed that letter—you know who you are—make sure you are pressing the new majority leader to stick to what you pressed him on just a couple of years ago. It is important.

NOMINATION OF LLOYD JAMES AUSTIN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I also want to talk about another important issue, and that is President Biden's nomination for the very important job of Secretary of Defense, Mr. Lloyd Austin. We are going to be voting on his nomination here on the Senate floor in a couple of hours.

I had the honor of introducing Mr. Austin just 2 days ago at his confirmation hearing, and I thought the confirmation hearing went well. So I want to talk a little bit about Mr. Austin before we take what will essentially be two important votes for his confirmation.

Now, the last time I was actually on the floor of the U.S. Senate, our Capitol was under siege, and from a foreign policy and national security perspective, America's authoritarian rivals have been gloating over what happened on that day. They have been reveling in our disunity. Democracy brings chaos, they tell their people. It is better to have a strong hand that keeps order. Well, as you know, we do live in an imperfect democracy, no doubt, and the American I was honored to introduce at the Armed Services hearing the other day, Mr. Lloyd Austin, understands our imperfections more than many.

Yet, on closer inspection, the world's dictators have little to celebrate. Congress went back to work on January 6, right here on the Senate floor, to count electoral votes, and yesterday there was a peaceful transfer of power at the top of our government, as there has been since our Republic's founding.

At some point—maybe sooner than we think—Chinese and Russian citizens are going to ask: Hey, why can't we do that? Why don't we have strong, resilient institutions that ensure the regular elections of new leaders and that invest in self-government and the people?

When these citizens ask these questions of authoritarians like Putin or Xi Jinping, they are not going to be gloating anymore because they won't have answers to these questions.

So what does this all have to do with Mr. Lloyd Austin? A lot. Mr. Austin has been nominated to lead one of America's most trusted institutions—the Department of Defense. Many of us have worked hard over the last few years to rebuild our military's strength

and readiness, but I think we can all agree that there has been too much turmoil at the top at the Pentagon. As its civilian leader, I am confident that Mr. Austin will bring steadiness, leadership, and respect to this indispensable American institution.

I got to know Mr. Austin in 2005 and 2006 while serving together in an Army-heavy combatant command as we conducted combat operations throughout the Middle East. We had what might be referred to today as an unequal power relationship. He was a two-star general. I was a major. He had spent years on Active Duty. I was a reservist. He was a soldier. I was a marine. I was just one of hundreds of field-grade infantry officers who had been recalled to Active Duty and deployed in the region during a challenging time for our Nation. Yet, when I asked for his time, Mr. Austin gave it. When I had a problem, he listened. When I asked for help on an important mission, he provided it.

A critical hallmark of exceptional leadership, especially for organizations like the Pentagon, is not just how one treats superiors but how one treats subordinates, those down the chain of command. What I saw was respect and integrity and someone who knew how to get things done in a difficult environment.

It is clear to me the core principles of Mr. Austin's life have been duty, honor, country. West Point has done its job. Now, that may sound quaint to some, but I think having individuals of impeccable character at the top of our government is more important than ever. Other than integrity, there is no singular requirement for the difficult job of Secretary of Defense, and as the former Director of the Joint Staff and as the former CENTCOM Commander, Mr. Austin certainly has insight on critical issues, such as interagency budget battles, working with allies, and congressional oversight.

Mr. Austin is also fully committed to the constitutional principle of civilian control of our military—something that those who serve in uniform typically understand and revere more than those who don't. In that regard, you may recall that, about 10 days ago, we had a hearing in the Committee on Armed Services on this very important topic, but I actually thought some of the witnesses had rather simplistic views of this important issue.

They had brought up topics and discussions of so-called "military logic" by those who wear the uniform versus "political logic" for those who don't wear the uniform.

So let me play devil's advocate for those who participated and watched that hearing.

The very nature of the confirmation hearing that we had with Mr. Austin just 2 days ago and, indeed, the very nature of the transfer of power that we saw yesterday here at the Capitol are evidence, in my view, that the civilian control of the military is not at risk in

America. I actually believe the related but opposite problem should be of more concern today, at this moment, and that problem is no military experience in the top ranks of our government. With the exception of Mr. Austin, no nominee on the incoming Biden administration's national security team has ever served in uniform. With regard to the entire Biden Cabinet, only one other nominee has any military experience at all. This is not wise.

If confirmed, I am sure I won't agree with all of Mr. Austin's decisions, but when the inevitable budget battles occur, it will be critical for our Nation's security and, very importantly, the military members and their families who serve to have a Secretary of Defense who understands firsthand the very real morale and readiness problems that result from drastic cuts to our military—something, unfortunately, I think many of my colleagues here in the Senate will be pushing for and even members of the Biden administration will be pushing for.

So let me conclude with this. Right now, a number of us are interviewing Cabinet members for confirmation for the incoming Biden administration. I anticipate opposing some, supporting others. Certainly, I anticipate opposing some if I believe they will hurt the working families of my State. But with regard to Mr. Austin, I am fully supporting his nomination.

We are living through difficult times—a pandemic, racial tensions, riots, turmoil at the top of the Pentagon, and rising dangers from China, Russia, and Iran. Mr. Austin's confirmation won't solve all of these problems, but it will help.

He represents the best of America—a man of integrity, humility, and character, with a wealth of relevant experience. Our allies will take comfort in his confirmation, and our adversaries will take pause. And as America's first African-American Secretary of Defense, he will be an inspiration to millions both in and out of uniform.

For all of these reasons, I strongly urge my colleagues to support Mr. Austin's confirmation and the waiver in Federal law that it requires.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

HONORING THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I can say with certainty that General Austin has no better friend or ally in this Chamber than Senator DAN SUL-LIVAN, who has seen him as a person and seen him as a commander.

Those votes will occur later today.

Madam President, I rise today on the floor to talk about what happened yesterday at the Capitol and what happened 2 weeks ago at the Capitol.

Yesterday, we had the 59th Presidential inauguration right here. The citadel of democracy was once again

the place where a President and Vice President were sworn in for 4 years.

Starting in 1789, every 4 years, America and the world have witnessed this remarkable event that provides for the peaceful transfer of Executive power and the continuity of government—something we sometimes take for granted but is rare, even today. It has happened through wars. It has happened through economic recessions. We have had our inaugurations today and during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

What is more, the inauguration took place 2 weeks to the day on the very west steps of the United States Capitol where a violent mob stormed this building, desecrating these halls, and tried to stop our constitutionally mandated deliberations in this body.

It was the ninth inauguration ceremony I have attended. I was proud to be there as President Biden and Vice President HARRIS were sworn in.

I am here on the floor today to thank the Capitol Police and other law enforcement agencies, including the Secret Service and its Director, Jim Murray, who took the lead on this national special security event to ensure that things went smoothly and that we, indeed, had a peaceful transfer of power.

I also want to give special thanks to the men and women of the National Guard, who worked to ensure this ceremony was safe and secure. Over the past 2 weeks, 25,000 National Guard troops from across the country, including all 50 States and 3 territories, answered the call, leaving their families and friends and, for most, leaving their regular jobs to help defend this sacred celebration of democracy that occurred at this place yesterday.

This number of 25,000 troops includes nearly 1,000 guardsmen from my home State of Ohio. I had the opportunity to meet with a couple hundred of these citizen soldiers from Ohio yesterday. I was able to tell them how much we appreciate their commitment to the mission and what they have done, truly, to protect democracy and to help our Capitol Police during a stressful time. Because of their efforts, the ceremony was safe for everyone in attendance, and we were able to proceed with this transfer of power.

When I thanked them, they all told me the same thing—they were just doing their duty. They were proud to be here. They were protecting their country and their fellow citizens.

I have seen this firsthand over the years when I have visited Ohio National Guard installations around our State, including the Mansfield Air Base, the Toledo Air Base, the Springfield Air Base, Rickenbacker Air National Guard.

During this pandemic, when more Americans than ever are facing severe food insecurity, I have had the chance to hand out food with members of the Ohio Army National Guard who have been working around the clock at food banks I have been at, like Greater

Cleveland Food Bank or Central Ohio Food Bank. They are working hard alongside volunteers to respond to a true crisis.

But that is not all. The Ohio National Guard has played an essential role in providing critical assistance to our prisons and our jails when guards were out with the COVID virus. They have helped with testing. They have helped to get the COVID-19 vaccines distributed across our State, and they are continuing to do that. We can't thank them enough for what they have done during this time of crisis.

As I have visited with the Guard this week, both with regard to the Ohio members and Guard from all over the country, including some conversations I had this morning, I have told them all what I have heard from the Capitol Police this week. I have heard that they really appreciated the backup at a time when shifts have been long, sleep has been rare, and the effects of the attack on the Capitol are still acutely felt.

It has been a tough 2 weeks on our Capitol police officers. It has been a tough 2 weeks since the attack on the Capitol.

I want to take this opportunity to also express the gratitude of all of us in this Chamber and all Americans to the Capitol Police for bravely holding the line against an illegal, violent mob that threatened this building, our proceedings, and our colleagues.

In effect, the men and women of the Capitol Police Force put their lives on the line to defend democracy. It is that simple.

As I said on this floor that terrible night 2 weeks ago, it was because of their courage that we were safe and because of their courage that we were able to demonstrate to the American people and the world that we were going to accomplish our constitutional duty of certifying the election. They allowed us to do that.

As a Congress, we have begun a complete, impartial, and nonpartisan investigation into what went wrong that day. I am working across the Senate with the committees of jurisdiction—the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, where I will be the ranking Republican, the Rules Committee, the Appropriations Committee, and the Intelligence Committee to ensure that our Capitol Police are never put in that kind of position again. We are performing oversight to ensure they have what they need to be able to protect the Capitol going forward.

Without prejudging our investigation, we must consider what reforms need to be made and take a hard look at the physical security of our Capitol Complex. While these buildings must remain accessible to the people, we need to look at incorporating the best practices in physical security, to include shatterproof windows and doors that can't be easily breached. This will

cost money, but it is absolutely necessary, based on what happened on the 6th of January.

I look forward to helping lead this bipartisan effort, and I urge my fellow Members of Congress to join in.

Again, I don't want to prejudge our review, but I know among the findings we will make is a finding that the officers on the line were heroic, and those officers deserve our gratitude.

We must never forget those who lost their lives that night, including a law enforcement officer and member of the Capitol Police, Officer Brian Sicknick, who, since 2008, had patrolled these halls and had been a familiar face to many of us. He was tragically killed defending this Capitol. He gave his life in heroic defense of us and our democracy.

Only a couple of days after the attack, I learned the tragic news that we lost another officer, a friend, Officer Howard Liebengood. Howie was on duty the day the Capitol was attacked and responded to the attack just as his many brave comrades did. He experienced some difficult experiences that night. I was devastated to learn of his death the next day.

Howie was someone I used to see almost every day. He was usually stationed in the Russell Building, where my office is located. He was an utmost professional—someone who took great pride in his work and had an ironclad commitment to keeping people safe. His dad was Sergeant at Arms here at one time.

He brightened my day every time I saw him. The last time was a few weeks ago, when he was standing guard outside the doors to the Russell Building, alone in the cold, alert, vigilant, and good-humored.

Today I reread a letter that I wrote to the Chief of the Capitol Police several years ago, commending the exceptional work of Howie and his partner, Chris Gallo, for their "professionalism, coupled with their kind demeanor."

Howie represented what is great and good about not just our police force but our country.

Rest in peace, Officer Brian Sicknick and Officer Howard Liebengood.

Through the tragedy of that day 2 weeks ago came other stories of bravery and valor too. We have heard about the heroic actions of Officer Eugene Goodman, an Army veteran whose quick thinking under intense pressure protected us here in this Senate Chamber by leading the mob away from the Chamber while many of us were still inside.

He unselfishly put himself in danger and, despite the risk, handled himself with the professionalism that defines the Capitol Police, and I was pleased to see his promotion.

Officer Goodman's heroic efforts are, to me, representative of the actions of all the brave officers of the Capitol Police, who, on that day of violence and lawlessness, held the line against the mob.

I am proud of another member of the Capitol Police. This is the supervisor. Inspector Tommy Lloyd is commander of the Capitol division—as compared to the House and the Senate, commander of the division to protect the Capitol itself.

This is a powerful photograph that I saw in *TIME* magazine. It is a photograph of him facing the mob, shoulder to shoulder with his line officers.

The Capitol was breached, but because of the valor of these men and women, we were able to complete our job and are able to be here today, discussing the workings of our democracy, confirming members of the new administration, doing our job.

The actions of law enforcement in the Capitol should serve as a reminder to all of us of the risks our police officers take every single day to keep us safe—not just here in the Capitol but around the country. On Monday, for example, the city of Toledo, OH, lost one of its own when Officer Brandon Stalker of the Toledo Police Department was killed in a standoff with a gunman. Officer Stalker, only 24 years old, was the father of two young children and engaged to be married. He had a promising life ahead of him. My thoughts are with the friends and families of Officer Stalker and the friends and families of Officers Sicknick and Liebengood during this difficult time.

Even with all the threats and challenges they face, our officers of the law here and around the country carry on in their duties to protect and to serve. They are truly the best of America. Officer Stalker's fellow officers will continue to patrol the streets of Toledo to keep its citizens safe. Yesterday, despite the hardships they have faced, the Capitol Police, once again, lined the Halls of Congress, keeping watch over the inauguration of the next President and Vice President of the United States.

Together, the National Guard, the Capitol Police, the Secret Service, and other law enforcement protected a Presidential inauguration that was at once like none other in recent memory, and yet also a continuation of a long and great tradition—an unbroken chain of peacefully transferring power that our Nation has cherished since 1789. They did their duty, as they do every day, in defense of the values we Americans hold dearest—democracy, liberty, rule of law—and we all owe them a debt of gratitude.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 335

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I will be, in a moment, asking for unanimous consent that we do the waiver on the Secretary of Defense, and we will vote on that relatively shortly, the Members should be aware.

So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate re-

ceives H.R. 335 from the House, that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that there be 30 minutes for debate; that the bill be considered read a third time; and that the Senate vote on the passage of the bill, with 60 affirmative votes required for passage; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, just to clarify for the Members, we expect this vote to occur sometime within the next hour.

I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR AN EXCEPTION TO A LIMITATION AGAINST APPOINTMENT OF PERSONS AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WITHIN SEVEN YEARS OF RELIEF FROM ACTIVE DUTY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of H.R. 335, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 335) to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be up to 30 minutes of debate on the bill.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today in opposition of the legislative waiver for the nominee to become the next Secretary of Defense.

Since the inception of our Republic, civilian control of our military by democratically-elected civilians has been fundamental to American Government. This principle was firmly established as General George Washington famously resigned his commission to the Continental Congress in 1783, when he might have easily positioned himself as the leader of the fledgling American Government instead. With this bedrock principle in mind, Congress in 1947 established a limitation on former military generals serving as Secretary of Defense without a sufficient number of years in civilian life. Today, Active-duty military members must have been retired for at least 7 years before becoming eligible to serve as Defense Secretary.

Four years ago, despite great concern for what I saw as an erosion of the principle of civilian control of our military, I voted in support of granting a "one-time exception" to the statutory requirement for the confirmation of Gen. James Mattis. Until Congress

granted a waiver of this requirement in 2017 for General Mattis, Congress had approved a waiver only once before, in 1950 for General George Marshall. With the nomination of Gen. Lloyd Austin, what I had thought would be a once-in-a-generation waiver in 2017 now appears to be the start of an unwelcome trend.

To be clear, I do not believe that General Austin himself poses a specific risk to the civilian control of our military. By all accounts, he is a dedicated public servant and patriot with more than 40 years of successful military service. However, I do not believe that President Biden has offered a strong enough justification for granting another legislative waiver in so short a time.

Should a waiver for his service be approved over my objections, which appears likely to occur, I intend to support General Austin's nomination based on his merits and qualifications. Over the course of his long and distinguished career, including as commander of U.S. Central Command during one of the region's most challenging periods for the United States, he has served with professionalism and diligence and has earned the trust of President Biden.

General Austin has committed to uphold the principle of civilian control of the military and pledged to ensure civilian leadership and oversight over the Pentagon's strategic and operational planning. I commend General Austin for once again answering the call to serve, and I look forward to working with him to rebalance our civil-military relations toward civilian control.

In November 2018, the congressionally appointed National Defense Strategy Commission concluded that, "There is an imbalance in civil-military relations on critical issues of strategy development and implementation. Civilian voices appear relatively muted on issues at the center of U.S. defense and national security policy." Losing this civilian perspective can have profound, long-term strategic impacts on the Pentagon and our national security policy.

There are many reasons for this trend toward unbalanced civil-military relations in recent years, including the failure of the prior administration to adequately fill Senate-confirmed positions at the Pentagon, instead relying on acting officials with limited ability to assert themselves within the department.

We have also seen a troubling increase in the politicization of our military. For example, hundreds of retired generals and admirals signed public letters of support for Presidential candidates in 2020, with both campaigns competing for the most military endorsements. That was coupled with a growing trend toward political expression among the ranks on social media and elsewhere; in at least one instance, servicemembers in uniform were featured at one of the national Presidential nominating conventions. It is

imperative that military officers do not come to view their commands as auditions for future political appointments or opportunities to curry favor with civilian political leaders.

As Dr. Lindsay Cohn, a professor at the U.S. Naval War College, stated during the recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing examining civilian control of the Armed Forces, civilian control of our military is not necessarily an on-off switch. It is a web of institutions, norms, practices, and understandings which can be weakened or strengthened. Recently, we have begun to see the principle of civilian control of the military weakened and degraded.

In my view, Congress must not simply acquiesce to that growing trend. I do not believe it would be wise to allow the exception to swallow the rule when it comes to such a foundational principle of our Republic as civilian control of the military.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I rise today to once again oppose a waiver to bypass U.S. law and allow a recently retired member of Armed Forces to serve as our Secretary of Defense. On the merits, I support the nomination of Lloyd Austin, and I believe that Mr. Austin is highly qualified for this role. However, the importance of civilian leadership at the Department of Defense is greater than any individual nominee.

The subordination of military authority to civil authority is a bedrock principle of our democracy. In 2017, when I voted against a waiver to allow James Mattis to serve as Secretary of Defense, I stressed that our Founders' emphasis on civilian leadership distinguished the young United States from the other nations of the time. I also noted that in enacting the exception for General Marshall in 1950, Congress expressly stated that: "the authority granted by this Act is not to be construed as approval by the Congress of continuing appointments of military men to the office of Secretary of Defense in the future. It is hereby expressed as the sense of the Congress that after General Marshall leaves the office of secretary of defense, no additional appointments of military men to that office shall be approved."

I still believe that the 7-year waiting period is a valuable practice—one of many—that preserves our Nation's long tradition of placing civilian authority above military authority. In 2017, I said "should Congress vote to waive this law at this moment in time, I will review the nomination [. . .] on its individual merits." And I intend to apply my words then to my actions now and will consider Mr. Austin's nomination on its merits when it comes to the floor for a vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I would ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will read the title of the bill for the third time.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill, having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. REED. 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.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—69

Bennet	Hagerty	Paul
Blunt	Hassan	Peters
Boozman	Heinrich	Portman
Braun	Hickenlooper	Reed
Brown	Hirono	Risch
Cantwell	Hoeven	Romney
Capito	Inhofe	Rounds
Cardin	Johnson	Sanders
Carper	Kaine	Schatz
Casey	Kelly	Schumer
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Coons	King	Shaheen
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sinema
Crapo	Leahy	Smith
Cruz	Lujan	Stabenow
Daines	Manchin	Sullivan
Durbin	McConnell	Thune
Ernst	Menendez	Tuberville
Feinstein	Murkowski	Warner
Fischer	Murphy	Warnock
Graham	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Grassley	Padilla	Wicker

NAYS—27

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Rubio
Barrasso	Hawley	Sasse
Blackburn	Lee	Scott (FL)
Blumenthal	Lummis	Tester
Booker	Markey	Toomey
Collins	Marshall	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Cotton	Murray	Wyden
Duckworth	Rosen	Young

NOT VOTING—4

Burr	Moran
Hyde-Smith	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the bill is passed.

Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The bill (H.R. 335) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business,

with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO DR. MICHAEL CARTER

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, for more than two decades, my friend Dr. Michael Carter has made Campbellsville University an oasis where students can answer their calling. Nestled in the heart of Taylor County, CU offers quality Christian higher education to thousands of future leaders. As the school's president, Michael accomplished one remarkable goal after another. He also set the university on a path toward long-term success. At the end of last year, Michael began a richly-earned retirement leaving behind a grateful university community. I would like to take a moment today to recognize my friend for his servant leadership and his lasting impact in Kentucky and beyond.

According to CU's board chair, Michael's leadership "forever transformed" the century-old school. I couldn't agree more. When Michael came to campus in 1999, the university was home to around 1,600 students and 74 full-time faculty. His tenure has seen the CU family grow to include more than 13,500 students and a record-setting freshman class despite the coronavirus pandemic. CU recently graduated its first class of Ph.D. students, marking a major milestone for the school's academic excellence. He also nearly tripled the faculty ranks with leading scholars and dedicated educators.

To accommodate the new students and faculty, Michael undertook an ambitious plan to grow CU's physical footprint. That plan—like everything at CU—was centered on faith. Michael embarked on the construction of a landmark chapel anchoring the entire community in its mission. Then, under the steeple of the new Ransdell Chapel, the growth has continued to surpass expectations.

CU's expansion wasn't limited to the city of Campbellsville, either. Michael oversaw the opening of eight additional centers of learning in Kentucky and around the country. The university was even approved for a new international arm in Ontario. Today, CU properties account for 1.1 million square feet, giving it the ability to serve current students with plenty of space to expand its reach.

In each of my visits to the school, I have been impressed by the remarkable development under Michael's leadership. From its 850 student athletes to a \$137 million economic impact in Taylor County, Michael has helped CU reach previously unbelievable heights. With the rest of his all-star leadership team, including my friend Dr. John Chowning, Michael drove the school's growth while keeping focus on an unmatched student experience.

When CU bid farewell to its president, the community also said goodbye

to its consequential first lady. Debbie Carter has a long list of accomplishments in her own right. She took a leadership role in securing a national accreditation for CU's Carver School of Social Work. She was also a driving force to create pathways for students with financial needs to attend CU. Michael and Debbie made an incredible team that changed this university and our Commonwealth for years to come.

Whatever the future holds in store for Michael and Debbie, I would like to wish them the very best. They leave office with the sincere gratitude of a university community made better by two decades of devotion. I encourage my Senate colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Michael Carter for his leadership at Campbellsville University.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL, RET. ARTHUR T. DEAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I would like to recognize the retirement of MG Arthur Dean as CEO and executive chairman of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, known as CADCA. MG Arthur T. Dean, U.S. Army, Retired, came from humble beginnings in North Carolina to rise to the highest, most distinguished levels of military service, where he retired after 31 years at the grade of major general. He possesses numerous military awards, with the highest being two awards of the U.S. Army Distinguished Service Medal.

I have had the honor to work with CADCA for many years and have long supported their efforts to prevent drug abuse. For instance, I supported and led efforts to create the Drug Free Communities Program in 1997.

Major General Dean began his career as CEO and board chair at CADCA in 1998, so we have had the pleasure of working on anti-drug efforts for over 20 years. I applaud him in his well-deserved retirement.

Over the past 23 years of service, I have had the pleasure to witness General Dean use his superior leadership, diplomatic skills, and passion to build CADCA into a world-class organization. Under his leadership, the Drug Free Communities Program has grown, and now over 2,000 communities benefit from these grants.

General Dean is a leader with vision, compassion, and a steely determination to ensure that substance use prevention remains a national priority so the next generation of Americans can grow up safe, healthy and drug free.

General Dean has been an outstanding leader of CADCA. His legacy will be one of progress and dedication towards reducing rates of youth substance use and misuse.

I want to thank General Dean for his dedicated and exceptional service to our Nation, both as a military and civilian leader, and wish him well in his much-deserved retirement.

CONFIRMATION OF AVRIL DANICA HAINES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I today rise in support of the nomination of Ms. Avril Haines as the Director of National Intelligence.

Last night, the Senate overwhelming voted to confirm Ms. Avril Haines as the Director of National Intelligence with a vote of 84-10.

I voted in support of Director Haines as I believe her to be a highly-qualified professional with the trust and mandate by President Biden to be a strong leader and reinstall stability and objectivity to the intelligence community.

She has pledged to defend and uphold our democracy, our freedoms and our values by ensuring there is simply no place for politics ever when it comes to intelligence.

It is clear from her background that Ms. Haines has the experience necessary to be an effective DNI.

She has served as both the Deputy Director of CIA and as Deputy National Security Advisor to President Obama, along with other positions in the White House and Congress.

Her nearly 20 years of experience in national security, intelligence, and foreign policy matters gives her valuable insight into the many challenges facing the intelligence community and makes her a great choice for Director of National Intelligence.

Based on my conversations with Director Haines and her testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee, I am fully confident she has what it takes to put the IC on the right path.

During her confirmation hearing on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, Director Haines outlined her top three priorities: No. 1, strengthening the institution including increasing trust and credibility with analytic objectivity; No. 2, better aligning IC efforts and resources to the major threats we are facing such as China and transnational threats; and No. 3, building better partnerships Congress, academia, the private sector, U.S. State and local officials, and with other countries.

I strongly agree on these significant priorities and look forward to periodically receiving updates from her on these.

Furthermore, I thank her for her clearly stated position that waterboarding is, in fact, torture and that the CIA's former interrogation program's enhanced interrogation techniques included torture.

In short, she is the ideal candidate to head the intelligence community at a time when we face numerous crisis threatening our national security.

She inherits an intelligence community beset by challenges, and I look forward to working with her to protect the American people.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, the Director of National Intelligence must demonstrate commitment to restraining the vast power of our intelligence agencies. They should not view themselves as an enabler or facilitator of

agencies that already operate without public scrutiny. We do not need another Washington insider in this position, someone who will go along to get along, helping to further the expansion of secret government powers.

What we need is someone who is a skeptic of these powers. After years of revelations of government spying on Americans and the exposure of the unconstitutional applications of these powers, I had hoped that the President would submit a nominee that understands the importance of regaining the public's trust, to pledge transparency and accountability.

The President's nominee, Avril Haines, does not meet that profile. She played a key role in formulating the government's legal authority to conduct summary executions by drone and was reportedly summoned in the middle of the night to approve lethal drone strikes. As Deputy Director of the CIA, she declined to punish any of the CIA employees who spied on the Senate as it was investigating the CIA's torture programs. Her record is that of an insider, someone who will defend the broken status quo. I will not support more of the same unconstitutional policies, and I oppose her confirmation.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR ELECTION INTEGRITY

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, along with my colleague Senator MIKE CRAPO, I rise today to ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the mission statement for the Citizens Committee for Election Integrity and their recommended minimum standards for fair and honest elections. Idahoans concerned about election integrity formed the Citizens Committee for Election Integrity to demonstrate the meaning of the Constitution by helping ensure the voices of "We the people" are heard.

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

The Citizens Committee for Election Integrity's mission statement reads as follows:

All political power rests with the people.

Our Constitutionally guaranteed republican form of government relies on free, fair, and honest elections to select our representatives and leaders.

To ensure equal protection and equal representation of the people, laws governing our elections must meet certain minimum standards.

It is the purpose of this Citizens Committee to concisely articulate the minimum standards for free, fair, and honest elections. These standards shall then be used by our local, state and federal legislators as a metric for reviewing and revising election law to ensure free, fair, and honest elections where the outcome is accepted by all citizens of good will.

On January 2, 2021, the committee met at the Idaho State Capitol to recommend the following minimum standards for fair and honest elections:

Our Constitutionally guaranteed republican form of government relies on free, fair,

and honest elections to select our representatives and leaders.

The standards listed here shall be used by our local, state and federal legislators as a metric for reviewing and revising election law to ensure free, fair, and honest elections where the outcome is accepted by all citizens of good will.

1. All voting processes, other than those needed to preserve the privacy of a citizen's vote, must be open and available for direct observation, with no minimum distance requirements, and audit by agents of the candidates or parties.

2. All election materials must have a secure chain of custody at all times. Election officials must be accompanied by observers when accessing any election materials. Records of the chain of custody shall be complete and available for audit.

3. All votes, regardless of voting method, shall be held to equal standards.

4. Voters shall only be qualified electors that are able to verifiably provide their government issued photo identity before being issued a ballot. Voters who provide false information, including information of voter qualification, should face severe penalties.

5. As a condition of being issued a ballot, the voter's identity and signature must be recorded in a permanent record (Poll Book).

6. Original Ballots must have a physical form that allows voting choices to be examined and properly interpreted by the naked eye.

7. Ballots must have features designed to prevent counterfeiting.

8. An auditable system for tracking the status of all ballots must be implemented and maintained in the State of origin. The total number of printed ballots must equal the sum of the number of cast ballots, spoiled ballots, and unvoted ballots.

9. Ballot tabulation must be conducted by two independent and unrelated systems. The difference in totals between the two systems must be less than one half the margin of victory or 0.1% of the vote total, whichever is less. Tabulating machines must only tabulate and not modify ballots in any way, or be connected to the internet.

10. Before the results of an election can be certified, the ballot counts must be reconciled with the voter records. The margin of uncertainty must be less than one half the margin of victory or 0.1% of the vote total, whichever is less.

11. Lists of qualified electors must be purged of unqualified persons 180 days before an election. Voter Rolls should be vetted and compared with available government records to identify duplicate or ineligible registrations.

12. Laws and regulations governing an election may not be changed for 180 days prior to that election.

13. All election records should be retained and preserved for not less than 22 months.

14. Voter identification for provisional ballots must be verified, with information provided by the voter, prior to that ballot being counted.

REMEMBERING HENRY H.R. "HANK" COE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, the 2021 General Session of the Wyoming Legislature got underway. Noticeably absent from the first day of the session was State Senator Henry H.R. "Hank" Coe. Hank had been present in Cheyenne for the first day of the annual legislative session for 32 consecutive years.

In March of 2020, on the last day of the 2020 Wyoming legislative session,

Hank announced his plan to retire. Senator Coe represented the people of Park County from 1988 to 2020.

Hank was a respected and effective legislator. He earned a reputation for being a kind, thoughtful, persuasive legislator of great integrity.

Hank always had a remarkable grasp of the issues facing the state and his home community. He could see short and long-term needs and offer solutions to address those needs.

During his time in the legislature, Senator Coe served on numerous committees, was elected as majority floor leader, and, in 2001, served as president of the senate.

For 17 years, Hank proudly served as the chair of the senate education committee. He was a strong proponent of local control and high-quality education.

Hank showed students that through hard work and dedication to their studies, there was a world of opportunities within their reach. He understood the importance of investing in our young people, recognizing their achievements, and providing them with the tools needed to succeed.

When I served in the Wyoming State Senate, I had the great honor of working with Hank Coe on one of our proudest legislative initiatives, the creation of the Hathaway scholarship program.

We were able to create a scholarship fund with a \$400 million permanent endowment. Income from the fund continues to fund scholarships for Wyoming high school graduates today. The Hathaway scholarship program allows every Wyoming student, regardless of economic background, to qualify for a merit-based scholarship to attend the University of Wyoming or any of our State's seven community colleges.

Senator Coe's leadership was a driving force behind passage of this legislation. Thousands of Wyoming students without the resources to obtain a college education have benefited from this scholarship.

Hank's contribution to public service extended far beyond Wyoming's capitol. He was a mentor to many in his hometown of Cody. He participated fully on local boards and committees. The Cody Chamber of Commerce, Cody Medical Foundation, Cody Yellowstone Air Service, Wyoming Air Service, Buffalo Bill Museum of the West, and the Park County Commissioners all benefited from Hank's committed service.

When Hank retired, he released the following statement, which was printed in the Cody Enterprise on March 13, 2020:

"The Wyoming Legislature continues to be one of the most effective and civil deliberate bodies in the nation. It is my sincere hope that this tradition will continue and Wyoming can be an example to the rest of the nation," said Coe. "Serving in the Senate has been a true honor and a privilege. I'm eternally grateful to the people of Park County who put their faith in me to represent them for so many years. To my community, friends, family, fellow lawmakers and the exceptional legislative staff, I say thank you."

Hank had a calling to serve. He took that calling and ran with it. His life's work has made a difference in the lives of the people in Park County and in every corner of our great State. History will look kindly upon the contributions and achievements of Hank Coe.

Hank passed away today, January 21, 2021. He leaves behind a remarkable legacy, and he will be greatly missed by a grateful State. To Hank's entire family, especially his children and grandchildren: son H.R. and grandson Henry, daughter Carey Coe Johnson and husband Jeff and grandchildren Madeline, Jagger, and Jrakke, and daughter Bethany Coe Boydston and grandchildren, Jackson, Tyler and Lily—our prayers and well wishes are with you.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the remarkable life of Hank Coe. His dedication to service will have a profound impact on our state for generations. Thank you Hank.

Ms. LUMMIS. Madam President, today I am pleased to recognize Senator Henry "Hank" Coe, who has retired from the Wyoming State Senate after 31 years of dedicated service and over 40 years of public service to Wyoming.

A Cody, WY native, Senator Coe has shown his dedication and love for the State of Wyoming and willingness to serve its citizens. Hank was first elected to the Wyoming Senate in 1989 and served with distinction for over three decades. During his tenure in the Wyoming Senate, Senator Coe served as vice president of the senate from 1997 to 1998; senate majority floor leader from 1999 to 2000; and as president of the senate from 2001 to 2002.

Senator Coe was chairman of the Travel, Recreation and Wildlife Committee from 1992 to 1998, where he worked to grow the tourism industry into one of Wyoming's largest industries. He also served on the Education Committee from 2003 to 2019, working to ensure that Wyoming's children had the tools they need to succeed. These are just a few of the many roles to which Senator Coe brought his passion and expertise, and represent a cornerstone of Wyoming public policy. Prior to joining the Wyoming Senate, Senator Coe served 8 years as a Park County commissioner, and in honor of his service, the commissioners have declared April 29 "Hank Coe Day" in Park County, WY.

Senator Coe's service to our great State goes beyond his work as an elected official. He was a respected member of his community. He was a member of the Volunteer Fire Department, a trustee for the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, a member of the Wyoming Business Alliance, an advisor for the Regional Airport board, and much more.

I had the honor of serving with Senator Coe during my time in the Wyoming Legislature. Our desks were right across the aisle from one another on

the Senate floor, and we enjoyed playing subtle pranks on each other. I will also cherish many evenings at the home of his extraordinary mother, Peg Coe, retiring to the den of her sprawling home for drinks and unforgettable conversation. The Coes are a one of a kind but quintessential Wyoming family of the highest order.

Senator Coe passed away today, but I have no doubt he will be an example for generations to come of a dedicated public servant, a model of humility, and a true beacon for the values Wyoming holds dear.

Thank you, Senator Coe for your years of tireless service to Wyoming and for your friendship. I send your family my condolences. God bless.

TRIBUTE TO VICE ADMIRAL FREDERICK J. "FRITZ" ROEGGE

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, today I honor a superb leader and warrior. I have had the privilege of associating with VADM Fritz Roegge both personally and professionally over many years, and it has been my pleasure to do so. After 40 years of uniformed service, Vice Admiral Roegge will be retiring from the U.S. Navy. On this occasion, I believe it is fitting to recognize his distinguished service and dedication to our Navy.

Vice Admiral Roegge is an honors graduate of the University of Minnesota with a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering and was commissioned through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program. He went on to earn a master of science in engineering management from the Catholic University of America and a master of arts with highest distinction in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College. He was a fellow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Seminar XXI program and of the Harvard Kennedy School program for Senior Executives in National and International Security.

His sea tours include USS *Whale* (SSN 638), USS *Florida* (SSBN 728) (Blue), USS *Key West* (SSN 722), and most prominently, command of USS *Connecticut* (SSN 22). His major command was as commodore of Submarine Squadron 22, with additional duty as commanding officer, Naval Support Activity La Maddalena, Italy.

Ashore, he has served on the staffs of both the Atlantic and Pacific Submarine Force commanders, on the staff of the Director of Naval Nuclear Propulsion, on the Navy staff in the Assessments Division (N81) and the Military Personnel Plans and Policy Division (N13), in the Secretary of the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs at the U.S. House of Representatives, as the head of the Submarine and Nuclear Power Distribution Division (PERS 42) at the Navy Personnel Command, and as an assistant deputy director on the Joint Staff in both the Strategy and Policy (J5) and the Regional Operations (J33) Directorates.

Vice Admiral Roegge completed his first flag officer assignment as the deputy commander, Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike at U.S. Strategic Command. He then served concurrently as commander, Submarine Group 8; commander, Submarines, Allied Naval Forces South; deputy commander, U.S. 6th Fleet; and director of Operations and Intelligence (N3), U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa. As a rear admiral, he served on the Navy staff as director, Military Personnel Plans and Policy Division (N13) with a concurrent period as director, Total Force Manpower Division (N12) and then as commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Vice Admiral Roegge now culminates his career of service to the Navy and the Nation as the 16th president of the National Defense University (NDU). NDU is the university of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the premier Joint Professional Military Education institution in the Department of Defense. NDU's mission to develop joint warfighters and other national security leaders through rigorous academics, research, and engagement has never been more important to our Nation and its security.

I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to Vice Admiral Roegge for his outstanding leadership and unwavering support of the missions of the U.S. Navy. I want to recognize his supportive family, Mrs. Julie Roegge and their two sons, Alex and Will. I wish Vice Admiral Roegge and his family "fair winds and following seas."

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SESQUICENTENNIAL OF HOUSTON COUNTY

• Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I consider it an honor and a privilege to acknowledge for the official record Houston County, TN, sesquicentennial anniversary.

Each State is its own melting pot of history and culture, and Tennessee is no exception. In Houston County, the Irish roots of the pioneers who explored the Cumberland River run deep, having buried themselves in the rugged, foggy hills and creek beds that so resembled the founders' homeland.

First settled in the 1780s, the Houston County area served as a new frontier for early pioneers. What began as a small working settlement flourished into a community that bore witness at the crossroads of the Civil War, embraced the possibilities of crisscrossing railroads, and led the charge toward progress that we now look back on as a major industrial boom.

On January 21, 1871, the Tennessee legislature officially established Houston County, named in honor of Texas freedom fighter and the sixth Governor of Tennessee, Sam Houston. Since then, the people who call Houston County home have turned their little

piece of rural Tennessee into a beautiful place to live, work, and raise a family.

Congratulations are in order to the members of the Houston County Historical Society and, most importantly, to the citizens of Houston County. I ask my colleagues to join with me in wishing them another 150 years of progress and prosperity.●

REMEMBERING HELEN EUGENIA HAGAN

● Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, today I rise to recognize Ms. Helen Eugenia Hagan, a remarkable pianist and pioneer for BIPOC women in music.

Her passion for performing began at a young age, and Ms. Hagan became the organist for the Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church when she was around 11 years old. Ms. Hagan's talents earned her a spot at the Yale School of Music. In 1912, she was the first African-American woman to graduate from Yale University.

At the request of General John J. Pershing, Ms. Hagan traveled to France during World War I as part of a group led by preacher Henry H. Proctor. Ms. Hagan was the only Black performing artist sent to France during the war. Continuing to break barriers, she was also the first Black pianist to perform a recital at a New York concert venue. Ms. Hagan's compositions and concert work received outstanding praise. The then-Dean of the Yale School of Music credited Ms. Hagan with "rare promise," and critics commended her creativity and originality.

Struggling to find work during the Great Depression, she took graduate-level courses at Columbia University's Teachers College while still giving performances. In 1933, Ms. Hagan took a teaching position at Bishop College in Texas and gave private music lessons in New York. She remained committed to musical composition, performance, and education until her passing in 1964.

On February 6, 2021, the New Haven Symphony Orchestra will honor Ms. Hagan with a History Award. Alongside Yale University, the symphony has been dedicated to sharing the life story of this incredible woman, who performed her "Piano Concerto in C minor" with them in 1916. This award is a tribute to Ms. Hagan's extraordinary legacy, which will be enduring.

I applaud her many accomplishments and hope my colleagues will join me in remembering Ms. Helen Eugenia Hagan.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:17 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 335. An act to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of per-

sons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:58 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOYER) has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 335. An act to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-19. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of Foreign Terrorist Organizations designation of Lashkar/ISIL (OSS-2021-0015); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-20. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of Foreign Terrorist Organizations designation of Harakat (OSS-2021-0010); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-21. A communication from the Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of Foreign Terrorist Organizations designation of Ansarallah (OSS-2021-0011); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Armed Services, without amendment:

S. 12. A bill to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE from the Committee on Armed Services.

*Lloyd James Austin, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Defense.

*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.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It

has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 21, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

NOMINATION OF ANTONY BLINKEN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I come to the floor today to urge the swift confirmation for Tony Blinken to be the Secretary of State.

Like we saw with Avril Haines yesterday and moving toward Lloyd Austin today, we need to hold a floor vote on Mr. Blinken's nomination urgently.

Mr. Blinken is well known to the Senate, having previously been confirmed as Deputy Secretary of State, having served as the Deputy National Security Advisor and, of course, as the staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before that.

He is superbly qualified to be the Secretary of State, and his knowledge and thoughtfulness were on display during 5 hours of testimony earlier this week. And since then, he has been asked to respond to hundreds of questions. As a matter of fact, he has had an inordinate number of questions that have been put to him for the record. He had nearly over half a hundred before his hearing. He has had from a couple of our colleagues nearly 600 questions, including multiple parts to those questions. And to my knowledge, he has largely answered them all, notwithstanding the size, the magnitude of it.

Now, I have been, since I arrived in this institution, one of the big advocates of the prerogatives of each and every individual Senator and of the institution. So I take a back step to no one, but there is a difference between prerogatives and prerogatives that are abused, which, in essence, are for the purpose of not seeking information but for the purpose of delaying a nomination.

Now, I appreciate that Senator RISCH, the present chairman of the committee, has been working with me to try to accelerate Mr. Blinken's nomination to the floor, but I would ask my colleagues, particularly those on the committee, to join him and I in an effort to bring one of the important national security positions in our government to the floor for a vote.

I don't think we should be leaving this weekend without a vote for the Secretary of State.

He is the right person to repair and restore our alliances, to rebuild and renew the State Department, to reinvigorate the relationship between the Department and Congress—something

that I think Republicans and Democrats alike have agreed have soured dramatically.

His testimony, his opening statement, his answers to questions show that he will be a working partner with this institution.

But, obviously, confirming Mr. Blinken is not just about the nominee himself. It is about doing what the American people expect and the Constitution requires—providing advice and consent to ensure that national security officials are in office in a timely manner.

We are facing challenges in every corner of the world. The world is on fire—from Iran to Russia, to Venezuela, to global challenges that define our times and defy borders, like COVID, migration, and climate change. We can't afford delaying to put Mr. Blinken in office. We can't allow the State Department to be rudderless.

If we don't have leadership, we can't be sure that China or Russia and others won't fill the vacuum as they have for the last several years or do something that is adverse to our national and economic security.

Imagine that there is a hostage deal to be had, as I believe there is, and you can't have another country call the Secretary of State because the Secretary of State doesn't exist.

Imagine if there are tensions between two countries that affect our national interests. You don't have a Secretary of State to call as counterpart in those countries to seek to ease the tension, to remove the threat.

Imagine if President Biden needs to have a Secretary of State engage in some part of the world to stop a conflict, to open an opportunity, to prevent an unintended consequence. We don't have that person, and we cannot expect the President to pick up the phone in each and every instance in the world as he is trying to deal with COVID at home and an economic crisis that follows on from that. That is what the Secretary of State does.

So Mr. Blinken also, finally, is not just critical to addressing challenges abroad, we have to acknowledge what the role of Secretary of State is here at home.

If we remember what just happened back on the 6th, three of the first four officials in the line of succession—the Vice President, the Speaker of the House, and the President pro tempore of the Senate—were in the Capitol when domestic terrorists breached the building. Every day we learn more details about this heinous attack, including that the terrorists, some of whom were chanting “Hang Mike Pence!” came within a minute or so of a potential face-to-face encounter with Vice President Pence. Thank God, through the quick thinking and heroics of our Capitol Police and other law enforcement, those three remained unscathed, but if something had happened, it is the Secretary of State who is fourth in line of succession to the President of

the United States. Leaving the office vacant is irresponsible. It is irresponsible in that regard. It is irresponsible in terms of something happening in the world and not having a Secretary of State who could work to deal with it so that we could preserve our national security, promote our national interests, and stop something, an unintended consequence, from happening.

Mr. Blinken has the qualifications. The challenges facing our country call for him to be confirmed, and I hope the Senate does not leave here tomorrow until he is confirmed.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The senior Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I would ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, let me just say to my good friend from New Jersey how wholeheartedly I agree with him. I have known Tony Blinken for a long period of time. I have worked with him in different venues. I talked to him today at some length, and we talked together on many issues that I think are significant.

One issue out there is the one we have been talking about in the Western Sahara. He understands the issues. So I join my friend from New Jersey in encouraging a fast and quick confirmation.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO TEAM INHOFE

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, we recently said goodbye to a lot of really good, hard-working men and women from the previous administration, and I want to highlight a few of them.

We refer to them—some of my friends and some of my enemies refer to them as the “Inhofe mafia.” It comes from the committees that I have chaired, both the Armed Services Committee as well as the Environment and Public Works Committee. But anyway, they are really a great bunch of people.

I am going to start with Andrew Wheeler. Andrew Wheeler was with me for a number of years—14 years—before he became the Director of the EPA. Here is a guy who was nominated to be the Administrator. At that time, I said that there is no one in America who is as qualified as Andrew Wheeler for this job. The first job he had out of law school was with the EPA. When he was nominated to be Administrator, I kind of gave his whole life history.

All of my Senate colleagues know Andy and have known him for a long period of time—Democrats and Republicans. He has worked for me in the Senate as well as becoming one of my “has-beens,” as we refer to people who used to be with me and are still my good friends.

Andy started in my personal office as chief counsel and went on to serve as

the staff director and chief counsel during my time as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee. He has decades of experience and is one of the most skilled energy and environmental policy experts I have ever come in contact with, and I am immensely proud of what he has been able to accomplish throughout his career, but particularly as EPA Administrator.

Andy understood that the EPA's mission is to implement the laws that are passed by Congress for the American people. The EPA's job is not to legislate. A lot of people think that. That is our job, to legislate, and then he carries it out, and he did really just a great job with that.

Contrary to what many on the left say Republicans want, we do want clean air and clean water and clean land, and Andy proved that he could accomplish that without burdensome overregulation. During his time at the EPA, he spearheaded a number of the rules and deregulatory actions that brought important relief to American job creators while protecting our environment.

He rolled back the economy standards on cars that were created to try to force Americans to drive vehicles they don't want to drive and that they can't afford. In its replacement, Andy developed the SAFE vehicles rule, which expands consumer choice and lowers the price of vehicles.

Andy also repealed and replaced the waters of the United States rule, or WOTUS. On the WOTUS rule, if you talk to any of the agricultural groups—I am talking about the Farm Bureau and other agricultural groups—they would say that was the rule we really had to do something about. States like mine don't need Washington bureaucrats imposing their radical regulations like WOTUS on people who know the waters better than they do. It is not an overstatement when I say that this was probably the greatest regulatory burden facing Oklahoma's farmers, landowners, and ranchers during the Obama administration. I was proud to see WOTUS repealed by the navigable waters protection rule, which provided a clean and lawful definition of waters of the United States and doesn't try to overregulate the arid parts of the State.

Oklahoma is an arid State. If you go out to the western part of Oklahoma, the panhandle of Oklahoma, it is really arid. If you take that regulation out of the hands of the States and give it to the Federal Government, there is always a concern by our farmers and ranchers in Oklahoma and across the Nation that they would turn these arid areas into wetlands.

Another of the regulatory overhauls accomplished by Andy was for the affordable clean energy or the ACE rule that replaced the illegal Clean Power Plan, which regulated emissions of coal-fired powerplants. I had long been critical of the Clean Power Plan and led the charge against it in the Senate.

Like most of that era of the rules, it was a Federal power grab, and it would have sent Americans' electricity bills soaring, and we all knew that. But we made it history when we repealed and replaced the Clean Power Plan with the ACE rule. It was good. Not only did this rule help Americans' electricity costs be affordable, it is expected to benefit the environment as well.

Just last month, the EPA finalized another big rule that requires EPA to prepare a cost-benefit analysis before coming up with new regulations. How is that at all unreasonable? Americans shake their heads, and they wonder why we would pass things that don't have any kind of a cost-benefit analysis. What is it going to cost? What kind of sacrifices are we going to have to make? Well, we put that into effect, and I think it is something people are very thankful for.

Throughout his tenure, Andy has been focused on what is in the best interests of the taxpayers and not just the Washington bureaucrats. That is clear with this rule and countless others.

You know, one of the good things about Andy, as I already mentioned, is that he knows more about the process than anybody else does—more about the EPA. He has always been a star, and he started at the bottom. When he was first put into that office and was confirmed as EPA director, he gave a speech over at the EPA. He didn't know I was there. I went over there to hear it. He had 300 people at the EPA all listening to him and looking at him and saying: There is room at the top for me. Here is a guy who started at the very bottom and ended up as director of the EPA. It didn't go unnoticed. Everybody realized that.

So I would ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an E&E News article from July 2018, which details a number of the former staff people and their backgrounds.

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

[July 6, 2018]

'BRAVE NEW WORLD' AS TEAM INHOFE TAKES OVER

(By Robin Bravender)

It's official: Alumni of the best-known climate skeptic in Congress are leading EPA.

Former aides to Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) have helped shape President Trump's energy policy agenda since even before he was elected. Many of them quickly landed top spots at EPA and in the White House, and Inhofe alumnus Ryan Jackson helped shepherd Scott Pruitt through the confirmation process before becoming his chief of staff at the agency last year.

But now an ex-Inhofe staffer is taking the reins as Pruitt leaves under a cloud of controversies.

Andrew Wheeler, who steps in as EPA's chief on Monday, was staff director and chief counsel to Inhofe on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee for much of the George W. Bush administration.

Jackson, a longtime friend of Wheeler, is expected to remain as EPA's chief of staff after Pruitt's exit. Jackson—a native Okla-

homan—was an Inhofe aide who worked as EPW staff director and Inhofe's chief of staff.

Brittany Bolen became the acting head of EPA's policy shop after Samantha Dravis left earlier this year. Bolen was Republican counsel to Inhofe on the EPW Committee. Daisy Letendre, a communications adviser in the policy office, was Inhofe's communications director.

And former Inhofe counsel Mandy Gunasekara is now principal deputy assistant administrator in EPA's air office.

Republicans and some energy industry lobbyists say Inhofe's alumni network brings deep policy knowledge to EPA and is well-positioned to bring calm to an agency that has been mired in controversies under Pruitt.

"With these Inhofe staff, you get all of the Pruitt policy and none of the Pruitt baggage," said an energy lobbyist and former congressional staffer.

It makes sense that ex-Inhofe aides would populate EPA under a Republican administration, the lobbyist said, given Inhofe's long tenure as the top Republican on the Senate committee charged with overseeing the agency. "He has hired a lot of smart people to work for him who were good and have gone on to do various other things," the lobbyist said.

Those staffers have a history of working closely with Democrats on Capitol Hill, that person added: "I think that the Democrat staff and members believe that Inhofe and the Inhofe staffers treated them fairly when they were up there."

They also share an appreciation for process, said Matt Dempsey, Inhofe's former communications director.

He expects his former colleagues to take a "back to basics" approach at EPA. "It's not necessarily a political agenda, but it's a policy-based agenda," he said.

That contrasts with how many people viewed Pruitt, who was widely thought to be trying to use EPA as a stepping stool to reach higher political office.

Under Wheeler, "the whole tone is going to be different," the energy lobbyist said. "People are going to perceive that Andy is going to spend his time on policy and not thinking about whether he's the next senator from Oklahoma."

But as Republicans and many in industry are celebrating the rise of the Inhofe crowd at EPA, some on the left are furious that disciples of the Senate's most vocal climate change skeptic—famous for throwing a snowball on the Senate floor to try to disprove global warming—are leading the agency tasked with protecting the environment.

"It is a brave new world of pro-fossil-fuel ideologues who seem not to care about anything but industry profits, the rest of the country be damned," said Bill Snape, an attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. "We're all getting hit in the head by the snowball at this point. It's obviously disturbing."

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, at the top of the list was my chief of staff, Ryan Jackson. Like Andy, Ryan also went on to be my staff director of the EPW Committee, Environment and Public Works, where he helped negotiate bipartisan bills for highway, water, and infrastructure to environmental bills like TSCA. Remember, that was the one that had the chemical regulations. In his role he helped me negotiate with former California Senator Barbara Boxer.

This is kind of interesting. I think the Presiding Officer would find this to be interesting. Barbara Boxer and I—

for many, many years, every time the Republicans were in the majority, I was the chairman of that committee, and she was the ranking member. Every time the Democrats were in control, she was the chairman, and I was the ranking member. So we worked together, and we accomplished more. I won't divulge where the meeting is, but there is a meeting that Republicans have historically had at 12:15 p.m. on a Tuesday with all the members of the committees, the chairmen. We would talk about what we have done, and when it was my turn, I would say: Now from the committee that actually gets things done. That was Barbara Boxer and I. No two people could be further apart philosophically than Barbara Boxer and I, yet we were able to do that with the help of Ryan Jackson.

I actually hired him when he was still in college. He left my office early 2017 to go to work as Chief of Staff at the EPA, where he was a central player in the implementation of the last administration's policies.

In February, he left the EPA, which was when Mandy Gunasekara took office as chief of staff. Mandy worked for me in the EPW Committee for several years as the majority counsel. In that role she helped me craft air and other policy priorities. While at the EPA, she has been instrumental in advancing priorities like the ACE rule that I mentioned earlier. She is a skilled and devoted public servant, and I am proud of all that she has done to advance policies that benefit all Americans.

A number of others of what I refer to as my "has-beens" have served at the EPA over the last 4 years. Susan Bodine was the chief counsel on EPW and went on to serve as Assistant Administrator in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

Brittany Bolen was counsel for the EPW, Environment and Public Works Committee, and went on to serve as Associate Administrator for the Office of Policy.

Byron Brown was senior counsel at the EPW and went on to serve as Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy.

Then there is Daisy Letendre. She was communications director in my office and went on to serve as a Senior Advisor in the Office of Policy.

So I am proud of all my "has-beens" and the big impact that they have had on our country. We are grateful for their service, past and present—especially that of Andrew Wheeler and Ryan Jackson. I say to our friends Wheeler and Jackson: Thank you and good luck in your next endeavors. You did great work.

Let me just mention one last thing. I urge the Biden administration not to repeal a lot of the rules and regulations and deregulation initiatives that gave us the economy that was unprecedented during the time before the pandemic set in. It would be devastating to our country, which is already trying to recover from the pandemic. Now is not

the time to impose costly new regulations on Americans and the job creators in this country. Everyone knows that this pandemic has wreaked havoc on our economy, and I am certain that, had we not had the virus, we would have broken even more economic records than we already had.

Prior to the pandemic, we had the best economy of our life. We set records, with small business optimism reaching the highest level on record in its 45-year history and unemployment hitting a 50-year low of 3.5 percent. We have always said in the past that full employment is 4 percent. We brought it down that entire year, and in February of 2020 it was down to 3.5 percent. It never had happened before. The median household income rose to a record high in 2019, the highest since 1967. The wealth of American families rose. That is an indicator. It rose to the highest level in history. So these good things were happening, and I would urge this administration not to repeal some of these regulations. Repealing some of these regulations would simply reverse gains like these.

I urge the Biden administration to work with me and others to reach compromises on regulations that would benefit all Americans. That seems to be pretty reasonable, and I think that is a good program to do. Let's give it a try, OK?

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that upon the conclusion of morning business on Friday, January 22, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 1, the nomination of Lloyd Austin to be the Secretary of Defense; further, that there be 10 minutes for debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; and 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2021

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

Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Friday, January 22; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; finally, that upon conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session as provided under the previous order.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, for the information of Senators, there will be a rollover vote on confirmation of the Austin nomination to be Secretary of Defense at approximately 10:30 tomorrow.

We also hope to vote on confirmation of the Yellen and Blinken nominations this week.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:14 p.m., adjourned until Friday, January 22, 2021, at 10 a.m.