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Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of MARCIA LOUISE FUDGE, of Ohio, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

CENSORSHIP

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, most Americans know that there are two sexes, male and female, and that sex is rooted in science. Most Americans also know that we ought to treat all people, including those who feel conflicted about their gender, with respect and dignity, without sacrificing the truth in the process.

These beliefs are now under attack from some of the most powerful corporations in the history of the world. Just a few weeks ago, while House Democrats were passing their far-left Equality Act, the leftwing media was busy canceling Dr. Seuss, Amazon quietly erased a book from its online store without notice, without warning, without explanation. That book is "When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment" by Ryan Anderson."

Amazon claims it banned this book for violating its brandnew policy on "hate speech." Of course, that excuse is arbitrary and patently false. You can go to Amazon right now—right now you can go to Amazon on your phone or on your computer and buy copies of actually hateful books. You can get Hitler's "Mein Kampf" shipped to your door with free Amazon Prime delivery. You can get the "Unabomber Manifesto," written by a serial killer who murdered 3 people and maimed 23 others. You can even get "How to Blow up

a Pipeline." I assume the title speaks for itself. All those books are available for purchase on Amazon right now, one click away. But Amazon wants you to believe that a conservative book is somehow beyond the pale, unacceptably hateful, literally worse than Hitler, as they like to say.

My office asked Amazon to send us the exact passages from "When Harry Became Sally" that it deemed so hateful that it couldn't even sell the book on its website. Shocking surprise, I know, they never got back to us. That is because the book doesn't say anything hateful. To the contrary, the book makes very clear that we should treat people who feel conflicted about their gender with the same respect and compassion that are due to all people. To quote the author, "We should have abundant compassion and charity and patience with people who feel this form of alienation. But we also need to insist on telling the truth . . ."

That is not hate. That is far from it. The author's real offense, his only offense, was telling the truth. He said calmly and compassionately that boys are boys and girls are girls. And the richest man in the world banned his book from his company's platform.

But, of course, you don't have to agree with the commonsense historic understanding of gender in order to acknowledge how dangerous it is for one of the biggest corporations in the history of the world to start banning books because while Amazon's censorship may start with conservative views, it could easily mutate to censor other views that offend Jeff Bezos and his bottom line. Perhaps Amazon will come after union organizers next since they are trying to bust up a union election in Alabama or maybe environmental activists or maybe trustbusters, since so many people are talking about potential antitrust violations in the world of Big Tech.

And even if Amazon goes only this far and no further, the damage of free

The Senate met at 3 p.m. 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.

Eternal God, today, make our Senators custodians of truth. Remind them that when people call a lie the truth, they tamper with their value judgment.

Lord, give our lawmakers the wisdom to know that to scrape away their value judgment will eventually cause them to lose their sense of moral distinctions. May they understand that deception is difficult to quarantine and will corrupt all sense of moral discrimination.

Lord, thank You for being a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

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



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speech has already been done. Books like "When Harry Became Sally" won't get published anymore. Writers who hold unfashionable opinions that just a few days ago were considered basic mainstream views of a large majority of Americans, may decide to self-censor, stay silent.

The virtual book burning may spread to other companies. Maybe Amazon will put a book burning app on its Kindle so readers can drag books from its catalog into the virtual bonfire.

Political correctness will only grow more oppressive if its enforcers, like Amazon, don't face some consequences for their actions. Amazon, for instance, makes billions of dollars each year hosting websites and storing data for the government. Almost all of Amazon's profit is made in these enterprise services, not in its consumer-facing retail business. Those are our tax dollars flowing to a company that uses its power to censor the beliefs of a large majority of Americans. Perhaps it is time for lawmakers to reconsider whether these contracts are in the best interest of our country.

I also note Amazon is the country's largest bookseller, selling three out of every four e-books in America. It is time for lawmakers to evaluate whether Amazon's practices are consistent with our antitrust laws or whether antitrust laws need to be updated to address this type of behavior from a monopolistic firm. We better hurry, though, because maybe they will ban all books on antitrust and monopoly behavior before we have a chance to study the question.

I will close by quoting from the book that Amazon banned, which predicted the very events we are witnessing here today:

If trans activists succeed in their political agenda, our nation's children will be indoctrinated in a harmful ideology, and some will live by its own lies about their own bodies, at great harm to themselves physically, psychologically, and socially. Lives will be ruined, but pointing out the damage will be forbidden. Dissent from the transgender worldview will be punished in schools, workplaces, and medical clinics. Trying to live in accordance with the truth will be made harder.

This is not a fight over hate or bigotry, respect or compassion. It is a battle over truth itself, the truth of who we are as human beings and the fundamental freedom to speak that truth or any other truth without fear.

Throughout our history, Americans have never surrendered to an oppressive tyranny of opinion, whether a majority or, in this case, a small but highly influential minority, and we won't be cowed in silence today. We will fight for what is true. We will fight for the freedom to say it. No matter what the cultural forces arrayed against us do, we will never back down.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SINEMA). 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the Senate returns this week to the business of nominations. Today, the Senate will confirm Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE to be the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, followed by confirmation votes later this week for Merrick Garland to serve as Attorney General and Michael Regan to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Finally, the Senate will begin the confirmation process for Congresswoman DEB HAALAND before the week is out. She would be the first Native American Cabinet member of any Agency and the first indigenous Secretary of the Interior—a profoundly important moment given the historically troubled relationship between the Federal Government and Tribal nations. Despite Republican obstruction, Representative HAALAND will be confirmed by the Senate to be Secretary HAALAND. I will file cloture on her nomination immediately after my remarks.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Now on the rescue plan, on Saturday, the American people got to see what a responsive and effective government looks like. A month and a half after assuming the majority, Senate Democrats followed through on our promise to deliver a bold COVID relief bill to help crush the virus, lift this country out of the crisis, and set our economy on a path to a strong recovery.

Earlier today, the final text of the Senate bill was sent to the House of Representatives. Congress remains on track to deliver the American Rescue Plan to President Biden's desk for his signature before enhanced unemployment benefits expire on March 14.

We said we would do it. We are doing it.

Once President Biden signs the American Rescue Plan into law, it will immediately become one of the most sweeping Federal recovery efforts in modern history. It will help restore Americans' faith in government at a time when that is sorely needed, and it will deliver more help to more people than almost anything Congress has accomplished in past decades.

Already the positive reviews are pouring in. According to several reports, the bill will help millions of Americans save hundreds of dollars in healthcare costs. Thanks to a historic expansion of the child tax credit—up to \$3,000 per child under 17 for an overwhelming majority of families—analysts predict the American Rescue Plan will cut child poverty in half.

Let me say that again: Analysts predict the American Rescue Plan will cut

child poverty in half. This has been a goal of this country for decades, and now we are taking real steps to accomplish it.

In fact, the Tax Policy Center predicts the American Rescue Plan will boost the incomes of the poorest 20 percent of Americans by 20 percent, including significant boosts all the way through the middle class.

Meanwhile, the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans will receive an income boost of zero—zero percent for the top 1 percent wealthiest Americans.

Let me say that again because this shows who we are as a party here in the Senate and who we should be as a nation. Let me say: A 20-percent boost in incomes for Americans who are struggling the most; zero percent for those who are at the top already, who are doing very well.

Let's contrast this to the Republican tax bill, which skewed in exactly the opposite direction. If people want to know the difference—the difference in terms of how Democrats feel about whom we should help and how Republicans feel about whom we should help—contrast this bill with the most major accomplishment during the 4 years that Donald Trump was President and it is very apparent.

Back in December, Democrats promised that, if we won the majority, we would deliver \$2,000 checks to American families. That is exactly what we have done. Promise made; promise kept. We helped pass \$600 checks in December and added \$1,400 in the bill we just passed.

Because Democrats kept that promise, Americans are going to receive the help they need quickly. The checks will stimulate the economy, and they are targeted to those Americans who need it the most. It is a promise kept.

The OECD, or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, projected that the American Rescue Plan could as much as double America's economic growth this year. As a result, it also revised upward its projections for the entire world's economic recovery. Once again, the United States is going to lead the way.

And so, because of what the Senate did last week, healthcare costs will go down, child poverty will be cut in half, Americans will receive direct financial support, and the economy is set for an enormous boost. It is a great beginning for a new administration and a new Senate.

And that is to say nothing of the schools that will receive support to reopen faster and safer, the restaurants and small businesses that will receive a lifeline, the millions of recently unemployed Americans who will continue to receive enhanced benefits until Labor Day, and the millions of workers and retirees who will see their pension plans protected.

Of course, one of the most important aspects of all is the support this bill will give to speed vaccinations and expand testing—exactly what we need to defeat the virus.

In short, this is one of the very most significant pieces of legislation to pass the Senate in years. It is broader, deeper, and more comprehensive in helping working families and lifting Americans out of poverty than anything—anything—Congress has accomplished in a very long time.

So I am extremely proud of the bill we passed this week—exceedingly proud. I am exceedingly proud of everybody in our caucus; our committee chairs, whose leadership allowed us to act swiftly at a moment when Americans needed help fast; and the Members, who pulled together and realized no one is going to get everything he or she wants, but the need to come together and get something done when we had no margin for error was wonderful.

I want to thank President Biden for his bold and steady leadership. He was instrumental in putting this bill together and helping to get it over the finish line.

And I am exceedingly proud of the staff, who toiled behind the scenes, who worked incredible hours under incredible stress to prepare, perfect, and pass the American Rescue Plan. The staff are the unsung heroes of this bill. So I want to spend just a moment to sing their praises.

First of all, to all the members and staff of the Senate committees, thank you. I have submitted all of their names into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to acknowledge their weeks of hard work assembling different portions of the bill, negotiating compromises, writing legislative text, petitioning the Parliamentarian, and managing a colossal amendment process.

To all of the floor staff—the doorkeepers, the clerks, the reporters, the cafeteria workers, the custodial staff, the Capitol Police and National Guard—the entire Senate gave you a standing ovation on Saturday, and you deserved every second of it. Thank you, thank you, thank you once again.

And, finally, I need to spend some time thanking my own staff. I think they are the best staff anyone could ever have. They are amazing. They are amazing. Every Senator believes they have the best staff on Capitol Hill, I guess, but I am no exception. I couldn't do what I do without them. They are amazing. The chiefs who run the show: Mike Lynch, Martin Brennan, Erin Sager Vaughn. The floor staff: the amazing Gary Myrick, Tricia Engle, the whole floor staff—thank you.

And then three names that I have to give a particular shout-out to because you could truly say that without these three we wouldn't have a bill: Gerry Petrella, Meghan Taira, Charlie Ellsworth.

My staff—I would like to brag a little about them if I might. My staff boasts some of the most brilliant legislative minds in the country—folks who know the nitty-gritty of every issue in their portfolio, who fashion solutions to the most difficult problems in the country

and then turn those solutions into action.

And thank you to my executive team, who keeps me somewhat on time and is a tremendous asset to the entire Democratic caucus.

Thank you to our phenomenal research team, ready to supply the right fact at the right moment. You ask them: Look this up, find this out. Boom, the answer appears right away.

To everyone at the Senate Democratic Media Center, the SDMC, who are clipping and editing videos at 3, 4, 5 in the morning; to our amazing press team, who gets the word out so skillfully; our engagement team, who does fantastic work with the groups affected by the legislation we pass; and our entire State staff—I just visited some of them. I just came back from Buffalo and Syracuse—who make sure that our work in Washington always responds to the needs of New York.

I wanted to mention each of these different groups, but in reality they are a team. They pull together, and they are friends as well. They celebrate holidays together, and we share each other's joys and sadnesses in life—a team that works together, helps each other, supports each other, and supports me; a team that gets up every morning with a passion to make the lives of their fellow citizens better. It is impossible, just impossible not to be inspired by them and by that.

So I ask unanimous consent to enter the names of my entire staff into the RECORD because, as I told them on the phone Sunday, even if they do nothing else in life, they have saved by their work many, many lives. They have made the lives of millions—millions—of people considerably better because of their hard work, their dedication, and their faith.

So I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the names of my entire staff.

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

I would like the Record to include the names of my staff who worked tirelessly to prepare, perfect, and pass the American Rescue Plan: one of the most significant pieces of legislation to pass the United States Senate in decades. Their names are as follows:

Abdelhaq, Yazeed, Achibar, Kathleen, Aleman, Jasmin, Armwood, Garrett, Babin, Reggie, Banez, Robert, Barjon, Didier, Barton, Steve, Battle, Sharon, Benavides, Jackie, Biasotti, Allison, Bluit, Tinae, Bodian, Lane, Bowman, Quinn, Brennan, Martin, Burns, Caroline, Byrne, Sean, Cardinal, Jon, Cardona, Selena, Carranza, Ramon.

Chang Prepis, Joyce, Charlerly, Kristen, Cole, Emily, Contes, Helena, Cook, Andrew, Cooke, Dave, Coutavas, Sophie, Daly, Annie, Dayal, Tushar, Deveny, Adrian, Dickson, Jeff, Dirienzo, Lindsay, Donovan, Patrick, Eagan, Ryan, Ellsworth, Charlie, Emanuel, Marissa, Engle, Tricia, Fado, Kelly.

Flood, Sam, Fuentes, Matt, Geertsma, Joel, Glander, Megan, Goodman, Justin, Gray-Hoehn, Hayley, Gutmaker, Joshua, Haberl, Gunnar, Harris, Jasmine, Hawley, Marisa, Hickman, Rob, Housley, Jon, Huus, Amber, Iannelli, Mike, Ileka, Steven, Jackson, Rachel, Jamaica, Jessica, Jean, Mike, Kazibwe, Rodney.

Kiandoli, Cietta, Kuiken, Mike, Lee, Monica, Lopez, Julietta, Lynch, Mike, Magaletta, Grace, Mann, Steve, Mannering, Amy, Marcojohn, Anneliese, Martin, Ryan, Mehta, Hemen, Meyer, Ken, Molofsky, Josh, Moore, Catey, Moreno-Silva, Michelle, Morgan, Rachel, Murphy Vlasto, Megan.

Myrick Gary, Najafi, Leela, Nam, Alice, Nehme, Joe, Nguyen, Alex, Nicholson, Jordan, Nunez, Diana, Odgren, Andrew, Olvera, Lorenzo, Orlove, Suzan, Ortega, Sol, Osmolski, Rebecca, Oursler, Nate, Paone, Stephanie, Patel, Vandan, Patterson, Liza, Patterson, Mark, Petrella, Gerry, Pina, Oriana, Reese, William.

Revelle, Justine, Rivera, Tony, Robinson, Alexandra, Rodarte, Sam, Rodman, Scott, Rodriguez, Crisitian, Roefaro, Angelo, Rosenblum, Zack, Ryder, Tim, Seijas, Nelson, Shah, Raisa, Sharbaugh, Tyson, Sinpatanasakul, Leeann, Skapnit, Amanda, Sledge, Alexa, Smith, Hannah, Sonnier-Thompson, Bre, Spellicy, Amanda, Sundaramoorthy, Dili, Sweda, Emily.

Talley, Hanna, Taira, Meghan, Tam, Catalina, Taylor, Anna, Taylor, Terri, Tepke, Paige, Timothy, Kimarah, Tinsley, Dan, Vaughn, Erin Sager, Velez, Cyre, Virgona, Nicole, Vogel, Kai, Vorperian-Grillo, Karine, Watt, Brad, Watters, Veronica, Weir, Emma, Yoken, Dan, Younkin, Nora, Zeltmann, Chris, Zomorrodian, Reza.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I want them all to know how much I appreciate their work and how much the country does and what a great difference it has made in the trajectory of our wonderful Nation.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 31.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Debra Anne Haaland, of New Mexico, to be Secretary of the Interior.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 31, Debra Anne Haaland, of New Mexico, to be Secretary of the Interior.

Charles E. Schumer, Chris Van Hollen, Michael F. Bennet, Jack Reed, Tammy

Duckworth, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Richard Blumenthal, Patrick J. Leahy, Amy Klobuchar, Tina Smith, Brian Schatz, Robert Menendez, Richard J. Durbin, Martin Heinrich, Maria Cantwell.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to this motion be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, when Senators were last in this Chamber, our Democratic colleagues were shooting down amendment after amendment to ensure their largely non-COVID-related spending plan remained very liberal and purely partisan.

Republicans proposed amendments to cap extra government help for wealthier Americans, to ensure that direct checks would only go to citizens and legal residents and not to people in prison, and to rein in runaway State and local bailouts and refocus the bill on urgent COVID-related actual needs. But Democrats banded together to defeat every one of these commonsense changes. As the Democratic leader happily explained to reporters later on Saturday, his whole conference put lockstep party unity ahead of substance and ahead of bipartisan compromise.

So the nearly \$2 trillion partisan spending spree that President Biden's Chief of Staff brags is "the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation" is on its way over to the House. Already, we hear reporting that this giveaway will simply wipe out the budget deficit of New York State and eliminate a big part of the deficit in San Francisco, courtesy of the taxpayers in Kentucky and Middle America. Already, we hear the administration saying they want some of these sweeping new welfare policies to become permanent, like a no-strings-attached benefit that disregards all the pro-work lessons of bipartisan welfare reform. Meanwhile, it only manages to spend about 1 percent on vaccinations and less than 9 percent on the entire health fight.

Democrats inherited a turning tide. The vaccine trends and economic trends were in place before the bill was ever voted on, before this President was sworn in, but they are determined to push to the front of the parade with an effort to push America to the left.

Meanwhile, House Democrats are wasting no time pursuing even more purely partisan legislation. Last Wednesday, the House passed H.R. 1, their effort to rewrite the ground rules of American elections and seize power from States and localities. Just like the spending plan, in both Chambers, once again the only thing bipartisan about the bill was the opposition.

This is House Democrats' bid to put Federal bureaucrats in charge of local election rules; to undermine voter ID requirements with massive loopholes that undermine them; to require every State to permit ballot harvesting, which lets paid political operatives produce stacks of ballots with other people's names on them; to overturn or change hundreds of State election laws; and to turn our highest election authority, the equally balanced FEC, into a partisan majority body to crack down on speech and ideas they don't like.

It is quite the recipe for rebuilding public faith in our democracy on all sides—a purely partisan effort to seize unprecedented power for Washington, DC, on a razor-thin majority. It is a hugely harmful idea at the worst possible time.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, on a different matter, this week, the Senate is set to consider more of President Biden's nominations. I have consistently said that the President should have latitude to staff their administration with people of their choosing so long as they nominate qualified and mainstream individuals. That is why I and many other Republicans have supported many of the President's mainstream nominees.

Secretaries Austin and Vilsack were each confirmed with more than 90 votes; Secretaries Raimondo, Yellen, and Buttigieg with more than 80. Senator Blinken got 78 votes, including mine. Secretaries Cardona and Granholm each got more than 60 votes. Even with the time spent on impeachment, half of the nominees I just mentioned were confirmed faster than President Trump's nominees to the same spots, and most of them received a more bipartisan margin now than 4 years ago. So this administration is receiving perfectly fair treatment from the Senate. Frankly, the President and his team must be thrilled that Senate Republicans are proving to be more fair and more principled on personnel matters than the Democratic minority's behavior 4 years ago.

But the fact remains that millions and millions of Americans elected 50 Republican Senators—an even split—to stand against policies and personnel who lean too far to the left. That is why many of us voted against confirming Secretary Mayorkas, who stood idly by while a major crisis exploded on the border in just his first several weeks. Rather than confront the problem, he absurdly claims that a record number of unaccompanied children in custody, overflowing shelters, and catch-and-release policies during a pandemic do not actually constitute a "crisis" at all.

Xavier Becerra, the partisan California attorney general with no significant healthcare experience, whom the President has nominated to run Health and Human Services during COVID-19, could not even get one Republican vote to get out of committee.

So Republicans will continue to distinguish between qualified, mainstream people and nominees who are way outside the mainstream.

I have already announced I will support Judge Merrick Garland, whose nomination to be Attorney General we will vote to advance later today, but we will continue to fight hard against people who are the wrong choices for key positions. We are going to shine a bright spotlight on anyone who seems more focused on far-left ideology than serving all of the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I had a press conference this Sunday back home in Illinois to talk about what the American Rescue Plan means to our State. It is dramatic. Dramatic.

Millions of dollars will be coming to our State to buy vaccines. I can tell you, all across Illinois, people are asking: When is it my turn? When do I get my chance? And we want to make sure they get that chance sooner rather than later.

Think about what President Biden inherited just a few weeks ago. Surely they had found some vaccines—excellent vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna—approved by then, but he came to the White House to find that there was no plan to administer those vaccines across the Nation.

Vaccine is important, but it is of little value if it is not in the arms of Americans. So he set out to establish a standard that we would be distributing this vaccine across the United States as quickly as possible and the mechanism, the infrastructure to make certain that it was administered by professionals who know what they are doing. That is quite an undertaking. It is the largest vaccination in the history of our Nation. But President Biden said he needed help to do it—not just money for the vaccine but money for testing, money for the genomic sequencing necessary to detect variants that might be emerging in the United States. That was a major element of the bill that passed this Senate last Saturday.

He also put money in there that had already been promised to the American people. Remember when President Trump said \$2,000 for every American? We agreed on a bipartisan basis. The first downpayment was last December, \$600, and the remainder, \$1,400, was included in the bill that passed on Saturday.

I have yet to hear a Republican Senator come to this floor and criticize that sum of money. All of them—I should say most of them have publicly supported it, and others say little or nothing about it, but no one is saying that it shouldn't be given as a result of the promise made. We kept that promise. That was part of what we were doing.

We also had a responsibility to millions of Americans who are still collecting unemployment. As of March 14,

they were going to lose their opportunity to continue that unemployment check.

There were arguments made on the floor here that these were just lazy people and that if you give them an unemployment check, they will just continue to be lazy and won't go back to work. I don't buy that. I don't believe it. Are some lazy? Well, possibly. I think the vast majority of these people are desperate. They are desperate because they have been laid off or lost their jobs and they need to keep their families together.

Unemployment benefits do that, and they also give fuel to the economy to recover. We were told that by the Chairman of the Federal Reserve and others—to put enough stimulus back in this economy so we can come out of it strong sooner rather than later. I believe that. Yet people like the Republican Senator from Ohio came to the floor talking about the recovery underway and we don't really need to do as much as President Biden had asked for. I disagree.

All across the board, the bill that we passed, whether it is money for schools or money for hospitals or money for clinics or money for administering this vaccine, was money that will be well spent in the State of Illinois and all across the United States.

Now what troubles me is this: Last year, we had two major bills for COVID relief. They talk about five. There were two major bills. The first was in March, the CARES Act that was worth \$2 trillion. That bill passed the Senate after it had been engineered by Treasury Secretary Mnuchin of the Trump administration. It passed the Senate with every Senator voting yes, 96 to nothing. Every Democratic Senator voted for it.

Then came the followup bill in December, some \$900 billion for more COVID relief, for a temporary, first-quarter-of-this-year fix. When you look at the final rollcall there, it was 92 to 6. All six "no" votes were Republicans. Every Democrat who voted, voted for it—again, a Trump proposal that we supported on the Democratic side.

So then the tables turned on January 20, and a new President came to town. Joe Biden said: Let me finish this and do it effectively. Give me an American Rescue Plan.

How many Republican Senators stood up and said: Well, since the Democrats, in the spirit of responding to this pandemic, came around and supported the Trump plans last year, we will do the same this year. The number—zero. Not one Republican Senator supported the bill that passed on Saturday. We passed it with 50 Democratic votes. That is what it took, with one Republican Senator being missing. But what a disappointment that is, to think that this pandemic and the economic crisis that followed was addressed on a bipartisan basis with every Democratic vote in the major legislation last year, and this year,

under President Biden, we couldn't get one Republican Senator to join us in that effort. It is a disappointment, but I hope it isn't a portent of things to come. We have a lot to do, and we need to do it together on a bipartisan basis. The American people are going to count on us to do it.

I also might say a word about the nominations that Senator McConnell referred to earlier. It is true that some of these nominees are getting votes that indicate a strong majority in support, and that does evidence Republican cooperation, and I want to thank them for joining us in that bipartisan spirit. But it evidences something else as well. These are good nominees. These are good men and women who can serve this country effectively. Given the chance, they will, and the votes that have been cast in support of them indicate that as well.

I won't go into the experience 4 years ago with the Trump nominees, but many of them had troubled records, and some of them didn't even file the necessary disclosures before their names were submitted to us for consideration. So there are a lot of things that have changed in the 4-year period of time. Now we have a chance to approve a team for President Biden and to fill out his national security team.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK BRIAN GARLAND

Madam President, the last person up is Merrick Garland, nominee for Attorney General. He is, simply put, the right nominee to lead the Justice Department. I believe that is true for three primary reasons: one, his integrity; two, his experience; and three, his humility.

Let me begin with integrity.

The Attorney General occupies a unique role in the Cabinet. Although serving at the pleasure of the President and responsible for implementing his policy initiatives, the Attorney General is also the Nation's law enforcement officer.

The AG oversees a Department that must remain impartial, unbiased, and independent. To balance these two roles requires a nominee who is beyond reproach, who understands the need to separate personal preference from constitutional principles, and who has the courage to stand steadfast in the face of political pressure. Merrick Garland is such a nominee.

As a judge of the DC Circuit for more than 20 years, he has been guided by an abiding faith in the rule of law and a firm commitment to make equal justice for all a reality. It is no surprise, then, that more than 60 former Federal judges and more than 150 former Justice Department officials, appointed by Presidents of both parties, have expressed their strong support for Judge Garland's nomination. They know that Judge Garland will carry his integrity and his independence with him in his new role, and the public will soon see the same integrity and independence in the new Department of Justice, a welcome change from the past 4 years.

Judge Garland also has the experience needed to lead the Department from the first day on the job. Before he served on the DC Circuit, Judge Garland served with distinction in multiple Justice Department roles—as a special assistant to the Attorney General, assistant U.S. Attorney, a deputy in the Criminal Division, and top adviser to the Deputy Attorney General.

We know, of course, it was Judge Merrick Garland who ably and admirably led the investigation and prosecution of the Oklahoma City bombing—the worst domestic terrorism attack, to date, in modern American history—and he will, no doubt, draw upon that experience as the Department brings to justice those who perpetrated the hideous January 6 Capitol insurrection and works to prevent further attacks.

But as Judge Garland highlighted at his hearing, his prior tenure at the Department of Justice has also given him insight into what is vital for the Department's success, from the importance of career prosecutors and agents to the breadth of the Department's responsibilities.

Finally, Judge Garland has what I believe to be a characteristic that is often overlooked when we evaluate nominees: humility. He is mindful of the Department's history, a founding rooted in protecting the civil rights enshrined in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments—and he is mindful of just how much work remains in the fight for civil rights.

He is mindful of the enormous power that prosecutors hold and the need to wield that power responsibly. In fact, he told us as much at the hearing when he quoted Robert Jackson, the Attorney General and later Supreme Court Justice, in saying:

The citizen's safety lies in the prosecutor who tempers zeal with human kindness, who seeks truth and not victims, who serves the law and not factional purposes, and who approaches the task with humility.

He is mindful of the opportunities that this country has provided him yet remain elusive for far too many. President Biden nominated Judge Garland to serve with a team of senior Justice Department leaders.

Today, we had a hearing with Lisa Monaco, who is aspiring to be his Deputy Attorney General; Vanita Gupta, who is aspiring to be his Associate Attorney General; and, later, we will have a hearing with Kristen Clarke, who wishes to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

This is an exceptionally well-qualified team of DOJ veterans eager to serve. When the committee reported Judge Garland's nomination, I am happy to report that four Republicans joined all the Democrats, making it a bipartisan rollcall. I think it is worth quoting again. Here is what Judge Garland said:

I come from a family where my grandparents fled anti-Semitism and persecution. The country took us in and protected us.

And I feel an obligation to the country to pay back, and this is the highest, best use of my own set of skills to pay back.

Judge Garland's motivation for serving as the Nation's next Attorney General is powerful, it is honest, and it is humble.

I want to close by coming full circle, so to speak. At Judge Garland's hearing, I noted that, if confirmed, he would be standing on the shoulders of predecessors like Robert Kennedy, who called on Congress to enact sweeping civil rights legislation. Well after that hearing, the committee received a letter from over 30 members of the Kennedy family, and they likened what faces Judge Garland to what faced the young Robert Kennedy as he took up his position as Attorney General. They wrote—the Kennedy family—and I quote:

We are confronted by the same challenges today, particularly in voting rights, in the actions of some of our police officers, and in great disparities in housing, health, and jobs. Merrick Garland's record shows he is dedicated to the kind of justice that does not simply punish but lifts people up so their best selves can be fulfilled.

That is precisely the kind of Attorney General America needs and the kind of Attorney General Merrick Garland will be. I look forward to voting for him, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Ohio.

NOMINATION OF MARCIA LOUISE FUDGE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting another dedicated and talented public servant and a great Ohioan—my Congresswoman for the last 12 years—MARSHA FUDGE, to be our next Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Congresswoman FUDGE is a proud daughter of Ohio. She was born in Cleveland, grew up in Ohio, and graduated from the Ohio State University and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. Congresswoman FUDGE has a long and distinguished career serving our State in the Cleveland and Cuyahoga County courts and Cuyahoga County prosecutors' office, as chief of staff to the trailblazing Stephanie Tubbs Jones, and as mayor of Warrensville Heights, OH.

At HUD, Congresswoman FUDGE will work to help protect our kids from lead poisoning, to restore the promise of fair housing, and to give communities the help and the resources that they need. It is a tall order. It is one she is poised to meet.

She brings to the job the unique and critical experience of serving as mayor for the kind of community that is either overlooked or outright preyed upon by Wall Street and by big investors. She understands we can't write off entire swaths of the country—whether it is a coal town in southeast Ohio or a historic industrial city like the one I grew up in, in Mansfield, or

whether it is farm country around Lexington, OH, or whether it is an urban neighborhood on the East Side of Cleveland.

This champion of Cleveland understands that. She saw up close how lenders preyed on families and the foreclosure crisis that followed. My colleagues have heard me talk about ZIP code 44105, where Connie and I live, which had more foreclosures in the first half of 2007 than any ZIP code in the United States.

At the time, Congresswoman FUDGE was serving as mayor of a city fewer than 20 miles away. Today, she represents this ZIP code in the United States Congress. Those families are more than just a statistic to her. They are her constituents. They are her neighbors. They are her friends. She knows their story. She knows how, for decades, communities have watched as factories closed, investment dried up, and storefronts were boarded over. She knows how many neighborhoods and towns have never had the investment they should—from Black codes to Jim Crow, to red lining, to the discrimination that President Trump's regulators locked into place. She understands how decades of policy funneled resources and jobs away from Black and Brown communities.

A few years ago, I was talking with local health department officials in Cleveland. I asked them what percentage of the older homes that make up the bulk of Cleveland housing have dangerous levels of lead, those homes built right after World War II or before that. They said 99 percent of those homes have high levels of lead—dangerously high levels of lead.

The families in those homes are Congresswoman FUDGE's constituents. She knows what lead poison does to kids. She knows the local efforts that Ohioans are leading in Cleveland to take this on. She lifts up their voices, which have been drowned out or silenced for too long. She will be a champion for families all over the country who want to be able to afford a home without crippling stress every single month and to be able to build wealth through home ownership to pass on to their children and grandchildren.

Congresswoman FUDGE has dedicated her career to fighting for Ohioans. I am excited she is now going to use all that talent and all that passion and all that empathy to fight for her whole country. I ask my colleagues to support her confirmation to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. President, this weekend, on Saturday, we passed the American Rescue Plan that will put shots in people's arms, kids back in school, money in people's pockets, and workers in jobs. Tens of millions of Americans, including more than 5 million Ohioans, are going to see money in their pockets from stimulus checks and the dramatic expansion of the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit.

This comes back to, as it always does in politics—the Presiding Officer knows—as it does in government, and it comes down to “whose side are you on?” as this illustrates pretty well. The American Rescue Plan. We all remember—most of us remember—4 years ago, the Trump tax cut for the rich, and the blue here is the American Rescue Plan, which we just passed on Saturday, which the House will probably pass tomorrow, and President Biden will probably sign it this weekend. The lowest numbers—the lowest 20 percent—saw their income go up by 20 percent under our plan. It is barely perceptible how much it went up under the Trump tax plan. But if you go to the top of 1 percent, you can see how much their income went up, and this is to the tune of millions and millions of dollars, and the lowest earners essentially got nothing from the Trump tax plan.

So you can see here in the blue is how our tax bill will put money in the pockets of middle-income people, all the way up—middle-income people, working-class people, the lowest income people—while the Trump tax plan, of course, was helping the richest people in the country.

We see that middle-class and working-class and low-income families are all going to benefit from the American Rescue Plan. This is a broad investment in a whole country—in the vast majority of people, who get their income not from a stock portfolio but from a paycheck. Contrast that with those who benefitted from the McConnell-Trump tax scam. The vast majority of benefits, as we all know, went to those at the top. Again, look at the top 1 percent. They got more from the Washington Republican tax giveaway than anyone else.

At the time, I remember—the Presiding Officer, I think, remembers this; he opposed that bill vigorously, too—Republicans claimed it just wasn't possible—to do their tax bill, it wasn't possible—to avoid giving tax cuts to the richest 1 percent. They just had to. We knew they were wrong then. This has proved they are wrong.

Again, look at the blue and the purple—the benefits that go to the lowest, to middle-class families, working families, and low-income families. Our rescue plan gave literally zero to the top 1 percent. They are doing just fine. The value of their stock portfolio has soared during the pandemic. We invested in everyone else, in the people who were promised more money in their paychecks from the Republican tax scam but never got those raises.

As I said, 4 million Ohioans will get a stimulus check. That is out of 12 million people in the State. Two million Ohio families will get at least a \$3,000 child tax credit. They will get a check—\$250 every month year round. More than half a million Ohio workers will get an expanded earned income tax credit. Those childless families—single people, childless people, some old, a

number of older Ohioans not yet quite 65—will get their enhanced earned income tax credit. Over a million delivery drivers and more than a million cashiers will get an income boost, and 800,000 home health aides get more money back in their pockets.

These are the workers on the frontlines of the pandemic. These are the people who go to work every day and expose themselves to people whom they don't know, in the course of their job. They go home at night anxious that they might be infecting their families. This is what making hard work pay off looks like. This is what investing in the country looks like. This is what a government on the side of workers and their families look like. It is about the dignity of work. It is about rewarding people that work hard. It is what we did on Saturday. It is what I said, as I was walking out of this building on the way home on Saturday, was the best day of my Senate career because we helped tens of millions of Americans. We helped millions of people in my State. We will make a difference in their lives. That is what we did on Saturday. That is what we will continue to do.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, this past Saturday, Senate Democrats signed off on the largest and most partisan transfer of wealth in the history of the U.S. Congress.

In the weeks leading up to that vote, they insisted that their \$1.9 trillion giveaway would bring the relief the American people were seeking. They quoted suspect polling and anecdotes to support their ridiculous claims that the bill was bipartisan, even though they never even tried to secure bipartisan support. In fact, I would argue that Democrats threw away the idea of bipartisanship the moment they chose to use the reconciliation process to force their hand. After almost 30 hours of debate, they did just that on a party-line vote. Then the cracks in their claims of bipartisanship and necessity began to show.

Almost immediately after the final vote, the majority leader called it—and I am quoting—“one of the most progressive pieces of legislation—if not the most progressive—in decades.” But we all know that his definition of “progressive” isn't compatible with the kind of targeted relief everyone here would probably agree that this country needs, had my colleagues on the other side of the aisle not seen an opportunity to fulfill the radical campaign promises that had put them into power. They chose—they chose—that power over dealing with the needs that people have.

They did what they set out to do. A fraction of the American Rescue Plan's \$2 trillion pricetag would go toward that—and I am quoting again—“big, bold, urgent” relief that Democrats spent all weekend long bragging about. I am sure you heard them as you turned on the TV. Here is the truth: Only 9 percent—9 percent—will go toward vaccines, testing, healthcare jobs; 9 percent of a nearly \$2 trillion bill goes for COVID relief.

But if we want to talk about big, bold spending plans, let's talk about all those special earmarks and sweetheart deals that Democrats used to take advantage of the situation and seize even more power—again, after the power, using people as pawns to get their liberal wish list, get the money in the pipeline. Of course, you can forget that we had \$1 trillion already in the pipeline that had not been spent, also putting their desired power ahead of our children and grandchildren who are going to have to pay that debt. Immoral.

In my office, we call this bill the blue State bailout. We do it for a reason. You can look at this chart. Along with that laughable 9 percent of actual COVID relief, the American people took on \$350 billion in debt to cover a bailout for some of the highest spending and most poorly managed State and local governments in the country. The number is astronomically higher than even the most extreme estimates of need conjured up by leftwing think tanks. It is more than the \$31 billion loss in expected tax revenue that experts forecasted. And it doesn't even take into consideration that many States don't need a bailout. Many States had success putting those five previous bipartisan COVID relief packages to work. They caught up on their tax revenue with time to spare.

But, still, that \$350 billion, it served a purpose. You can see it right here. The blue States, they are getting more money. The red States, they are losing money. It created yet another expectation of dependency that mismanaged States and local governments can lean on when their out-of-control spending policies come back to bite them.

And we have learned today that the majority leader had a staff member who tweeted out that the money from this bill, it would tend to New York State's deficit—pretty much the same thing we are hearing from California and from some of the big blue cities. If you can't control your spending habits, crank up the printing presses.

The payday continued with an \$85 billion no-strings-attached pension bailout that everyone from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget to the editorial board of the Wall Street Journal, to the editorial board of the Washington Post agree had nothing to do with COVID relief—nothing. It was a gift to an embattled constituency and another pernicious assertion that when the going gets tough and the money in those mismanaged funds

evaporates, just call on the Federal Government and crank up the printing presses one more time. Why? Oh, we need the money. We cannot manage our budgets. We are running low on fulfilling our obligation to the pension fund. Oh, my goodness, we have so many needs.

Everybody has needs. Our children and our grandchildren have needs. They need freedom. They need Members of the Senate, Members of the House to act like adults and address the problems that are right in front of us.

When President Biden asked, back in February, what would they have me cut from this spending bill, I would have told him, let's start with this money. Let's start with the money that is going to the States to bail them out because yes, indeed, this is now the Biden blue State bailout.

Democrats' desire for a lawless and open border shone through in their unanimous refusal to accept an amendment that would have kept billions of dollars in direct payments out of the hands of illegal immigrants. This was more than just a handout; it was a signal to every person who is trying to jump the line and break the rules that we will not only tolerate it, but now we are encouraging it. Think about that. Think about that.

The rule of law is out the window. We are willing to chip away at our own security—the Democrats are—and ignore the growing crisis at our southern border—the Democrats are. And if it means we can slap a bandaid on what has become a gaping wound and call it a win in the war against poverty, the Democrats are OK with doing that. It is called spin. But it does not address the underlying issues. It doesn't address the fact that they are doing this at the expense of schools, small businesses, and families.

Democrats certainly followed through on their campaign promise to empower teachers unions. In fact, they went so far as to approve a provision that would pay schools to stay closed. All 50 Democrats voted against an amendment that would have sent new funding only to schools that have followed the science and have reopened safely.

You know, you would have thought that the Democrats would have at least done that for the children. But, no. In addition to saddling them with debt—another \$2 trillion worth of debt—they encouraged the teachers unions to not go back to school. That vote put the power right where the Democrats want it—in the hands of the unions. And millions of students and teachers out there will continue to pay the mental and emotional price for this action.

This bill took so much from people who have absolutely nothing to give. Think of all those billions of dollars wasted on unnecessary State bailouts, pension rescues, and union appeasement. We had the opportunity to spend that money on vaccine distribution and

small business relief and a light at the end of the tunnel for rural healthcare systems that are hanging on by a thread.

So why did Democrats throw so much money at their pet projects? Do they really owe that many favors and paybacks? They certainly didn't pour their time and energy into those 600 pages to provide relief but to shamelessly advance their own agenda and throw aside struggling families and workers. Struggling families and workers were simply the price for getting the power that the Democrats wanted.

When I talk to Tennesseans about what happened in this Chamber last week, I tell them: You are right about what you were seeing as you watched the proceedings. You are right. Democrats took advantage of you, of your desperation and your exhaustion. They used slick messaging and wordy phrases to sell a bill of goods that treats every pet project they have and every liberal wish list agenda item as essential.

They like changing the rules. They change the meaning of words like "essential" because they knew that if they could make everything that they wanted essential, they could take all the power away from local, responsible governments. They could take it away from school districts and small businesses. And do you know what they are doing with it? They are going to centralize it.

See, here is the thing: You were essential to their greedy power grab. They had to have you.

They had to give their bill a nice-sounding name. They had to say certain things were essential, but you—small businesses, families, people who are playing by the rules, you were not essential to them.

See, that is what "progressive" means to Senate Democrats, and if we continue along this road, you are right; it will be an absolute unmitigated disaster for every single person that my colleagues across the aisle have used as leverage against responsible policy that will actually bring us out of this pandemic.

No, it is not about getting out of the pandemic. It is about power, the power that they want.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

FREE SPEECH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have spoken on the Senate floor recently on the subject of free speech as it applies to the world of digital media. The principles of free speech are timeless and are applicable to new forms of communication. Still, it is natural that new questions will arise and new mechanisms might be needed to apply those principles across new modes of communication.

What shouldn't be in question is the need for open dialogue and freedom of speech in academia. Otherwise, what does the principle of academic freedom

mean if it isn't involved with freedom of speech?

All of the progress that has made modern life possible has been the result of individuals who have been able to think of things in new ways, even if that challenged an old orthodoxy. A healthy and vibrant academic environment is not afraid of those challenges.

Only stagnant, defensive, and unconfident regimes suppress speech. Think about the recent protests in Russia, Belarus, or Burma. China's restrictions on the internet and suppression of minorities show that it is threatened by contrary ways of thinking.

Which would you describe as an advanced, stable, and dynamic society: North Korea or South Korea? Obviously, that describes South Korea well. It does not at all describe that part of the Korean Peninsula north of the 38th parallel.

So what does it say about so many American academic institutions that the notion of free thought and free speech has now become controversial? What purpose do universities serve if one of the purposes is not to discuss controversial subjects? I often say my definition of a university is where controversy runs rampant.

We hear lots of rationales about why the current generation of college students needs to be protected from hearing speech that could be offensive, hateful, or just plain wrong. Of course, none of us support hateful speech. I don't support it, but I do support freedom.

If you empower those in authority to limit hate speech, whether they be college administrators or government officials, that power will eventually be abused to limit dissenting points of view of all kinds, and that is where some universities are right now.

Even in Iowa's three public universities, we have seen recent efforts to shut down mainstream, center-right views. For instance, a dean at the University of Iowa sent an email across a university platform criticizing a Trump administrative Executive order, but at that same university, when a student challenged the position of the dean using the very same medium, the student was threatened with disciplinary action.

Well, the dean has since apologized for his initial handling of the subject, so I don't raise that to pick on him. In fact, that very dean has befriended me in very many ways and in thoughtful ways as well. But it just makes you wonder if it is part of a broader cultural trend in academia, what went on in that instance at the University of Iowa.

Then there was an English professor at Iowa State University who had to be reprimanded for banning her students from writing papers expressing certain viewpoints such as opposition to abortion or same-sex marriage. The president of my alma mater, the University of Northern Iowa, had to step in to re-

verse a decision by the student senate denying a group of pro-life students student organization status purely because of their political views.

In each case, the university administrations of these three universities ultimately resolved these incidents well and properly so. I mention them not to pick on my State of Iowa's universities and not to criticize any university, for that matter, but because they seem to be examples of a broader trend on campuses across the country of a knee-jerk reaction to shut down speech some find disagreeable.

The best response to the expression of views that you find repugnant is speech that points out the errors of that particular way of thinking. Now, I think that is best expressed by the University of Chicago's policy, which has become kind of a gold standard for free speech advocacy on university campuses. The University of Chicago expressly prohibits obstructing or otherwise interfering with freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe.

If you are confident in the rightness of your views and you have an environment that allows free expression of those views, you need not fear speech you find wrong. Of course, that assumes that human beings are all gifted with the power of reason and can discern what is right.

Now, if it happens that that is not the case, if people cannot be trusted to listen to different views and come to the right conclusion, then there is no basis for democracy and our system of self-government, then, is fundamentally flawed.

You can shield students from hearing challenging and uncomfortable views while in college but not when they get out in the real world. Just think of these college students who are on campus. What if they had left high school for the world of work? They would be faced with all these things every day.

So what is special about a college campus? In fact, it is so special that you ought to have a discussion of all these subjects. Academic institutions that do not allow for student views to be challenged, to be tested, to be refined through rigorous debate are doing those very same students a very great disservice. These students' knowledge will be limited, then, and their views unsophisticated. Their ability to deal with different ways of thinking, which they will inevitably encounter throughout their lifetime, will be greatly diminished.

I feel sorry for students who graduate from colleges that cocoon them from controversy. Let me repeat what I said at the beginning. I have always thought of a university as a place where controversy should run rampant.

The notion that the voices students hear must be curated for their own good is concerning, not just because it has a totalitarian ring but because it is harming students in the long run, when they have to deal with the real world.

If students are showing up on campus unable to cope emotionally with hearing conflicting viewpoints, that is a problem of their upbringing and education to that point, before they go to that university. It is something colleges need to confront head-on for their students' well-being. Further shielding students from having their views challenged and then sending them out in the world thinking they are prepared is a recipe for failure.

Americans seem to be losing the ability to understand the point of view of those with whom they disagree. That is an unrealistic point of view for Americans to have. It is a failure to teach about freedom. Questioning of motives has replaced principled argument. Shouting insults has displaced logical debate.

Don't you see, this is a societal trend that increasingly is reflected in the Halls of Congress—right here. Those who have attended institutions of higher education should have to be exposed to the great thinkers of the past and the present, be able to argue points logically, and, more importantly, understand the points of those whom they are trying to persuade or refute.

College graduates should be models of civil discourse. Instead, they are too often the vanguard of the closing of the American mind. For the sake of their students and for the benefit of society, I urge college administrators, trustees, alumni, and all Americans who value the free exchange of ideas to work toward reversing this trend.

Open debate may seem contentious at times, but it is the only path toward mutual understanding, which is so needed right now in American society, our less-than-civil American society, which that less-than-civil American society tends to show up in a democracy that has representative government where, if you are really going to have representative government, wouldn't you expect some of what is happening at the grassroots to show up here in the Halls of Congress? And we do see it all the time, to our shame.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK BRIAN GARLAND

Mr. President, on another subject, today the Senate will start consideration of Judge Merrick Garland's nomination to be Attorney General of the United States.

I will be supporting his nomination, but, as I said at Garland's hearing before the Judiciary Committee, I have concerns, and I am here now to repeat those concerns so all of my colleagues can hear them.

I hope he will take these concerns seriously, and I will work with members of the Judiciary Committee to conduct thorough oversight of the Department of Justice in order to make sure the Department is being run independently and free from political influence.

On paper, I don't think anyone would doubt Judge Garland is a good pick to lead the Department of Justice.

His credentials are excellent, and he has a distinguished career of public

service, including all of those long years he has been on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. Of all the possibilities to be President Biden's Attorney General, it is hard to come up with a better pick.

The top law enforcement officer of the United States must be committed to enforcing the rule of law, and he made it very clear that that is what he was going to do. As our former colleague John Ashcroft said—and he was Attorney General, you know, early in the George W. Bush administration—the Department of Justice is the only Cabinet Agency whose name is an ideal. It is not the Department of Law Enforcement but the Department of Justice. Justice is equality under the law. There is one law for all Americans regardless of race, color, creed, or political affiliation.

It is our founding principle that all people are created equal. My hope is that Judge Garland agrees with that principle, and he does, but he has got to be careful to make sure the Justice Department runs accordingly.

That is not how it has always been, however. And I don't want to say that is how it has always been under just Democrat Presidents; it probably has been that way under Republican Presidents too. But I don't think it is how it was run more recently during the Obama years.

Here is what I don't want to see Judge Garland do—and all of my colleagues at the time heard this: The Attorney General then, Eric Holder, famously said that he was a “wingman” to the President. I don't want an Attorney General who takes tarmac meetings with President Clinton while she is investigating his wife. I don't want consent decrees that federalize law enforcement and cause murder rates to soar. I don't want the Civil Rights Division trying to stop school choice in Louisiana. I don't want a return to catch and release. I don't want Operation Choke Point, where the Department of Justice decides that gun stores don't get access to banking services.

I am concerned about the Justice Department's direction before Judge Garland is even confirmed. These are some of the directions. They changed litigation positions on a number of high-profile cases in court, including on immigration, affirmative action, ObamaCare, and other issues.

This is what a very famous Solicitor General, Paul Clement, said: “It has been the long-term position of the Justice Department to defend the constitutionality of statutes whenever reasonable arguments can be made.”

It appears that our new President and his administration are going to flout that tradition. I just stated how Paul Clement felt about it. I hope that Judge Garland brings that point of view in line and preserves the credibility of the Justice Department.

I hope he also preserves his credibility with the Durham investigation. During the Trump administration, I

supported the Mueller investigation. I even supported legislation to protect his investigation in 2018 when it looked like President Trump might fire him. That bill got out of the committee that I chaired at that time.

In 2019, when Bill Barr was before the Judiciary Committee, he was required to commit to not interfere with the Mueller investigation. And I thought that was appropriate.

Now we have another special counsel investigation, this one run by John Durham, a respected career prosecutor who is investigating the Crossfire Hurricane investigation, in which members of the Obama administration spied on and prosecuted members of the Trump campaign.

As a Republican who supported Mueller, I think it is obvious that Judge Garland should have made that same commitment at the hearing about Durham that Bill Barr made about Mueller when he was before the same committee for confirmation. Judge Garland was given multiple opportunities to do so during his hearing and had written questions for the record, but every time he declined to do so unequivocally. He has implied that he won't interfere with the Durham investigation, and I take him at his word. But it would have been better if he had been very clear about it before the committee.

So, further clarification, it is Judge Garland's credibility that is on the line. If Durham is fired for anything other than cause, we will know why Judge Garland refused to give us a commitment like Barr gave us a commitment when we asked for it.

Lastly, I want to make a point about how Judge Garland's nomination went through the Judiciary Committee. Republicans called two witnesses, two of whom supported Judge Garland's confirmation. Republicans also decided not to do the usual holdover of one week of Judge Garland's nomination, allowing him to be reported to the floor a week early. Judge Garland also received bipartisan support in the committee.

It happens that none of these courtesies were extended to either of President Trump's nominees to be Attorney General, one of whom was a colleague of ours here in the Senate and one of whom had already held the job before.

I say all of this to make a point more to the media than to my colleagues because the media seemingly refuses to cover these points of bipartisanship that we didn't get from the Democrats in the previous administration. After the last 4 years of unprecedented obstruction of nominees, I think Republicans would have been justified to make this confirmation a drawn-out process. But we did not do that.

I don't plan on opposing nominees just because of the person who nominated them like many of my colleagues, unfortunately, did in the last 4 years.

So even though I still have some concerns, I believe Judge Garland is a good

person, particularly a good person for this job, to lead the Department of Justice. So I will vote for his confirmation.

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

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it doesn't seem like that long ago—it wasn't; it was only January 20 of this year—that we heard President Biden talk about healing the divisions in our country and promoting unity. He promised to restore respectful, bipartisan communication and cooperation. He spoke eloquently, saying:

Without unity there is no peace, only bitterness and fury.

No progress, only exhausting outrage.

No nation, only a state of chaos.

It really was a fine speech. But here we are, 7 weeks into the Biden administration with a lot of bitterness and fury and outrage over the President's first big, broken promise. On Saturday afternoon, following an all-night voting marathon, our Democratic colleagues passed, by themselves, their so-called COVID-19 relief bill.

Sadly, the lack of bipartisan support was not a surprise. After all, our Democratic colleagues decided to abuse the reconciliation process for this very reason. They wanted to pass a bill they knew would not generate any support among Republicans because it really is a Trojan horse for their liberal wish list. And the only way they could make that happen would be to exclude Republicans, turn down offers of bipartisanship, as the President did when 10 Republicans visited him at the White House just a few weeks ago and decided to go it alone, which is what our Democratic colleagues did.

Since Republicans had no say in the drafting of the bill and because our Democratic friends chose to skip the normal committee consideration, our only opportunity to make any changes to the bill came through the amendment process on the floor. From roughly 11 a.m. on Friday until 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, the Senate voted on more than 30 amendments, largely from folks on our side of the aisle, almost all of which were rejected in a party-line vote.

Outside of Washington, DC, not many people stay up for 24 hours straight to watch Congress vote on budget amendments, so I think it is important that we recap what the American people missed while they were sleeping.

The first amendment vote last Friday was a good barometer of what was happening on the other side of the aisle. The first vote, teed up by the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator SANDERS, would have more than doubled the minimum wage at \$15 an hour. The Congressional Budget Of-

fice said that this would kill 1.4 million jobs, and then the Senate Parliamentarian said that this was an improper use of the budget reconciliation process.

But our Democratic colleagues wanted to take this shot anyway, so they voted to waive a budget point of order, but it did not go well. Eight Democrats voted alongside all Republicans to prevent this abuse of the budget reconciliation process and prevent this job-killing minimum wage mandate from becoming part of this bill.

As it turns out, there is bipartisan opposition to killing jobs at a time when our economy is already on a fragile footing. Who would have thought otherwise?

And once Senators cast their votes, our Democratic friends held the vote open for a recordbreaking 12 hours as they tried to whip their caucus into shape on the most critical amendment, which was next in line.

I am not one to tell our friends across the aisle how to do their job, but normally, when you have a vote, you know ahead of time how that vote is going to come out. That is just legislation 101. But when you are trying to rush, at warp speed, a nearly \$2 trillion wish list to the President's desk, I guess you don't have the time to do things the right way, and you certainly don't have an interest in getting them done in a bipartisan fashion.

But on the rest of the votes we held, over and over again, our Democratic colleagues held together and blocked commonsense amendments offered by this side of the aisle. For example, there were amendments to stop blue States from receiving more than their fair share of the State and local funding. The Democratic proposal includes a jaw-dropping \$350 billion for State and local aid—more than double what was spent in the CARES Act last March when the economic picture was far more dire.

Unlike the CARES Act funding that was distributed based on population, this proposal separated the funds into two pots of money—one to be distributed based on a population formula while the second is based on the unemployment rate.

Senator GRAHAM from South Carolina offered an amendment which would have required this funding to follow the same formula that we did in March, in a bipartisan way, rather than this new formula that favors blue States.

Since the primary argument for the bill was that States needed this funding because of lost tax revenues, it made sense that the largest population States should receive the most funding, a per capita formula. This would eliminate a big windfall for blue States that have largely kept their economies on ice and shuttered, even as COVID-19 cases decreased.

Then there was an amendment from the Senator from Utah, Senator ROMNEY, which would have ensured State

and local funding was only going to those States that actually need it. What a concept. His amendment would require States to apply for aid through the Treasury Department. They could then receive funds to help recover pandemic-related expenses, revenue losses, or unexpected Medicaid costs. But, of course, in a party-line vote, our Democratic colleagues blocked that amendment as well.

And it is not just State and local funding that folks on my side of the aisle wanted us to use more responsibly. I offered an amendment to improve the quality of care for unaccompanied migrant children who arrived along the U.S.-Mexico border. We know that these children are especially vulnerable and their health and safety should have been addressed in this COVID package.

Well, President Biden's border crisis is shaping up to be one of epic proportions. Border agents reportedly detained nearly 100,000 migrants along the southern border last month alone. That marks the highest total for the month of February since 2006. The numbers have now climbed so high that the administration is allowing facilities to house children to operate at 100 percent capacity, when our kids aren't even going back to school in many school districts around the country because of concerns for their safety. Forget that. The Biden administration is now allowing these facilities that house children to operate at 100 percent despite the COVID risk.

An amendment I offered would redirect unnecessary funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and instead send it to the Office of Refugee Resettlement. This office is part of the Department of Health and Human Services, and this extra funding would help keep these children safe and healthy. Unfortunately, for these children, many of whom have endured long and dangerous journeys in the hands of human smugglers, our Democratic colleagues chose the National Endowment for the Humanities instead of these children in distress.

Well, the list of rejected amendments goes on and on.

Senator SCOTT of South Carolina offered an amendment to ensure States weren't fudging on the nursing home death count totals, like the disastrous situation developing in New York that we are just now learning about the magnitude of nursing home deaths that were covered up by the Cuomo administration. This amendment would have required States to certify the accuracy of COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes in order to assess funding for nursing home facility strike teams. Once again, a party-line vote blocked that amendment.

One of the highlights of this long and drawn-out process, which just left me scratching my head, was an amendment from Senator CASSIDY, the Senator from Louisiana, that would have prevented stimulus checks being sent

to people in prison and one from Senator CRUZ, my colleague from Texas, that would have stopped payments from going to people who are not even legally present in the United States. Both amendments were blocked in a party-line vote by Democrats.

Our colleague from Florida, Senator RUBIO, offered an amendment to incentivize a safe return to in-person learning at our Nation's schools. The crux of it was simple: If schools wanted Federal funding, they should actually educate children in the classroom and do so safely, according to CDC guidelines; otherwise, why do they need this huge amount of extra money if they are not actually going to use it to educate our children? Well, our Democratic colleagues blocked that amendment too.

While Americans were sleeping, Senate Democrats stood in the way of numerous commonsense reforms to this behemoth of a partisan bill. They have proven, once again, this so-called COVID-19 relief bill has next to nothing to do with what is best for the country and everything to do with what is best for their liberal partisan agenda.

This bill includes a long list of liberal priorities that are completely unrelated to the crisis at hand. I think roughly 90 percent of it is unrelated to COVID-19. Blank checks for mismanaged union pension funds, funding for climate justice—whatever that is—backdoor money for Planned Parenthood, an exclusive paid leave program for bureaucrats, those are just some of the greatest hits in the vote-arama.

Even the portions of the bill that are related to the pandemic are completely out of proportion. The legislation provides \$130 billion for schools when tens of billions of dollars that we have already appropriated last December remain to be spent.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, only \$6.4 billion will be distributed through September of this year. The remaining \$122 billion would trickle out the door through not just 2021 but through 2028.

Of course, there is the blue State bailout. Despite the fact that tax revenues have largely rebounded and many States are still sitting on piles of cash from previous COVID-19 relief bills, our Democratic friends want to send another \$350 billion to State and local governments but not just on an equitable population-based formula. They rigged the formula to make sure blue States reap the biggest cash benefits.

We know this wasn't the only path forward. We worked, time and time again, this last year on five different occasions to show we can unite to provide COVID-19 relief to the American people.

We could have built on that record this year, which after listening to President Biden's inaugural speech, I had hoped we might do. The first legislation to pass during the Biden administration could have been a bipartisan

pandemic relief bill with overwhelming support. We wouldn't have needed to go through the vote-arama or the abuse of the budget reconciliation process. We could have had a bill that supported the hardest hit families, got kids back at school, and helped expedite vaccination.

But those types of policies, obviously, weren't top of mind for our Democratic friends. They wanted to have a payday for the most radical element of their party at an absurdly high pricetag, which our children and grandchildren are going to be saddled with.

They assembled a laundry list of unrelated wasteful and downright partisan provisions and rejected even the most commonsense amendments offered by this side of the aisle.

Sadly, this legislation passed the House without a single Republican vote. It passed the Senate without a single Republican vote. And now, our Democratic friends are on track to write a \$2 trillion check completely funded by deficit spending without even a trace of bipartisanship.

They don't have a figleaf to hide behind. This was a partisan bill intentionally. Either the President sold snake oil on Inauguration Day or he has already caved into the most radical elements of his own political party. Either way, it is bad news for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, today I am going to talk about the growing crisis on our southern border and how we need urgent action to address the degrading situation there, but before I begin, I want to say a quick word about the reconciliation bill we passed last week.

The massive \$1.9 trillion bill was not COVID-19 relief; it was liberal relief. Everybody and everyone needs to understand what this was. It was not a rescue plan. It was a heist of taxpayers' money. We don't have \$1.9 trillion to be spending. When we have to borrow this much money, we are digging our country deeper into debt. And with this massive spending bill, we are borrowing against our grandkids' future and are going to owe more and more countries like China.

To keep up, the money supply will have to increase at such a rapid rate, it could potentially spark inflation. That means we could see the value of Americans' hard-earned dollars plummet.

To further underscore that point, that means your money doesn't go as far. For the items you buy, it is very expensive. All of this bogs down our economy and hinders future growth.

What is more, this entire sham of a process was partisan. It was not about helping Americans, businesses, and communities recover from the pandemic. That much is clear because only 9 percent of the bill is going to COVID and health-related pressures and less than 1 percent is going to vaccines. The remaining 90 percent went to progres-

sive wish list items for bailouts for poorly run States.

Instead of ramming through non-COVID-related spending, Democrats should have worked together with Republicans as a team to pass a bipartisan bill that actually makes lives better as we recover from this pandemic.

We share a goal of helping the American people, but the bill that was ultimately put forward failed to do just that. It is a shame. This is not how our country should be run.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, we started to see headlines bubbling up about the building crisis at the southern border that is threatening to boil over. Americans back home are paying attention. They are watching what is going on and seeing how it is getting worse by the day. The saddest thing is that this was predictable and preventable.

Protecting our border and cutting down illegal immigration matters to the people of Alabama and the rest of the country. Alabamians are law-abiding people. We play by the rules, and we expect others to follow them too. When people break the rules, they have to face the consequences, plain and simple. That is how our country should operate, by law and order.

Enforcing the laws on our books cannot be an option. Sadly, this type of selected enforcement is exactly what President Biden has done during his short time in office. President Biden has put forward an immigration proposal that would completely upend our existing immigration policy and give out American citizenship like it is candy.

But before that, he made sure to lay the groundwork with Executive orders. President Biden quickly reversed many of President Trump's most successful border control policies with the stroke of his pen. And his Secretary of Homeland Security, whose Department oversees immigration policy and border security, has made it clear he is not interested in enforcing existing laws. We have seen the dangerous effects of President Biden's policies already, and it has barely been 2 months.

But we have also seen some mixed messaging. The same day President Biden issued an order that said building a border wall is a "waste of money that diverts attention from genuine threats to our homeland security," his Department of Homeland Security released official data that tells otherwise. In January 2021, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol Protection encountered approximately 78,000 illegal immigrants, a 6-percent increase from December 2020. Within that number, roughly, 64,800 were single adults, a 157-percent increase compared to January of last year. For unaccompanied children, there has been a 91-percent increase in apprehensions compared to last January.

The data shows the number of illegal immigrants trying to cross the southern border is going up during a month when, historically, apprehensions are low. In fact, the staggering number of people arrested crossing the border illegally this January is the most any January has seen in more than a decade.

In March 2020, President Trump invoked title 42 along the southern border. That means that, in the interest of public health, only essential travelers are permitted to enter the United States. President Biden has maintained title 42 for this purpose, with one exception: Unaccompanied children can still come in.

News outlets reported that border officials told President Biden they “anticipate 117,000 children will arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border without a parent or guardian in 2021.” Why? Because President Biden has given them a free pass to enter the United States. This number is on pace to exceed the all-time record that was set under the Obama administration by 45 percent.

The greater problem here is that the administration doesn’t have enough space to put these children. President Biden was recently briefed on a plan to add 20,000 more beds to meet the needs. Yet, yesterday, news reports showed a record number of unaccompanied children—more than 3,200—are in Border Patrol’s custody. Almost half of these children have been held beyond the 3-day legal limit. The facilities are overwhelmed and bursting at the seams. Folks in the Southwest are already referring to this increase as the “Biden effect.”

Now Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas has the gall to blame the current border crisis on the Trump administration. So why, then, does the Secretary think that new records are being set during the typical off months of January and February? I will tell you why. It is a direct result of President Biden ditching border security measures and sending a “come one, come all” signal. President Biden decided to message to the world that our border is open. We shouldn’t be surprised that people showed up. We all saw this coming, and we warned that reversing President Trump’s policies would lead to national security and humanitarian crises.

On top of all of this, President Biden’s administration is subjecting American citizens to more stringent standards to enter our country than it is with illegal immigrants. On January 26, the CDC began requiring anyone flying to the United States, including American citizens, to provide evidence of a negative COVID test taken within 3 days of their flight. That makes sense. Migrants crossing our border are not subject to the same requirement.

I sent a letter to Secretary Mayorkas about this issue, and I have not yet received a response, but media reports out of Texas seem to have already found the answer. As FoxNews.com re-

ported, more than 100 illegal immigrants released by Border Patrol agents in Brownsville, TX, in the last few weeks have tested positive for the coronavirus. So these folks can cross the border illegally and get tested by the city at the bus stop where the agents let them off, but the city has no authority to prevent them from traveling elsewhere even if they test positive for COVID. How does that fit into President Biden’s plan to bring our country out of this pandemic? American citizens have to prove they have negative tests to enter the country, but illegal immigrants do not.

At a time when the virus is on the retreat, thanks in large part to the vaccine developed by President Trump’s Operation Warp Speed, we cannot now afford to allow thousands and thousands of illegal immigrants into the country, especially without screening them for COVID. It is not only a reckless security policy; it is a reckless health policy. We just spent \$1.9 trillion because that is supposedly what the country needs to help get us past this pandemic. Yet we are going to let people into the country, unchecked, to potentially spread the virus.

President Biden’s policies at the border are reckless. The American people can see it for themselves, and the data prove how bad the situation has become in such a quick timeframe.

We can and should take positive, proactive, concrete steps to secure our border and strengthen our national security. There are two big items to address right away.

No. 1, we should maintain the Migrant Protection Protocols Program. This system was put in place during the Trump administration to process migrant asylum claims at the border without releasing people into the United States. It requires that migrants remain in Mexico pending the completion of their cases. It was successful—hugely successful. The number of apprehensions along the border went down when people realized they couldn’t just come walking into the United States. It was exactly the kind of message we want to send: Our borders are not wide open. You must follow the rules. You must get in line.

Since taking office, President Biden has dismantled the program and is bringing in nearly 30,000 people who are waiting in Mexico.

No. 2, we should continue to build the wall. My constituents expect me to hammer this point home every day. A strong wall will help prevent illegal migrants from crossing over our border between ports of entry to avoid law enforcement.

Just recently, there were reports of a car crash in California that left 13 illegal migrants dead who were stuffed and stacked in the back of a truck. Border Patrol officers believe these migrants entered through a “dilapidated border fence” in Southern California. Weaknesses in our border allow human trafficking efforts like this to continue.

This has to stop. Without needed fixes, President Biden offers false hope, and that is a dangerous signal for desperate people.

Today, I am only mentioning two ways to address the border surge. There are plenty more, and I plan to advocate for them in the weeks and months to come because, unlike this President and his administration, I am fighting for the safety and security of the American people.

I understand our immigration system is not perfect, and I understand President Biden has a different view on what our immigration system should look like, and he has made no secret about where he stands. But any immigration reform proposed must include policies that strengthen our lawful immigration system and protect our Nation’s borders. So far, President Biden’s policies do neither.

I can respect different visions for the future even though I may strongly disagree with them, but what I and the people of Alabama will not stand for is a refusal to enforce the laws of today. It puts our country at risk and encourages migrants to seek dangerous paths to enter our country instead of the legal paths our laws provide. Allowing illegal immigration to go unchecked fundamentally undermines the rule of law in this country. Without laws and without borders where those laws apply, a sovereign nation ceases to exist.

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.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 12, MARCIA LOUISE FUDGE, of Ohio, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Patty Murray, Chris Van Hollen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Brian Schatz, Cory A. Booker, Amy Klobuchar, Benjamin L. Cardin, Angus S. King, Jr., Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of MARCIA LOUISE FUDGE, of Ohio, to be

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 69, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 111 Ex.]

YEAS—69

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Hickenlooper | Peters |
| Bennet | Hirono | Portman |
| Blumenthal | Hoeven | Reed |
| Blunt | Inhofe | Romney |
| Booker | Johnson | Rosen |
| Braun | Kaine | Rounds |
| Brown | Kelly | Sanders |
| Cantwell | King | Schatz |
| Capito | Klobuchar | Schumer |
| Cardin | Leahy | Scott (SC) |
| Carper | Lujan | Shaheen |
| Casey | Manchin | Sinema |
| Collins | Markey | Smith |
| Coons | Marshall | Stabenow |
| Cortez Masto | McConnell | Sullivan |
| Duckworth | Menendez | Tester |
| Durbin | Merkley | Van Hollen |
| Feinstein | Moran | Warner |
| Gillibrand | Murkowski | Warnock |
| Graham | Murphy | Warren |
| Grassley | Murray | Whitehouse |
| Hassan | Ossoff | Wyden |
| Heinrich | Padilla | Young |

NAYS—30

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Ernst | Risch |
| Blackburn | Fischer | Rubio |
| Boozman | Hagerty | Sasse |
| Burr | Hawley | Scott (FL) |
| Cassidy | Hyde-Smith | Shelby |
| Cornyn | Kennedy | Thune |
| Cotton | Lankford | Tillis |
| Crapo | Lee | Toomey |
| Cruz | Lummis | Tuberville |
| Daines | Paul | Wicker |

NOT VOTING—1

Cramer S0634

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). The yeas are 69, the nays are 30.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 27, Merrick Brian Garland, of Maryland, to be Attorney General.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Patty Murray, Chris Van Hollen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Brian Schatz, Cory A. Booker, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Jon Ossoff, Alex Padilla, Benjamin L. Cardin, Sherrod Brown, Angus S. King, Jr., Tim Kaine.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination

of Merrick Brian Garland, of Maryland, to be Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 70, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 112 Ex.]

YEAS—70

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Hassan | Peters |
| Bennet | Heinrich | Portman |
| Blumenthal | Hickenlooper | Reed |
| Blunt | Hirono | Romney |
| Booker | Inhofe | Rosen |
| Brown | Johnson | Rounds |
| Burr | Kaine | Sanders |
| Cantwell | Kelly | Schatz |
| Capito | King | Schumer |
| Cardin | Klobuchar | Shaheen |
| Carper | Lankford | Sinema |
| Casey | Leahy | Smith |
| Cassidy | Lujan | Stabenow |
| Collins | Manchin | Tester |
| Coons | Markey | Thune |
| Cornyn | McConnell | Tillis |
| Cortez Masto | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Duckworth | Merkley | Warner |
| Durbin | Moran | Warnock |
| Ernst | Murkowski | Warren |
| Feinstein | Murphy | Whitehouse |
| Gillibrand | Murray | Wyden |
| Graham | Ossoff | |
| Grassley | Padilla | |

NAYS—29

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Hawley | Sasse |
| Blackburn | Hoeven | Scott (FL) |
| Boozman | Hyde-Smith | Scott (SC) |
| Braun | Kennedy | Shelby |
| Cotton | Lee | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Lummis | Toomey |
| Cruz | Marshall | Tuberville |
| Daines | Paul | Wicker |
| Fischer | Risch | Young |
| Hagerty | Rubio | |

NOT VOTING—1

Cramer S0634

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). On this vote, the yeas are 70, the nays are 29.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Merrick Brian Garland, of Maryland, to be Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate and honor the retirement of one of my senior staff members and friend who has served in my home State of Idaho for the last 12 years as the State director of natural resources, Michael "Mike" D. Roach.

After retiring from the banking industry, Mike came to my staff after my first election to the U.S. Senate in 2009 as the regional director of my Lewiston office. However, with a bachelor's degree in wildlife-fisheries resources from the University of Idaho, I knew he was a perfect fit for the State director of natural resources position stationed in my Boise office. Shortly after starting in Lewiston, Mike helped to find his replacement in north Idaho and moved to southwestern Idaho to lead my State offices in natural resources.

Mike was born in Twin Falls and grew up in southwestern Idaho where his father worked in the cattle and banking industry. This afforded him the opportunity to work and associate with the cattle and sheep industry in Idaho and develop a deep understanding of the history, traditions, and issues of Idaho. While in college at the U of I, he worked for Idaho Fish and Game and served as a Wildlife and Range Sciences Guidance Council member for the U of I's College of Forestry. He was also appointed to the district advisory council for the Bureau of Land Management—Boise District by former Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan. With his deep roots in Idaho, he was the perfect ambassador to the diverse natural resource and conservation groups of the State like the Idaho Cattle Association, Idaho Farm Bureau, Trout Unlimited, and the Nature Conservancy.

During his 12 years of service as my natural resources director, he advised and guided my office through many complicated issues like the sage grouse recovery plan, Idaho Roadless Rule implementation, salmon and steelhead management plans, Columbia River Treaty, Good Neighbor Authority, and many other resource issues. Due to his experience and knowledge, in 2015, the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources awarded Mike Roach the Alumni Award, recognizing his career achievements in natural resources.

Another significant milestone came to pass while serving on staff; he became engaged and married to Cally Grindstaff in 2019. They now make their home in Fairfield, ID.

It is always difficult to lose a trusted staff member of Mike's caliber, but I want to wish him and Cally nothing but best wishes in their future endeavors and look forward to our continued friendship in the years ahead.

Congratulations and thank you for your outstanding service to my staff and the citizens of Idaho.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND KEVIN COX

• Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, on March 15, 2021, having served the Louisiana District United Pentecostal Church in the role of district secretary, 1998–2005, and district superintendent, 2005–Present, Reverend Kevin Cox will retire from his current role, though remaining active in ministry.

Kevin was born in St. Paul, MN—spent his early years in Missouri—before moving to Bogalusa in 1974, when his father became pastor there. He is a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University, where he earned a BS in accounting. In addition to his ministerial license, he holds CPA credentials. He married the love of his life, Delisa, in 1979. She passed away in the spring of 2012. Kevin and Delisa served as pastor in Wewahatchka, FL, from 1980–1986 before returning to Bogalusa where they joined Kevin's parents and assumed the pastorate of First Pentecostal Church of Bogalusa for 12 years. With his election as district secretary, the Cox Family—Kevin and Delisa, along with their two sons, Andrew and Stephen—relocated to the Campground in Tioga.

As district superintendent, in addition to being responsible for the oversight of the ministers and churches of Louisiana, Reverend Cox has continued to coordinate the Louisiana United Pentecostal Camp Meeting. This annual Camp Meeting event has convened for over 100 years here in Louisiana and consists of a week of worship, fellowship, and fun. The Bible speaks of laying up crowns in heaven as a reward for good works on earth. I hope it is many years before Kevin Cox ascends to heaven. When he does, he will have many crowns.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Office laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:03 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. 1280. An act to hold law enforcement accountable for misconduct in court, im-

prove transparency through data collection, and reform police training and policies.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. BARASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SHELBY, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 617. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. LEE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. COLLINS, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 618. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and extend the deduction for charitable contributions for individuals not itemizing deductions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COTTON:

S. 619. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to make the murder of a Federal, State, or local law enforcement officer a crime punishable by life in prison or death; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 620. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, and the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission to conduct studies and report to Congress on actions taken to expand access to telehealth services under the Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP programs during the COVID-19 emergency; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HAWLEY, and Mr. SASSE):

S. 621. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to add membership in a significant transnational criminal organization to the list of grounds of inadmissibility and to prohibit the provision of material support or resources to such organizations; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 622. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance the qualifying advanced energy project credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. HAGERTY):

S. 623. A bill to make daylight saving time permanent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 624. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to increase certain royalty rates, minimum bid amounts, and rental rates, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 625. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to eliminate the enrollment fee requirement for TRICARE Select for members of the Armed Forces who retired before January 1, 2018; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 626. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to enhance protections against the importation, and transport between States, of injurious species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SMITH, Mr. REED, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. KING):

S. 627. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax credits for energy storage technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 628. A bill to increase access to agency guidance documents; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 629. A bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to require Federal agencies to submit to the Comptroller General of the United States a report on rules that are revoked, suspended, replaced, amended, or otherwise made ineffective; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BROWN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 630. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance benefits under the work opportunity credit, increase the work opportunity credit for vocational rehabilitation referrals, qualified SSI recipients, and qualified SSDI recipients, expand the disabled access credit, and enhance the deduction for expenditures to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the handicapped and elderly; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 631. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, to conduct or support research on the mental health consequences of SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. COONS, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 632. A bill to amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 633. A bill to transfer antitrust enforcement functions from the Federal Trade Commission to the Department of Justice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 634. A bill to support and expand civic engagement and political leadership of adolescent girls around the world, and other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 635. A bill to reauthorize The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 636. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to submit to Congress an annual report on projects that are over budget and behind schedule, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 637. A bill to forestall the loss of research talent by establishing a temporary early career research fellowship program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 638. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to include a payment and performance security requirement for certain infrastructure financing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 639. A bill to establish a National Technical Assistance Center on Grandfamilies and Kinship Families; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 640. A bill to provide grants to support continuing education in election administration or cybersecurity for election officials and employees; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

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

S. 641. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to consider certain factors in issuing certificates of public convenience and necessity under that Act, to modify the requirements for the right to exercise eminent domain in construction of pipelines under that Act, to provide that the right of eminent domain may not be exercised under that Act for projects for the exportation of natural gas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 642. A bill to protect the rights of passengers with disabilities in air transportation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 643. A bill to reduce child poverty in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 644. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to restore State authority to waive for certain facilities the 35-mile rule for designating critical access hospitals under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 645. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to levy a fee on methane emissions from oil and natural gas facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 646. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 647. A bill to improve the process for awarding grants under certain programs of the Department of Agriculture to certain counties in which the majority of land is owned or managed by the Federal Government and to other units of local government and Tribal governments in those counties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 648. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to make a technical correction to the water rights settlement for Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 649. A bill to improve the process for awarding grants under certain programs of the Department of Transportation to certain counties in which the majority of land is owned or managed by the Federal Government and to other units of local government and Tribal governments in those counties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. ROSEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 650. A bill to enable the payment of certain officers and employees of the United States whose employment is authorized pursuant to a grant of deferred action, deferred enforced departure, or temporary protected status; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO:

S. 651. A bill to amend SAFETEA-LU to improve the Intelligent Transportation System Program Advisory Committee, to require information and resources for the development of local smart communities, to help establish a 21st century transportation workforce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. BURR, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 652. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Challenge Grant Program to promote technological innovation in our Nation's communities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Res. 97. A resolution calling on the Government of Ethiopia, the Tigray People's Liberation Front, and other belligerents to cease all hostilities, protect human rights, allow unfettered humanitarian access, and cooperate with independent investigations of credible atrocity allegations pertaining to the conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. Res. 98. A resolution recognizing the contributions of AmeriCorps members and alumni and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to the lives of the people of the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. ROMNEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. HAGERTY, and Mr. COONS):

S. Res. 99. A resolution observing the 10th anniversary of the uprising in Syria; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. Res. 100. A resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 101. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that, while the United States finds value and usefulness in the World Trade Organization in fulfilling the needs of the United States and other free and open economies in the 21st century, significant reforms at the World Trade Organization are needed and the United States must therefore continue to demonstrate leadership to achieve those reforms; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 44

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 44, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit kindergarten through grade 12 educational expenses to be paid from a 529 account.

S. 140

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 140, a bill to improve data collection and monitoring of the Great Lakes, oceans, bays, estuaries, and coasts, and for other purposes.

S. 258

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 258, a bill to help small businesses access capital and create jobs by reauthorizing the successful State Small Business Credit Initiative.

S. 271

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of

S. 271, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and make the credit fully refundable.

S. 278

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 278, a bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and socially disadvantaged groups, and for other purposes.

S. 307

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 307, a bill to amend the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to make grants for travel promotion, and for other purposes.

S. 333

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 333, a bill to amend title XI and title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide funding for State strike teams, technical assistance, and infection control for resident and worker safety in skilled nursing facilities and nursing facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 374

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 374, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require the submission by issuers of data relating to diversity, and for other purposes.

S. 437

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 437, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to concede exposure to airborne hazards and toxins from burn pits under certain circumstances, and for other purposes.

S. 441

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 441, a bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a consumer product safety rule for free-standing clothing storage units to protect children from tip-over related death or injury, and for other purposes.

S. 456

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 456, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 460

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 460, a bill to extend the authority for Federal contractors to reimburse employees unable to perform work due to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 31, 2021, to September 30, 2021.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) were added as cosponsors of S. 488, a bill to provide for congressional review of actions to terminate or waive sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.

S. 519

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 519, a bill to review the use of election security grants in the 2020 presidential election and to prohibit future election security grants to States with unconstitutional election procedures.

S. 522

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 522, a bill to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100 word plain language summary of the proposed rule.

S. 530

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 530, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require shareholder authorization before a public company may make certain political expenditures, and for other purposes.

S. 535

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 535, a bill to authorize the location of a memorial on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces that served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism, and for other purposes.

S. 560

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 560, a bill to improve coverage of maternal oral health care, and for other purposes.

S. 583

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 583, a bill to promote innovative acquisition techniques and procurement strategies, and for other purposes.

S. 586

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 586, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to combat the opioid crisis by promoting access to non-opioid treatments in the hospital outpatient setting.

S. 591

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 591, a bill to prohibit firearms dealers from selling a firearm prior to the completion of a background check.

S. RES. 13

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 13, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the International Olympic Committee should rebid the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to be hosted by a country that recognizes and respects human rights.

S. RES. 96

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 96, a resolution designating March 8 through March 14, 2021, as "Women of the Aviation Workforce Week".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SHELBY, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 617. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 617

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Death Tax Repeal Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF ESTATE AND GENERATION-SKIPPING TRANSFER TAXES.

(a) ESTATE TAX REPEAL.—Subchapter C of chapter 11 of subtitle B of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 2210. TERMINATION.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), this chapter shall not apply to the estates of decedents dying on or after the date of the enactment of the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2021.”

“(b) CERTAIN DISTRIBUTIONS FROM QUALIFIED DOMESTIC TRUSTS.—In applying section 2056A with respect to the surviving spouse of a decedent dying before the date of the enactment of the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2021—

“(1) section 2056A(b)(1)(A) shall not apply to distributions made after the 10-year period beginning on such date, and

“(2) section 2056A(b)(1)(B) shall not apply on or after such date.”.

(b) GENERATION-SKIPPING TRANSFER TAX REPEAL.—Subchapter G of chapter 13 of subtitle B of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 2664. TERMINATION.

“This chapter shall not apply to generation-skipping transfers on or after the date of the enactment of the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2021.”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The table of sections for subchapter C of chapter 11 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“Sec. 2210. Termination.”.

(2) The table of sections for subchapter G of chapter 13 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“Sec. 2664. Termination.”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to the estates of decedents dying, and generation-skipping transfers, after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. MODIFICATIONS OF GIFT TAX.

(a) COMPUTATION OF GIFT TAX.—Subsection (a) of section 2502 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

“(a) COMPUTATION OF TAX.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The tax imposed by section 2501 for each calendar year shall be an amount equal to the excess of—

“(A) a tentative tax, computed under paragraph (2), on the aggregate sum of the taxable gifts for such calendar year and for each of the preceding calendar periods, over

“(B) a tentative tax, computed under paragraph (2), on the aggregate sum of the taxable gifts for each of the preceding calendar periods.

“(2) RATE SCHEDULE.—

“If the amount with respect to which the tentative tax to be computed is:

| | The tentative tax is: |
|---|---|
| Not over \$10,000 | 18% of such amount. |
| Over \$10,000 but not over \$20,000 | \$1,800, plus 20% of the excess over \$10,000. |
| Over \$20,000 but not over \$40,000 | \$3,800, plus 22% of the excess over \$20,000. |
| Over \$40,000 but not over \$60,000 | \$8,200, plus 24% of the excess over \$40,000. |
| Over \$60,000 but not over \$80,000 | \$13,000, plus 26% of the excess over \$60,000. |
| Over \$80,000 but not over \$100,000 | \$18,200, plus 28% of the excess over \$80,000. |
| Over \$100,000 but not over \$150,000 | \$23,800, plus 30% of the excess over \$100,000. |
| Over \$150,000 but not over \$250,000 | \$38,800, plus 32% of the excess over \$150,000. |
| Over \$250,000 but not over \$500,000 | \$70,800, plus 34% of the excess over \$250,000. |
| Over \$500,000 | \$155,800, plus 35% of the excess over \$500,000.”. |

(b) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN TRANSFERS IN TRUST.—Section 2511 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN TRANSFERS IN TRUST.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section and except as provided in regulations, a transfer in trust shall be treated as a taxable gift under section 2503, unless the trust is treated as wholly owned by the donor or the donor’s spouse under subpart E of part I of subchapter J of chapter 1.”.

(c) LIFETIME GIFT EXEMPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) of section 2505(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

“(1) the amount of the tentative tax which would be determined under the rate schedule set forth in section 2502(a)(2) if the amount with respect to which such tentative tax is to be computed were \$10,000,000, reduced by”.

(2) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—Section 2505 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any calendar year after 2011, the dollar amount in subsection (a)(1) shall be increased by an amount equal to—

“(A) such dollar amount, multiplied by

“(B) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for such calendar year by substituting ‘calendar year 2010’ for ‘calendar year 2016’ in subparagraph (A)(ii) thereof.

“(2) ROUNDING.—If any amount as adjusted under paragraph (1) is not a multiple of \$10,000, such amount shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of \$10,000.”.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 2505(a) of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(2) The heading for section 2505 of such Code is amended by striking “UNIFIED”.

(3) The item in the table of sections for subchapter A of chapter 12 of such Code re-

lating to section 2505 is amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 2505. Credit against gift tax.”.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to gifts made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(f) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of applying sections 1015(d), 2502, and 2505 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, the calendar year in which this Act is enacted shall be treated as 2 separate calendar years one of which ends on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act and the other of which begins on such date of enactment.

(2) APPLICATION OF SECTION 2504(b).—For purposes of applying section 2504(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, the calendar year in which this Act is enacted shall be treated as one preceding calendar period.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. COONS, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 632. A bill to amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Inventor Diversity for Economic Advancement Act of 2021. I thank my colleague from North Carolina, Senator TILLIS, for working with me on this important piece of legislation, which serves as a first step to closing the diversity gap in our patent system by collecting demographic data on patent applicants.

Women and racial minorities have made some of the most significant inventions in this Nation’s history. The \$75 billion home security industry grew

from an initial home security system invented by Marie Van Brittan Brown. The computer would never have become the multimedia device it is today without the microcomputer system invented by Mark Dean. The genetic revolution would still be science fiction if not for the CRISPR gene-editing tool discovered by Jennifer Doudna—raised on Hawaii’s Big Island.

We should celebrate these inventors and the many others like them who have contributed to innovation in this Nation. But we must also recognize the hard truth that women, racial minorities, and many other groups are greatly underrepresented in the U.S. patent system.

The Patent and Trademark Office’s recent report on women inventors shines a spotlight on one part of this problem. The PTO found that only 22 percent of U.S. patents list a woman as an inventor and that women make up only 13 percent of all inventors. This is true even though women held 43 percent of all full-time jobs in 2016 and 28 percent of STEM jobs in 2015.

Other reports highlight racial patent gaps. For example, a report by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research found that the percentage of African American and Hispanic college graduates who hold patents is approximately half that of their white counterparts.

Closing these gaps would turbocharge our economy. According to a study by Michigan State University Professor Lisa Cook, including more women and African Americans in the “initial stage of the process of innovation” could increase GDP by as much as \$640 billion.

Another study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that eliminating the patent gap for women with science and engineering degrees alone would increase GDP by over \$500 billion.

It's simply good policy and good business to want to fully integrate people of all types into our innovation economy. But if we have any hope of closing the various patent gaps, we must first get a firm grasp on the scope of the problem.

Studies of the demographic makeup of patentees, like the ones I described, are few and far between. The reason is a simple one. A lack of data. The PTO does not collect any data on applicants beyond their first and last names and city, State, and country of residence. As a result, those wishing to study patent gaps between different demographic groups are forced to guess the gender of an applicant based on his or her name, determine the race of an applicant by cross-referencing census data, or explore a number of other options that are time-consuming, unreliable, or both.

The IDEA Act solves this problem. It would require the PTO to collect demographic data—including gender, race, and military or veteran status—from patent applicants on a voluntary basis. It would further require the PTO to issue reports on the data collected and, perhaps more importantly, make the data available to the public with appropriate protections for personally identifiable information. Outside researchers could therefore conduct their own analyses and offer insights into the various patent gaps in our society.

Let me be clear. Closing the information gap facing researchers alone will not solve the patent gap facing women, racial minorities, and so many others. But it is a critical first step. I therefore encourage my colleagues to support the IDEA Act.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 644. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to restore State authority to waive for certain facilities the 35-mile rule for designating critical access hospitals under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 644

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Rural Hospital Closure Relief Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. RESTORING STATE AUTHORITY TO WAIVE THE 35-MILE RULE FOR CERTAIN MEDICARE CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL DESIGNATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1820 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i-4) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)(i)—

(i) in subclause (I), by striking at the end “or”;

(ii) in subclause (II), by inserting at the end “or”;

(iii) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

“(III) subject to subparagraph (G), is a hospital described in subparagraph (F) and is certified on or after the date of the enactment of the Rural Hospital Closure Relief Act of 2021 by the State as being a necessary provider of health care services to residents in the area;”;

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(F) HOSPITAL DESCRIBED.—For purposes of subparagraph (B)(i)(III), a hospital described in this subparagraph is a hospital that—

“(i) is a sole community hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(5)(D)(iii)), a medicare dependent, small rural hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(5)(G)(iv)), a low-volume hospital that in 2021 receives a payment adjustment under section 1886(d)(12), a subsection (d) hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(1)(B)) that has fewer than 50 beds, or, subject to the limitation under subparagraph (G)(i)(I), is a facility described in subparagraph (G)(ii);

“(ii) is located in a rural area, as defined in section 1886(d)(2)(D);

“(iii)(I) is located—

“(aa) in a county that has a percentage of individuals with income that is below 150 percent of the poverty line that is higher than the national or statewide average in 2020;

“(bb) in a health professional shortage area (as defined in section 332(a)(1)(A) of the Public Health Service Act); or

“(II) has a percentage of inpatient days of individuals entitled to benefits under part A of this title, enrolled under part B of this title, or enrolled under a State plan under title XIX that is higher than the national or statewide average in 2019 or 2020;

“(iv) subject to subparagraph (G)(ii)(II), has attested to the Secretary two consecutive years of negative operating margins preceding the date of certification described in subparagraph (B)(i)(III); and

“(v) submits to the Secretary—

“(I) at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require, an attestation outlining the good governance qualifications and strategic plan for multi-year financial solvency of the hospital; and

“(II) not later than 120 days after the date on which the Secretary issues final regulations pursuant to section 2(b) of the Rural Hospital Closure Relief Act of 2021, an application for certification of the facility as a critical access hospital.

“(G) LIMITATION ON CERTAIN DESIGNATIONS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may not under subsection (e) certify pursuant to a certification by a State under subparagraph (B)(i)(III)—

“(I) more than a total of 175 facilities as critical access hospitals, of which not more than 20 percent may be facilities described in clause (ii); and

“(II) within any one State, more than 10 facilities as critical access hospitals.

“(ii) FACILITY DESCRIBED.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—A facility described in this clause is a facility that as of the date of enactment of this subparagraph met the criteria for designation as a critical access hospital under subparagraph (B)(i)(I).

“(II) NONAPPLICATION OF CERTAIN CRITERIA.—For purposes of subparagraph (B)(i)(III), the criteria described in subparagraph (F)(iv) shall not apply with respect to

the designation of a facility described in subclause (I).”; and

(2) in subsection (e), by inserting “, subject to subsection (c)(2)(G),” after “The Secretary shall”.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue final regulations to carry out this section.

(c) CLARIFICATION REGARDING FACILITIES THAT MEET DISTANCE OR OTHER CERTIFICATION CRITERIA.—Nothing in this section shall affect the application of criteria for designation as a critical access hospital described in subclause (I) or (II) section 1820(c)(2)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i-4(c)(2)(B)(i)).

SEC. 3. CMI TESTING OF NEW RURAL HOSPITAL DELIVERY AND PAYMENT MODEL.

Section 1115A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1315a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)(A), by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The models selected under this subparagraph shall include the testing of a new rural hospital delivery and payment model (or models), as described in subsection (h).”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) TESTING OF NEW RURAL HOSPITAL DELIVERY AND PAYMENT MODEL.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—

“(A) TESTING.—The Secretary shall test the implementation of a new rural hospital delivery and payment model (or models) that the Secretary determines would promote financially sustainable ways to ensure patient access to care in rural communities, which may include models under which such hospitals furnish outpatient emergency care services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for which payment is made under title XVIII based on the amount determined under the prospective payment system for hospital outpatient department services under section 1833(t), plus a fixed rate for the cost of furnishing the emergency services.

“(B) PROMULGATION OF REGULATIONS.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations to test a new rural hospital delivery and payment model (or models) described in subparagraph (A), unless Congress enacts legislation that establishes such a payment model (or models) prior to the promulgation of regulations pursuant to this subparagraph.

“(2) TRANSITION.—Effective beginning on the date on which the testing of a new rural hospital delivery and payment model (or models) described in paragraph (1)(A) is implemented under this subsection or such a payment model (or models) is established through the enactment of legislation described in paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary shall provide a process under which—

“(A) all critical access hospitals may transition to such new model or models under this subsection; and

“(B) any facility that was designated as a critical access hospital pursuant to a certification by a State under section 1820(c)(2)(B)(i)(III) may revert to the prospective payment model (or models) under which the facility received payment under title XVIII prior to being so designated.”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 97—CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA, THE TIGRAY PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT, AND OTHER BELLIGERENTS TO CEASE ALL HOSTILITIES, PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS, ALLOW UNFETTERED HUMANITARIAN ACCESS, AND COOPERATE WITH INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS OF CREDIBLE ATROCITY ALLEGATIONS PERTAINING TO THE CONFLICT IN THE TIGRAY REGION OF ETHIOPIA

Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 97

Whereas the United States and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia share an important relationship and more than a century of diplomatic relations;

Whereas Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and plays a key role in advancing security and stability across sub-Saharan Africa, including as a top contributor of uniformed personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions;

Whereas tensions between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which was part of the ruling coalition in Ethiopia until late 2019, escalated when the TPLF held elections in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia on September 9, 2020, despite the decision by the Federal Government of Ethiopia to postpone general elections due to the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas the TPLF rejected the postponement of general elections and considered the extension of the term of the Federal Government to be unconstitutional, and the Federal Government subsequently deemed the Tigray regional elections illegitimate;

Whereas, in the early hours of November 4, 2020, Prime Minister Abiy ordered a military offensive in response to an attack by the TPLF on the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), which evolved into an armed conflict between the ENDF and allied forces on one side and the TPLF on the other side, with thousands of deaths reported;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia rejected all offers, including one extended by African Union Chairman Cyril Ramaphosa in November 2020, to mediate talks with the TPLF;

Whereas, on November 28, 2020, the Government of Ethiopia claimed victory in the conflict after taking Mekelle, the capital city of the Tigray Region, with Prime Minister Abiy announcing that his forces had "completed and ceased the military operations" and would shift focus to rebuilding the region and providing humanitarian assistance while Federal police attempt to apprehend leaders of the TPLF;

Whereas clashes have continued in the Tigray Region and Ethiopian soldiers and allied forces have pursued prominent TPLF leaders, notably killing former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia Seyoum Mesfin as part of a "stabilizing mission . . . to bring to justice perpetrators";

Whereas, in 2020, prior to the outbreak of fighting in the Tigray Region, there were more than 1,800,000 people internally dis-

placed in Ethiopia and approximately 2,000,000 people in the Tigray Region were already in need of humanitarian assistance;

Whereas the conflict in the Tigray Region has prompted more than 61,000 Ethiopians to seek refuge in Sudan, has displaced as many as 500,000 people internally, and has caused severe shortages of food, water, medical supplies, and other necessary goods for those who remain in the region;

Whereas the conflict has disrupted harvests, livelihoods, markets, and supply chains, food and medical supplies have been looted, and restrictions and bureaucratic impediments continue to constrain the humanitarian response, with nearly 4,000,000 people in the Tigray Region estimated to require urgent food assistance, including 100,000 Eritrean refugees;

Whereas, during the first few weeks of the conflict, there was a complete shutdown of electricity, banking, internet, and telephone services throughout the Tigray Region by the Government of Ethiopia, with government reports of TPLF forces also destroying communications infrastructure, and subsequent service restorations have been limited;

Whereas, in addition to the shutdown of telephone and internet services, which has severely limited the flow of information on the conflict and the humanitarian situation, journalists have been restricted from accessing much of the Tigray Region, several journalists have been arrested in connection to their coverage of the conflict, and one journalist working for the Tigray Mass Media Agency was killed;

Whereas, although the Government of Ethiopia entered into an agreement with the United Nations on November 29, 2020, to facilitate humanitarian access to the Tigray Region, that access remains limited;

Whereas, on February 1, 2021, the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council stated, "Twelve weeks since the fighting began, the basic elements of a response on the scale needed are still not in place. It is false to say that aid is increasingly getting through. Aid has only gone to the places with little conflict and more limited needs and is not keeping pace with the humanitarian crisis as it inevitably grows over time.";

Whereas, on February 6, 2021, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) announced a new agreement with the Government of Ethiopia to rapidly scale up the deployment of emergency food assistance while improving the process for reviewing and approving requests from United Nations and humanitarian partner agencies;

Whereas humanitarian access to the refugee camps that were home to almost 100,000 Eritrean refugees at the start of the conflict has been especially restricted, with the Hitsats and Shimelba camps still completely inaccessible, and the United Nations Refugee Agency estimates that 20,000 Eritrean refugees displaced from those camps remain unaccounted for;

Whereas United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi has expressed alarm about the "overwhelming number of disturbing reports of Eritrean refugees in Tigray being killed, abducted and forcibly returned to Eritrea";

Whereas, in November 2020, four humanitarian workers, including one employee of the International Rescue Committee and three employees of the Danish Refugee Council, were killed at Hitsats refugee camp;

Whereas challenges to access have significantly restricted the reporting and documentation of atrocities, but survivor and eye-witness testimony and satellite imagery have enabled reports to emerge of targeted violence or indiscriminate attacks against

civilians committed by multiple parties to the conflict;

Whereas examples of reported atrocities committed in the Tigray Region include the massacre in the town of Mai Kadra on November 9, 2020, in which, according to estimates from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), more than 600 civilians died from what the EHRC Chief Commissioner concluded was "for no reason other than their ethnicity," and a mass killing in the city of Axum on November 28 through 29, 2020, which involved, according to reports from Amnesty International, the systematic killing of "hundreds of unarmed civilians" after Ethiopian and Eritrean troops retook the city;

Whereas United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten has highlighted reports of sexual and gender-based violence, including a high number of alleged rapes in Mekelle;

Whereas, on January 27, 2021, the United States Government publicly confirmed that Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) are participating in the conflict in alliance with the ENDF and called for the immediate withdrawal of all EDF soldiers from the Tigray Region, and credible reports have emerged that EDF soldiers participating in the conflict have attacked civilians, including Eritrean refugees, and looted and destroyed homes and religious institutions;

Whereas Ethiopia has been beset in recent years by multiple human rights and humanitarian challenges, including targeted ethnic violence, intercommunal conflict, natural disasters, and political unrest;

Whereas, since mid-2020, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International, and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission have reported atrocities and a rise in ethnic and intercommunal violence in other parts of Ethiopia, including in the Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Somali, Afar, and Oromia regions;

Whereas, according to international human rights organizations, during the conflict in the Tigray Region, ethnic Tigrayans throughout Ethiopia have been suspended from their jobs and prevented from leaving the country, and there are reports of surveillance and mass arrests of citizens of Ethiopia based on their ethnicity;

Whereas Ethiopia is undergoing a fragile democratic transition, with the postponed 2020 general elections rescheduled for June 2021, except in the Tigray Region, where elections have not yet been scheduled;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has restricted the right of several opposition political parties to peacefully assemble, and a number of opposition leaders have been jailed since the summer of 2020, with varying degrees of due process violations and procedural delays in their trials; and

Whereas the conflict in the Tigray Region occurs within the context of complicated regional and global dynamics featuring ongoing negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Ethiopia's rapprochement with Eritrea, threats posed by the violent extremist organization Al-Shabaab, a struggle for influence and power among regional and global actors, increasingly hostile border disputes between Ethiopia and Sudan, and the fragile democratic transition and peace process in Sudan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly disapproves of the escalation of political tensions between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) into armed conflict and condemns in the strongest terms all violence against civilians;

(2) appreciates the willingness of Sudan to welcome refugees fleeing the conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia;

(3) calls on the Government of Eritrea to immediately and fully withdraw its military forces from Ethiopia;

(4) calls for the swift and complete restoration of electricity, banking, telephone, and internet services throughout the Tigray Region and other parts of Ethiopia where communications have been restricted;

(5) calls on the Government of Ethiopia to—

(A) ensure that any apprehensions of TPLF members are carried out with the least possible use of force and that the rights to which those detained are entitled under Ethiopian and international law are fully respected;

(B) release opposition leaders detained on the basis of their political activity as well as journalists detained on the basis of their reporting, and respect the rights of all Ethiopians to free expression and political participation, without discrimination based on ethnicity, ideology, or political affiliation; and

(C) convene a national dialogue inclusive of all nonviolent political parties, ethnic communities, religious groups, and civil society organizations in Ethiopia to work toward the sustainable resolution of grievances and chart a democratic and peaceful path forward for the country;

(6) urges all parties to the conflict to—

(A) cease all hostilities, fully comply with international humanitarian law, and refrain from actions that could spread or escalate the conflict, particularly attacks on civilian targets;

(B) make demonstrable progress to guarantee unfettered and immediate humanitarian access, for personnel and supplies, to areas affected by the conflict, and take all possible steps to protect the safety of civilians, including refugees, displaced persons, and humanitarian aid workers; and

(C) allow for, and cooperate with, independent and transparent investigations of any alleged human rights abuses committed in the course of the conflict and hold perpetrators to account; and

(7) urges the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, in coordination with the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, to—

(A) engage at the highest levels with leaders of the Government of Ethiopia, the Government of Eritrea, and the TPLF to encourage the full cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Eritrean forces, mitigate the humanitarian crisis that has emerged from the conflict, and support an inclusive process of national dialogue and reconciliation;

(B) immediately establish criteria to end the pause of all non-life-sustaining assistance to Ethiopia and support programming to meet immediate humanitarian needs, including of refugees and internally displaced persons, advance nonviolent conflict resolution and reconciliation, and aid a democratic transition in Ethiopia;

(C) ensure that the call made by Secretary of State Blinken on February 27, 2021, for a “full, independent, international investigation into all reports of human rights violations, abuses, and atrocities” committed in the course of the conflict is realized and impose strict accountability measures on those found responsible;

(D) take all possible diplomatic steps to prevent further ethnic-based violence and mass atrocities, including by non-state armed groups, in Ethiopia; and

(E) maintain close coordination with international allies and multilateral organizations regarding efforts to address the con-

flict in the Tigray Region and bring attention to the conflict in international fora, including the United Nations Security Council.

SENATE RESOLUTION 98—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS AND ALUMNI AND AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS TO THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. CASIDY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 98

Whereas, since their inception, each of the AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors national service programs have proven to be a highly effective way—

(1) to engage the people of the United States in meeting a wide range of local and national needs; and

(2) to promote the ethics of service and volunteerism;

Whereas, each year, nearly 270,000 individuals serve in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors at 40,000 locations across the United States to give back in an intensive way to communities, States, Tribal nations, and the United States;

Whereas AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors funds have been invested in nonprofit, community, educational, and faith-based groups, and those funds leverage hundreds of millions of dollars in outside funding and in-kind donations each year;

Whereas AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have provided millions of hours of service nationwide, helping—

(1) to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people of the United States;

(2) to protect the environment;

(3) to contribute to public safety;

(4) to respond to disasters;

(5) to strengthen the educational system of the United States; and

(6) to expand economic opportunity;

Whereas AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers recruit and supervise millions of community volunteers, demonstrating the value of AmeriCorps as a powerful force for encouraging people to become involved in volunteering and community service;

Whereas, for more than 5 decades, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the RSVP, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companion programs have played an important role in strengthening communities by sharing their experience, knowledge, and accomplishments with the individuals they serve;

Whereas, since 1994, more than 1,200,000 individuals have taken the AmeriCorps pledge to “get things done for America” by becoming AmeriCorps members through the AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC programs;

Whereas AmeriCorps members nationwide, in return for the service of those members, have earned more than \$4,000,000,000 to use to further their own educational advancement at colleges and universities across the United States;

Whereas AmeriCorps is a proven pathway to employment, providing members with valuable career skills, experience, and contacts to prepare them for the 21st century workforce and to help close the skills gap in the United States;

Whereas, in 2009, Congress passed the bipartisan Serve America Act (Public Law 111-

13; 123 Stat. 1460), which authorized the expansion of national service, expanded opportunities to serve, increased efficiency and accountability, and strengthened the capacity of organizations and communities to solve problems;

Whereas national service programs have engaged millions of people in the United States in results-driven service in the most vulnerable communities of the United States, providing hope and help to individuals with economic and social needs;

Whereas national service and volunteerism demonstrate the best of the spirit of the United States, with people turning toward problems and working together to find community solutions; and

Whereas AmeriCorps Week, observed in 2021 from March 7 through March 13, is an appropriate time for the people of the United States—

(1) to salute current and former AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers for their positive impact on the lives of people in the United States;

(2) to thank the community partners of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors for making the programs possible; and

(3) to encourage more people in the United States to become involved in service and volunteering; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) encourages the people of the United States to join in a national effort—

(A) to salute AmeriCorps members and alumni and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers; and

(B) to raise awareness about the importance of national and community service;

(2) acknowledges the significant accomplishments of the members, alumni, and community partners of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors;

(3) recognizes the important contributions made by AmeriCorps members and alumni and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to the lives of the people of the United States; and

(4) encourages individuals of all ages to consider opportunities to serve in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors.

SENATE RESOLUTION 99—OBSERVING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING IN SYRIA

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KANE, Mr. ROMNEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. HAGERTY, and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 99

Whereas 10 years ago, on March 15th, 2011, in the midst of the Arab Spring, hundreds of Syrians peacefully assembled to call on their leadership for democratic reforms and respect for their fundamental freedoms, sparking a nationwide movement;

Whereas in response to the predominantly peaceful protests, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad ordered unyielding violence against the people of Syria, including arbitrary detentions, torture, killing, and attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, often under the false premise of combating terrorism;

Whereas over the course of this conflict, the Assad regime has exhibited unrelenting depravity in its use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs, deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, and committing gross violations of international humanitarian law;

Whereas the former Syrian military photographer “Caesar” meticulously photographed the Assad regime’s widespread system of arrest, detention, torture and murder of tens of thousands of Syrian protesters and dissidents, and then courageously smuggled 55,000 of those photographs out of Syria, exposing the regime’s barbarity for the world to witness;

Whereas the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (22 U.S.C. 8791 note), which became law on December 20, 2019—

(1) seeks accountability for the Assad regime and its international enablers for atrocities against the Syrian people;

(2) denies the Assad regime the resources to fuel its war machine; and

(3) sends a clear signal to the international community against normalizing, rehabilitating, or legitimizing Assad and his backers.

Whereas Iran and Russia intervened militarily in support of the Assad regime, enabling and actively participating in the Assad regime’s horrific brutalities against civilians in favor of advancing their narrow interests and in some cases empowered extremist groups;

Whereas in pursuit of its narrow self-interest, Russia, backed by China, has blunted United Nations’ efforts to preserve vital border crossings that serve as a critical humanitarian lifeline to the beleaguered Syrian population.

Whereas the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria exacerbated the suffering of the Syrian people through the violent and hostile seizure of territory, misapplication of Islamic law, destruction and smuggling of antiquities, and oil smuggling, turning Syria into a global hub for terrorist activity;

Whereas the Assad regime, and its Russian and Iranian backers, are largely responsible for the death of more than 500,000 Syrian civilians, and the displacement of more than 12,000,000 men, women, and children within and outside of Syria’s borders, imposing irreversible trauma and loss for a whole generation;

Whereas millions of Syrians are struggling to survive, with more than 13,000,000 Syrians who are in need of humanitarian assistance and more than 9,000,000 Syrians who are facing food insecurity;

Whereas international efforts to secure a peaceful political transition of power in Syria, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, adopted on December 18, 2015, remain stymied, due almost entirely to the intransigence of Russia and the Assad regime, holding the people of Syria hostage;

Whereas the people and Government of the United States support the people of Syria in their aspirations for peace, stability, dignity, and accountability;

Now, therefore, be it
Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) solemnly observes the 10th anniversary of the Syrian uprising;

(2) affirms that it is the policy of the United States—

(A) to seek a political solution to the Syrian conflict;

(B) to continue to stand with the people of Syria;

(C) to further efforts to secure a permanent ceasefire;

(D) to continue work on the constitutional committee free from regime intransigence; and

(E) to foster conditions for free and fair elections in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254;

(3) affirms that it is the policy of the United States to promote adherence to the laws of war by all parties engaging in hostilities in Syria;

(4) affirms that it is the policy of the United States to support international humanitarian efforts to assist innocent civilians, including through support for displaced populations and the promotion of accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses;

(5) commits to continuing efforts to hold the Assad regime and its Russian and Iranian backers accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity; including through implementation of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019;

(6) commends the bravery of Syrian human rights defenders who, in the service of justice and accountability, have courageously documented the atrocities committed by the Assad regime and its Russian and Iranian backers over the course of this conflict;

(7) condemns the indiscriminate use of force by all actors in Syria, including the Assad regime, its proponents, its opponents, and extremist groups;

(8) calls on the United States Government to reinvigorate diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict as outlined under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, and to expand humanitarian aid to the Syrian people so they may—

(A) be free from violence, whether from the State or other armed groups;

(B) return to their communities of their own free will and in an informed manner;

(C) participate in transitional justice; and

(D) decide their own futures through free and fair elections that result in a legitimate representative government that serves all Syrians.

SENATE RESOLUTION 100—SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 100

Whereas, as of March 2021, there are approximately 3,803,000,000 women and girls in the world;

Whereas women and girls around the world—

(1) have fundamental human rights;

(2) play a critical role in providing and caring for their families and driving positive change in their communities;

(3) contribute substantially to food security, economic growth, the prevention and resolution of conflict, and the sustainability of peace and stability; and

(4) must have meaningful opportunities to more fully participate in and lead the political, social, and economic lives of their communities;

Whereas the advancement and empowerment of women and girls around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States and is critical to the achievement of global peace and prosperity;

Whereas the National Security Strategy of the United States, published in December 2017—

(1) declares that “[s]ocieties that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful”;

(2) supports “efforts to advance women’s equality, protect the rights of women and girls, and promote women and youth empowerment programs”; and

(3) recognizes that “governments that fail to treat women equally do not allow their societies to reach their potential”;

Whereas, on October 6, 2017, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (22 U.S.C. 2152j et seq.) was enacted into law, which includes requirements for a government-wide “Women, Peace, and Security Strategy” to promote and strengthen the participation of women in peace negotiations and conflict prevention overseas, enhanced training for relevant United States Government personnel, and follow-up evaluations of the effectiveness of the strategy;

Whereas the United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security, dated June 2019, recognizes that—

(1) the “[s]ocial and political marginalization of women strongly correlates with the likelihood that a country will experience conflict”;

(2) there is a “tremendous amount of untapped potential among the world’s women and girls to identify, recommend, and implement effective solutions to conflict”, and there are “benefits derived from creating opportunities for women and girls to serve as agents of peace via political, economic, and social empowerment”; and

(3) barriers to the meaningful participation of women and girls in conflict prevention and resolution efforts “include underrepresentation in political leadership, pervasive violence against women and girls, and persistent inequality in many societies”;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (commonly referred to as “UN Women”), peace negotiations are more likely to end in a peace agreement when women and women’s groups play a meaningful role in the negotiation process;

Whereas, according to a study by the International Peace Institute, a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in the development of the peace agreement;

Whereas the joint strategy of the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) entitled “Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism” and dated May 2016—

(1) notes that women can play a critical role in identifying and addressing drivers of violent extremism in their families, communities, and broader society; and

(2) commits to supporting programs that engage women “as key stakeholders in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities”;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in criminal justice professions and security forces vastly enhances the effectiveness of the security forces;

Whereas, despite the contributions of women to society, hundreds of millions of women and girls around the world continue to be denied the right to participate freely in civic and economic life, lack fundamental legal protections, and remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse;

Whereas, every year, approximately 12,000,000 girls are married before they reach the age of 18, which means that—

(1) nearly 33,000 girls are married every day; or

(2) nearly 23 girls are married every minute;

Whereas, despite global progress, it is predicted that by 2030 more than 150,000,000 more girls will marry before reaching the age of 18, and approximately 2,400,000 girls who are married before reaching the age of 18 are under the age of 15;

Whereas girls living in countries affected by conflict or other humanitarian crises are often the most vulnerable to child marriage,

and 9 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are considered fragile or extremely fragile;

Whereas, according to the International Labour Organization, 71 percent of the estimated 40,300,000 victims of modern slavery in 2016 were women or girls;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (commonly referred to as "UNICEF")—

(1) approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have been victims of some form of physical violence;

(2) approximately 120,000,000 girls worldwide, slightly more than 1 in 10, have experienced forced sexual acts; and

(3) an estimated 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas, according to the 2018 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime entitled "Global Report on Trafficking in Persons", from 2003 to 2018, 72 percent of all detected trafficking victims were women or girls;

Whereas, on August 10, 2012, the United States Government launched a strategy entitled "United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally", which is the first interagency strategy that—

(1) addresses gender-based violence around the world;

(2) advances the rights and status of women and girls;

(3) promotes gender equality in United States foreign policy; and

(4) works to bring about a world in which all individuals can pursue their aspirations without the threat of violence;

Whereas, in June 2016, the Department of State released an update to that strategy, underscoring that "[p]reventing and responding to gender-based violence is a cornerstone of the U.S. Government's commitment to advancing human rights and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls";

Whereas, despite the achievements of individual female leaders and evidence that democracy and equality under the law form a mutually reinforcing relationship in which higher levels of equality are strongly correlated with the relative state of peace of a country, a healthier domestic security environment, and lower levels of aggression toward other countries—

(1) women around the world remain vastly underrepresented in—

(A) national and local legislatures and governments; and

(B) other high-level positions; and

(2) according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 25 percent of national parliamentarians and 21 percent of government ministers;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth, self-reliance, and political and social stability;

Whereas the overall level of violence against women is a better predictor of the peacefulness of a country, the compliance of a country with international treaty obligations, and the relations of a country with neighboring countries than indicators measuring the level of democracy, level of wealth, or level of institutionalization of the country;

Whereas, although the United Nations Millennium Project reached the goal of achieving gender parity in primary education in most countries in 2015, more work remains to be done to achieve gender equality in primary and secondary education, and particularly in secondary education worldwide as gender gaps persist and widen, by addressing—

(1) discriminatory practices;

(2) harmful cultural and social norms;

(3) inadequate sanitation facilities, including facilities to manage menstruation;

(4) child, early, and forced marriage;

(5) poverty;

(6) early pregnancy and motherhood;

(7) conflict and insecurity; and

(8) other factors that favor boys or devalue girls' education;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—

(1) approximately 132,000,000 girls between the ages of 6 and 17 remain out of school;

(2) girls living in countries affected by conflict are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school than boys;

(3) girls are twice as likely as boys to never set foot in a classroom; and

(4) up to 30 percent of girls who drop out of school do so because of adolescent pregnancy or child marriage;

Whereas women around the world face a variety of constraints that severely limit their economic participation and productivity and remain underrepresented in the labor force;

Whereas the economic empowerment of women is inextricably linked to a myriad of other human rights that are essential to the ability of women to thrive as economic actors, including—

(1) living lives free of violence and exploitation;

(2) achieving the highest possible standard of health and well-being;

(3) enjoying full legal and human rights, such as access to registration, identification, and citizenship documents, and freedom of movement;

(4) access to formal and informal education;

(5) access to, and equal protection under, land and property rights;

(6) access to fundamental labor rights;

(7) the implementation of policies to address disproportionate care burdens; and

(8) receiving business and management skills and leadership opportunities;

Whereas closing the global gender gap in labor markets could increase worldwide gross domestic product by as much as \$28,000,000,000,000 by 2025;

Whereas, pursuant to section 3(b) of the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 (22 U.S.C. 2151-2(b)), it is the international development co-operation policy of the United States—

(1) to reduce gender disparities with respect to economic, social, political, educational, and cultural resources, as well as wealth, opportunities, and services;

(2) to strive to eliminate gender-based violence and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals and communities, including through efforts to develop standards and capacity to reduce gender-based violence in the workplace and other places where women work;

(3) to support activities that secure private property rights and land tenure for women in developing countries, including—

(A) supporting legal frameworks that give women equal rights to own, register, use, profit from, and inherit land and property;

(B) improving legal literacy to enable women to exercise the rights described in subparagraph (A); and

(C) improving the capacity of law enforcement and community leaders to enforce such rights;

(4) to increase the capability of women and girls to fully exercise their rights, determine their life outcomes, assume leadership roles, and influence decision making in households, communities, and societies; and

(5) to improve the access of women and girls to education, particularly higher education opportunities in business, finance, and management, in order to enhance financial literacy and business development, management, and strategy skills;

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, global maternal mortality decreased by approximately 44 percent between 1990 and 2015, yet approximately 830 women and girls continue to die from preventable causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth each day, and 99 percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, of the 830 women and adolescent girls who die every day from preventable causes relating to pregnancy and childbirth, 507 die each day in countries that are considered fragile because of conflict or disaster, accounting for approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of all maternal deaths worldwide;

Whereas the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that women and girls comprise approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the 67,200,000 refugees and internally displaced or stateless individuals in the world;

Whereas women and girls in humanitarian emergencies, including those subject to forced displacement, face increased and exacerbated vulnerabilities to—

(1) gender-based violence, including rape, child marriage, domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation and assault;

(2) disruptions in education and livelihood;

(3) lack of access to health services; and

(4) food insecurity and malnutrition;

Whereas malnutrition poses a variety of threats to women and girls specifically, as malnutrition can weaken their immune systems, making them more susceptible to infections, and affects their capacity to survive childbirth, and children born of malnourished women and girls are more likely to have cognitive impairments and higher risk of disease throughout their lives;

Whereas it is imperative—

(1) to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and girls; and

(2) to afford women and girls every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities; and

Whereas March 8, 2021, is recognized as International Women's Day, a global day—

(1) to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women in the past, present, and future; and

(2) to recognize the obstacles that women face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of International Women's Day;

(2) recognizes that the fundamental human rights of women and girls have intrinsic value that affect the quality of life of women and girls;

(3) recognizes that the empowerment of women and girls is inextricably linked to the potential of a country to generate—

(A) economic growth and self-reliance;

(B) sustainable peace and democracy; and

(C) inclusive security;

(4) recognizes and honors individuals in the United States and around the world, including women human rights defenders, activists, and civil society leaders, who have worked throughout history to ensure that women and girls are guaranteed equality and fundamental human rights;

(5) recognizes the unique cultural, historical, and religious differences throughout the world and urges the United States Government to act with respect and understanding toward legitimate differences when promoting any policies;

(6) reaffirms the commitment—

(A) to end discrimination and violence against women and girls;

(B) to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of women and girls;

(C) to pursue policies that guarantee the fundamental human rights of women and girls worldwide; and

(D) to promote meaningful and significant participation of women in every aspect of society and community, including conflict prevention, protection, peacemaking, and peacebuilding;

(7) supports sustainable, measurable, and global development that seeks to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and

(8) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 101—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT, WHILE THE UNITED STATES FINDS VALUE AND USEFULNESS IN THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION IN FULFILLING THE NEEDS OF THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER FREE AND OPEN ECONOMIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY, SIGNIFICANT REFORMS AT THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION ARE NEEDED AND THE UNITED STATES MUST THEREFORE CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP TO ACHIEVE THOSE REFORMS

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. RES. 101

Whereas the United States has led the formation, as well as reform, of rules governing the multilateral trading system since World War II;

Whereas the United States is a founding member of the World Trade Organization (in this preamble referred to as the "WTO") and a key architect of the organization;

Whereas the United States secured important commitments in the WTO to facilitate trade in goods and services, to prevent the application of non-scientific restrictions on United States agriculture, and to protect United States intellectual property;

Whereas the United States uses the rules of the WTO to benefit workers, farmers, and businesses in the United States by facilitating access to the 90 percent of the world's consumers who live outside the borders of the United States;

Whereas the fundamental purpose of the WTO is to create space for members to negotiate with each other, and the WTO reserves to those members exclusively the right to negotiate and adopt rules that reduce and eliminate trade barriers and discriminatory treatment;

Whereas the prompt settlement of disputes in which a member of the WTO considers that its rights are being impaired by the actions of another member is essential to the functioning of the WTO and the maintenance of a proper balance between the rights and obligations of members;

Whereas the WTO's dispute settlement function, including in particular the Appellate Body, has increasingly failed to enforce the rules of the WTO in a timely manner, and has usurped the negotiating prerogative of members by creating new obligations and

rights that are inconsistent with the rules negotiated by members;

Whereas the creation of those obligations and rights undermines—

(1) the WTO's negotiating function by discouraging members from making concessions; and

(2) the WTO's dispute settlement function by encouraging overuse of the process and undermining its legitimacy, including by preventing free market economies from responding to globally trade distortive practices by nonmarket economies;

Whereas the WTO does not have sufficient rules to discipline the distortive economic policies of nonmarket economies, such as policies relating to excess capacity and forced technology transfer, the special treatment those economies afford to state-owned enterprises, and their massive and opaque industrial subsidies;

Whereas there is long-standing bipartisan support in the United States Congress to reform the WTO to address those failings;

Whereas the current presidential administration, as well as prior administrations, raised concerns about the failings described in this preamble and have made reform of the WTO a top priority of United States trade policy;

Whereas the United States urges WTO members to work constructively with the United States to assess the reasons why the existing WTO rules have proven inadequate in order to create an atmosphere within the WTO that is conducive to the development of new rules less subject to jurisprudential drift;

Whereas the guiding principle for reform of the WTO, and the lens through which WTO members should consider specific reform proposals, is the restoration of the WTO's capability and capacity for negotiation between members; and

Whereas, given that the United States has achieved its trade policy objectives through active leadership at the WTO, and that an absence of that leadership would be filled by nonmarket economies that are hostile to a host of United States interests: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) while the United States finds value and usefulness in the World Trade Organization (in this resolution referred to as the "WTO") in order to fulfill the needs of the United States and other free and open economies in the 21st century, significant reforms are needed;

(2) the United States must therefore continue to demonstrate leadership to achieve reforms that restore the effectiveness of the WTO's—

(A) negotiating function;

(B) dispute settlement function so that it transparently, efficiently, and fully enforces outcomes negotiated by members rather than usurping their primacy by creating new rights or obligations; and

(C) rules for special and differential treatment to ensure those rules promote development for truly disadvantaged countries, rather than becoming tools for globally competitive countries to engage in protectionism and market distortions;

(3) the efforts to reform the negotiating function of the WTO should revitalize the negotiating function by providing confidence to members that the WTO operates according to the rules as negotiated and adopted by members;

(4) a revitalized negotiating function must include new rules that reflect the 21st century economy, further combat anticompetitive and protectionist barriers, and ensure disputes are efficiently resolved;

(5) the United States Trade Representative should continue to lead efforts to work with WTO members to pursue reforms at the WTO that—

(A) ensure the dispute settlement mechanism faithfully applies the rules adopted by members, including by undertaking measures to ensure the WTO's Appellate Body does not create new rights and obligations;

(B) improve public confidence in dispute settlement by promoting greater transparency and efficiency in the conduct of proceedings;

(C) redress the consistent failure by certain members to satisfy their notification obligations under various WTO agreements, including through measures that strengthen accountability;

(D) ensures rules for special and differential treatment are appropriately reserved for countries whose state of development and global competitiveness actually warrants such flexibility;

(E) create new rules and structures that can serve the interests of the United States while promoting peace, prosperity, good governance, transparency, effective operation of legal regimes, the rule of law, and free enterprise; and

(F) expand upon the trilateral negotiations currently underway with Japan and the European Union; and

(6) the United States Trade Representative should explore and assess specific reform proposals, including—

(A) pursuing plurilateral agreements that further the interests of the United States while limiting the benefits accruing to countries that are not parties to those agreements;

(B) efforts to ensure that incorrect interpretations by the Appellate Body, including with respect to the Agreement on Safeguards, the Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, and the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, are corrected, and not to be deemed precedential;

(C) new rules and norms to address practices of nonmarket economies, such as practices relating to state-owned enterprises, which certain countries often utilize for objectives that cause severe trade distortions; and

(D) better implementation of existing rules, such as the prohibition in paragraph 4 of Article XIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on currency manipulation, to ensure that those rules are effective to preserve the rights of free market economies.

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:

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 6 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, pursuant to Public Law 116-283, on behalf of the Majority Leader of the Senate and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, appoints the following individual as a member of the Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorate the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America: LTG Thomas P. Bostick (ret.) of Virginia.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, March

10; 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; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Fudge nomination as provided under the previous order; finally, that the Senate recess following the confirmation vote on the Fudge nomination until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, for the information of Senators, there will be four rollcall votes during Wednesday's session of the Senate in relation to the Fudge, Garland, and Regan nominations.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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 7:01 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nomination received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

UZRA ZEYA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS), VICE SARAH SEWALL, RESIGNED.