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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.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, You have always been our helper. Continue to teach our lawmakers to live for Your glory.

Lord, lead them along the paths that will keep our Nation strong. Give them confidence in Your guidance and a passion for Your truth. Strengthen them so that they will be courageous in defense of righteousness. Inspire them to wait patiently for the ultimate triumph of Your prevailing providence. May they find spiritual nourishment simply by being kind to each other.

We pray in Your merciful 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.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, the Senate completed an extremely productive day by confirming three members of President Biden's Cabinet. Today, we are going to keep up the pace by moving the ball forward on two more of the President's nominees.

First, the Senate will begin the process of bringing Xavier Becerra's nomination to the floor to serve as HHS Secretary. This is a critical position as we continue to battle the virus, and I am perplexed that none of my Republican colleagues would vote for him. He is a capable man, and he has worked hard to make sure that people get healthcare. Some have said: Well, he is not a doctor. Neither was the previous Trump nominee for HHS, who happened to be a pharmaceutical company executive. Whom would Americans prefer?

Second, the Senate will move forward with another very historic nominee who makes us so proud, Representative DEB HAALAND of New Mexico, to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior. She will be confirmed on Monday. Representative HAALAND was elected to the Congress in 2018. She was the first Native American woman, along with Representative SHARICE DAVIDS of Kansas, to ever serve in the people's House. If confirmed, Representative HAALAND will not only become the first Native American to lead the Department of the Interior, but she will be the first Native American to serve in any Cabinet position in American history. We have had a Vice President with Native American roots but never a Cabinet official.

Given the long and troubled relationship between the Federal Government and Tribal nations, the ascension of

Representative HAALAND to the top of the Interior Department is a profoundly important moment for America as we advance on the long road—still not fully traveled at all—toward equality. For too long, Tribal nations have been denied a seat at the table where decisions were made that impacted their lives and their land. Not only will Secretary HAALAND ensure that they get a seat, she will bring her own lived experiences to the table alongside them.

Under President Trump, the Department of the Interior became one of the most scandal-ridden Agencies in the history of the Federal Government. It gave oil and mining companies carte blanche to drill in wildlife reserves. It rolled back environmental protections and greatly undermined trust in the Federal Government and Tribal lands.

Representative HAALAND will move the Department in a dramatically different direction. One of her most important responsibilities will be to restore and uphold the Federal Government's obligations to sovereign Tribal nations. I cannot think of a better candidate to take on this job than Representative HAALAND, and I greatly look forward to confirming her. It will be historic.

Now, in general, Madam President, the Senate is making great progress in installing President Biden's highly qualified nominees. So far, we have already confirmed 16 Cabinet-level appointments. We are set to increase that number to 18 after Secretaries HAALAND and Becerra are approved. Every single one of the President's nominees has been confirmed with a bipartisan vote here on the Senate floor. President Biden deserves to have his team in place, and the Senate is moving quickly to get the job done.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Madam President, on the American Rescue Plan,

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



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which finally cleared the hurdle in Congress yesterday by passing the House, it is now only a Presidential signature away from becoming law. Soon—very soon—the most sweeping recovery effort in recent history will get underway.

Direct checks will be delivered to American families from coast to coast—roughly, 85 percent of all households. The American people can expect those \$1,400 checks for each person in the family to be delivered by the end of March, and we are making amazingly good progress on vaccines. Vaccines will be available far more quickly to far more people.

Just this morning, the Biden administration announced an expansion of the vaccine program, and I was able to announce that more than 100 community health centers in my home State of New York will be eligible to get their own, dedicated supply of vaccines. There is a brand new vaccine supercharge for New York and for some of the rest of the Nation as well—the crux: more vaccines and more sites to administer them. Over 100 sites will be set up across New York State to administer a massive influx of new shot supplies.

There is light at the end of this COVID tunnel, which has always been centered on access to a free vaccine for all New Yorkers. More access and more shots mean a quicker recovery, and that is what we want, and that is becoming available for my home State of New York and for the entire Nation.

The CHC sites, or community health center sites, will be federally funded and organized by the Department of Health and Human Services—a huge expansion. We have all heard numerous stories of people having to travel too far to get the vaccine, hampering our ability to recover and return to normal. With this announcement of more vaccines and more New York sites to administer them, New Yorkers have something to celebrate, and I thank the President for working with us to make this effort real and to bring it to every State in the Nation. Other things are happening, too.

Our schools will receive critical assistance to update their infrastructure, hire more teachers and tutors, and prepare to reopen as fast and as safely as possible.

There is going to be money for broadband. There are going to be dollars for rural hospitals. There are going to be dollars to help our Tribal nations—all who are suffering. The new RESTAURANTS Act, which is so important to so many of our States, is becoming law. More money for Save our Stages to help our arts institutions is coming.

Perhaps the thing that we are the most proud of—although there are so many in this bill—is helping people with their pensions and making sure those who are laid off still get healthcare by funding COBRA fully.

There are so many good things for average working families, but maybe

the most important of all—who knows? There are so many good things in this bill—is the child tax credit, which will cut childhood poverty in half. When a child is born into poverty at no fault of his or her own, they don't get adequate nutrition. They don't get adequate healthcare. They don't get adequate housing. They don't get adequate education. Then, when they get to young adulthood, they have nowhere to go, and then they get blamed for their plight. The better, smarter, more effective thing to do is to help them get out of poverty early so they can lead good, productive lives as citizens and as taxpayers. We are doing that for the first time here, and I hope it is something that we can continue.

Simply put, the American Rescue Plan is one of the most significant pieces of legislation to pass the Congress in recent history.

Yesterday, I started describing in more detail some of the lesser known aspects of the plan. Everyone knows that vaccines are coming, that \$1,400 checks are coming, that money for schools is coming, and now people know of the child tax credit, but there are lots of other things in this bill. Today, I want to continue by talking about another unheralded provision: assistance to Native communities. It is a topic very much on theme today given the nomination of Secretary HAALAND.

One of the most tragic features of the COVID-19 pandemic is how destructive it has been for America's Tribal nations. Native Americans have faced the highest risk of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths due to COVID-19—bar none, the highest. Early in the crisis, the Navajo Nation, to take one example, saw more cases per capita than any other State in the country. Decades of an unraveling social safety net, declining economic opportunity, an overburdened health system, and the failure of the Federal Government to honor its trust obligations to American Tribes left Native communities unequipped to handle the crisis. But in the American Rescue Plan, the Democrats will deliver the single largest investment in Native communities in our Nation's history. We are very proud of that. It is historic—the single largest investment in Native communities in our Nation's history. More than \$31.2 billion in direct funding will go to Tribes and communities to defeat this pandemic and rebuild their communities; \$20 billion directly to Tribal governments so they can stabilize essential services; \$6 billion to the Indian Health Service, not just for vaccines and testing and tracing but to improve and restore these rural, long-neglected hospitals; hundreds of millions more for Native education; \$10 million will go to just making sure communities can access clean water.

Listen to the items I just mentioned: clean water, keeping hospitals running, connecting kids to broadband. These are absolute necessities, and the Amer-

ican Rescue Plan is going to dedicate resources to all of them for Indian Country.

I want to thank a whole bunch of my colleagues. So many contributed, but the chair of the Indian Affairs Committee, Senator SCHATZ, and Senators TESTER and CANTWELL and SMITH and KELLY and BEN RAY LUJÁN and Heinrich are very, very important. Senator HEINRICH particularly pushed for broadband. So it was a team effort, and I am proud of my colleagues.

The American Rescue Plan takes us a giant step closer to fulfilling our trust responsibilities to all Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. This is just one example, an important one, as to how the rescue plan will dramatically improve the lives of millions of people in this great country of ours.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, a year ago, coronavirus cases were beginning to climb on U.S. soil. Shutdown measures were starting to take effect.

Americans have endured one of the strangest and most painful years in living memory. Nearly 2 million Americans have been hospitalized with serious cases of the virus. More than half a million have lost their lives. Millions of students and workers have had their lives completely thrown off course. But these dark times have also spotlighted some of the best of America: heroism, selflessness, ingenuity.

Last March, the night we passed the CARES Act without a single dissenting vote, I said we would see a new generation of American heroes, and so we have. Doctors and nurses and first responders have worked tirelessly to help their fellow Americans. Essential workers kept manning their posts and prevented economic collapse. Neighbors looked out for neighbors, and small businesses shifted gears almost overnight. Children and parents have fought to adapt to extraordinary disruptions, and incredible heroes in lab coats in America and worldwide worked at light speed to decode this new enemy and create lifesaving vaccines in record time.

Today, together, we are standing on the cusp of a new springtime for our

country not like anything we have experienced in our lifetimes. More than 95 million vaccine doses have reached American arms; another 2 million every single day. COVID-related deaths have plummeted, now less than half of their high, particularly for the elderly and the vulnerable. Science reaffirms kids can be safely in the classroom right now. States are starting to lift blanket restrictions, freeing citizens and small businesses to follow smart precautions themselves. For weeks, every indicator has suggested our economy is poised to come roaring back, with more job openings for Americans who need work.

None of these trends began on January 20. President Biden and his Democratic government inherited a tide that had already begun to turn toward decisive victory.

In 2020, Congress passed five historic bipartisan bills to save our health system, protect our economic foundations, and fund Operation Warp Speed to find vaccines. Senate Republicans led the bipartisan CARES Act that got our country through the last year.

The American people already built the parade that has been marching toward victory; Democrats just want to sprint in front of the parade and claim credit.

So when 10 Republican Senators went to the White House to suggest working together, the Democrats said: Uh, no. Both the Democratic leader and the White House Chief of Staff now indicate they think President Obama's problem was that he was too bipartisan.

This time, as one journalist put it, the situation was "Democrats to GOP: Take it or leave it." The "it" that we are talking about here was a bill that only spent about 1 percent on vaccines and about 9 percent on the entire health fight. The rest of the tab went to things like this: a \$350 billion bailout for State and local budgets unrelated to pandemic needs, with strings attached to stop States from cutting taxes on their own citizens down the road—take the money, you don't get to cut taxes; massive Federal school funding spread over several years, without requiring quickly reopening; sweeping new government benefits with no work requirements whatsoever—a time warp to the bad times before bipartisan welfare reform—which Democrats already say they want to make permanent; and agricultural assistance conditioned not on specific financial need but solely on the demographics of the farmer, which some liberal activists are celebrating as "reparations." Only about 20 percent of the spending went to \$1,400 direct checks, to try to keep all of the unrelated socialism out of the spotlight.

This wasn't a bill to finish off the pandemic; it was a multitrillion-dollar Trojan horse full of bad, old liberal ideas. President Biden's own staff keep calling this legislation "the most progressive bill in American history"—

hardly the commonsense bipartisanism that the President promised.

So we pause today at the 1-year mark to remember and to mourn, but we also look with great optimism toward the future. Twenty twenty-one is set to be a historic comeback year, not because of the far-left legislation that was passed after the tide had already turned but because of the resilience of the American people.

(Mr. PADILLA assumed the Chair.)

NOMINATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on a completely different matter, at noon today, the Senate will vote on whether to pluck the Becerra nomination out of committee after it failed to garner enough support to advance.

Every one of President Biden's nominations the Senate has considered so far has received bipartisan support for confirmation. There is a reason Mr. Becerra could not get one single Republican vote to move out of committee. It is because he is such a thoroughly partisan actor with so little subject-matter expertise and such a demonstrated history of hostility toward basic values like the freedom of conscience. There is nothing about Mr. Becerra's record in Congress or in California to suggest he is the best possible person to run the Department of Health and Human Services in the middle of a once-in-a-generation viral pandemic—not even close.

This is too important a job at too important a time for this administration to put raw partisanship ahead of qualifications. So I would strongly urge all Senators to vote against rescuing this nomination from committee. Let's give the President the opportunity to make a better selection.

TRIBUTE TO MARY SUIT JONES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on one final matter, as I have mentioned, it is customary for some top Senate staff positions to see new faces when party control changes hands.

Today, it is my honor to pay tribute to Mary Suit Jones, a huge asset to this institution who has become an institution herself.

Tomorrow, Mary will finish her second separate run as Assistant Secretary of the Senate and conclude a Senate career that has spanned more than a quarter of a century.

I first met Mary Jones in the mid-1990s when we brought her on board to help manage my office. Neither I nor Mary's colleagues back then could have predicted that nearly 30 years later, she would depart as one of the most senior officers in the entire place. But the truth is, if you had told us, nobody would have been even a little surprised either.

I have entrusted Mary with a lot of different responsibilities over the years. She served as our office manager

just a few years out of college. She came with me to the Rules Committee, first as deputy staff director and then the top job. Senator Frist had the good judgment to ask her to be Assistant Secretary in the early 2000s. Then she returned to Rules and resumed serving as our staff director under Senators Bob Bennett, Lamar Alexander, and then Pat Roberts. Finally, she generously brought all of this expertise and institutional knowledge back to the Assistant Secretary role 6 years ago.

In her first job in my office, Mary organized one team of people and our infrastructure. In her current job, she has overseen 26 departments and scores of Senate staff, pushing resources and guidance down and pushing information up. In between, at Rules, she tackled things like helping run Presidential inaugurations.

Through it all, I cannot name one time when Mary Jones did not deliver. She is consistent, competent, and completely reliable. No wonder her name has become a kind of catchphrase around the Senate when anyone is trying to track down some key piece of wisdom or is puzzling over how to get something done: "Well, let's ask Mary Jones." "Have you checked with Mary Jones?" "I think Mary knows all about that."

Everyone from junior staff to senior Senators, Republicans and Democrats, have been able to count on Mary for expertise and execution. On a million different subjects, she knows the answer to the question you are going to ask before you even finish asking it. A rock-solid administrator, a consummate professional—she is just that good.

So I am sorry to see Mary depart the Senate, but she has given generously to this place. She has certainly earned the opportunity to apply her many talents to some new challenges and perhaps knock a few miles off of her famously epic commute while she is at it.

The whole Senate thanks Mary for her excellent service. We wish her, her husband, and their kids all the best in the exciting new chapters that lie ahead.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to discharge the nomination of Xavier Becerra from the Committee on Finance.

The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senate is now debating the motion to discharge from the Finance Committee the nomination of California Attorney

General Xavier Becerra to head the Department of Health and Human Services.

As chairman of the Finance Committee, I am going to begin with a simple message: Holding up the nomination of Attorney General Becerra has been blocking urgent anti-virus work that needs to get done now. So it is time for the Senate to act quickly, without politics getting in the way, to confirm this nominee.

I also believe moving quickly on this nomination will help to achieve something I heard a lot of Senators talk about over the last few days.

A few days ago, I spent almost 24 hours here at this desk while the Senate was debating a number of different issues. Over the course of that debate and in the weeks before it, many Senators talked about how important it was to get past some of the longstanding disagreements and find unity.

I will say to my colleagues: There could not be a more unifying prospect for America than ending this public health nightmare as quickly as possible, preventing as many COVID-19 deaths as possible, and helping the American people get back to the activities that they enjoy, that they consider part of their normal daily routine.

Having a confirmed Secretary leading the Department of Health and Human Services is a linchpin for accomplishing that task. The Department is right at the effort, at the forefront, to end this contagion. It is leading the distribution of vaccines. It is working to get PPE into the hands of nurses and doctors who still—still—desperately need more of it. It is getting new resources to rural hospitals to keep them afloat and to keep their doors open to patients who literally had nowhere else to go during this crisis.

Health and Human Services is right in the center of the government-wide COVID response. They coordinate work at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, with the Centers for Disease Control, with the National Institutes of Health, with the National Guard, with all 50 States, with the District of Columbia, with private healthcare systems and doctors across the country and more individuals and organizations that are just too numerous to name. Now, that is what the job is all about and why it is so critical right now.

I want to turn to some of what I have heard discussed with respect to Attorney General Becerra. I have heard some say that, well, he doesn't have the right leadership experience. That is a comment being made about the head of America's second largest department of justice. This nominee is in charge of a billion-dollar budget. This nominee is in charge of more than 4,000 employees as the top law enforcement official in what would be the fifth largest economy in the world. This is the work of somebody who really knows how to run a mammoth government agency.

Then there have been suggestions about his healthcare background. This is one that, to me, is just bizarre, given the track record. He spent years and years on the House Ways and Means Committee, which is one of the key committees in the country with respect to jurisdiction over healthcare policy. He wrote and debated major pieces of healthcare legislation, including playing an important role in the development of the Affordable Care Act. As California's attorney general, he defended the Affordable Care Act in court. When the pandemic hit, he stepped up and fought to protect the health and well-being of millions of Californians, particularly nurses and doctors and other workers who found themselves in harm's way.

When one is in the Senate, you understand that Members of the opposing party are going to have disagreements on policy issues. That goes with the turf. Women's healthcare was obviously one of those issues that came up during the nomination hearing.

I will tell you that Attorney General Becerra's response is what we ought to expect of responsible public officials and of nominees. He made it clear to members of the Finance Committee. He said again and again and again that he will follow the law. He will be accessible to all Senators. He is going to work to find common ground on key healthcare issues.

I can tell you, having specialized in healthcare since my days with the Oregon Gray Panthers, that is heavy lifting. By the way, I think it is pretty refreshing after 4 years of just blather about repeal-and-replace and empty rhetoric and promises on pharmaceutical price-gouging and partisan policies that favor insurance companies over the typical American consumers.

In my view, Attorney General Becerra proved in his nomination hearing that he knows healthcare policy inside and out and that he is ready to lead the Department of Health and Human Services. I don't think anybody ought to be particularly surprised because he has a decades-long track record in healthcare leadership and policy experience that is going to help him succeed in the job.

We all understand the country's healthcare system is still under extraordinary pressure and strain. On Saturday, the Senate passed one of the largest public health packages in our country's history, designed to crush this pandemic. So we are starting to see some light. We are starting to see the end of the tunnel. The Biden administration is doing everything it can to acquire more vaccines, to get more shots into arms. I think we all understand it is not a task completed yet.

I will just close by way of saying that when our country faces a healthcare crisis, it needs a Secretary of Health and Human Services confirmed and on the job as soon as possible. It doesn't need more political games and delay

that only sets back our effort to end the pandemic.

So we will be voting, I believe, in less than an hour, and I just want to say that I hope colleagues will support this nomination discharged from the Finance Committee. I have known the attorney general for a number of years. As I say, this is the area that I have specialized in over the years. And I know that Senators have differences of opinion with respect to healthcare. I get that. But those differences of opinion shouldn't stand in the way of a qualified public official who has managed thousands of people in his current job, for example, from having the opportunity to do what has to be done for this country, and that is to get a confirmed nominee for a critical position so that he can attack those challenges that are in front of us right now and help patients and speed up the efforts to end the pandemic.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Republican whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I voted for a number of President Biden's nominees—his nominee for Treasury Secretary, for Defense Secretary, for Attorney General, for Director of National Intelligence, for Agriculture Secretary, and others. These candidates were not the ones I would have picked if I were President, but I believe it is important for our country that our President have a team in place.

As long as a President's nominees aren't raising serious concerns, I think a President of either party is entitled to have the people he or she chooses serving in his or her administration, but by the same token, if a President's nominee does raise serious concerns, I think we have a responsibility as Senators to oppose him or her. Today, I rise to oppose the President's nominee to head the Department of Health and Human Services.

A number of President Biden's nominees have been qualified, mainstream candidates. Xavier Becerra is not a mainstream candidate. He is an extremist who has used the offices he has held to advance an aggressively pro-abortion agenda and to target religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Mr. Becerra does not represent the views of the majority of Americans; he represents the views of the radical, pro-abortion wing of the Democratic Party.

The Planned Parenthood wing of the Democratic Party would like Americans to believe that unrestricted abortion on demand up to the moment of birth is a no-brainer, an unqualified good, but the truth is, despite decades of trying to convince Americans of this, Americans simply don't agree.

Just 29 percent of Americans believe that abortion should be legal in all circumstances. The vast majority of Americans believe that abortion should either be illegal or that there should be at least some restrictions, undoubtedly because on some level, every American is aware that when we talk about abortion, we are talking about killing a human being. Mr. Becerra, on the other hand, does not seem to support any restrictions on abortion. If he does, I would sure like to hear about them.

As a Congressman, he earned perfect ratings from Planned Parenthood and NARAL. He assembled an overwhelmingly pro-abortion voting record, even opposing a ban on partial-birth abortion—a procedure so heinous and repulsive, it is difficult to even describe.

As California attorney general, he aggressively crusaded in favor of abortion. He is known for defending California's law forcing crisis pregnancy centers to advertise abortion—a case he lost at the Supreme Court on First Amendment grounds. But his activities were hardly limited to California abortion law. This was not a case of an attorney general simply defending the laws of their own State. No. As California attorney general, Mr. Becerra repeatedly—repeatedly—inserted himself into abortion debates in other States. He joined other attorneys general to file amicus briefs challenging abortion laws in Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and other States, and he frequently led these efforts himself—a fact he proudly highlighted in press releases.

Mr. Becerra's extremist views on abortion would be enough of a red flag, but to that we have to add Mr. Becerra's record on religious liberty and freedom of conscience—most famously his efforts to force religious people, including nuns, to offer health insurance benefits that violate their religious beliefs.

At a Finance Committee hearing, Mr. Becerra tried to downplay his actions in this case. "I never sued [an order of] nuns," he claimed. "I have [sued] the federal government." Well, that is an answer only a lawyer could love. Yes, he didn't sue nuns; he sued the Federal Government to force nuns and other religious people to offer health insurance benefits that violate their consciences. That was the aim of his lawsuit—to force nuns and other religious Americans to act contrary to their consciences.

When an order of nuns, the Little Sisters of the Poor, joined the case in an effort to ensure their right to live according to their faith was protected, Mr. Becerra apparently had no hesitation in continuing his suit.

Mr. Becerra's extremist views on abortion and his record on religious liberty would be troubling in any nominee, but they would matter a lot less if we were talking about a nominee for, say, Secretary of Transportation. But that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about putting Mr.

Becerra in charge of a Cabinet Department entrusted with interpreting and applying laws protecting religious freedom and freedom of conscience.

Nothing I have seen suggests to me that Mr. Becerra can be relied on to provide robust protection for these cherished rights. In fact, I am profoundly concerned that Mr. Becerra would use his office to limit Americans' religious freedom. Under Mr. Becerra's HHS, are nuns going to be forced to offer health insurance benefits that violate their religious faith? Will healthcare professionals be protected from having to perform procedures, like abortions, that violate their consciences?

Given Mr. Becerra's record, I am concerned about the answers to these questions. In fact, there is a reason to be concerned. A prime reason for nominating Mr. Becerra was his radical abortion advocacy and his attacks on religious liberty.

It is difficult to find another reason for nominating Mr. Becerra during a global health emergency. Mr. Becerra is not a doctor. He has not worked in the healthcare field. He is not a virologist or a vaccine expert. He does not have a background in public health. It is not unreasonable to conclude that his appeal to the abortion left, one of the most powerful interest groups in the Democrat Party, was a prime reason for his nomination.

NARAL and Planned Parenthood certainly give credence to that idea with their enthusiastic statements in support of Mr. Becerra, which highlighted his aggressive abortion advocacy. I also have to say that it is pretty interesting to nominate someone to head HHS who, in his last job, proudly sued HHS repeatedly.

I know that President Biden is a man of faith, but he is doing a great disservice to people of faith and to the First Amendment with this nomination. He is also doing a disservice to the American people by nominating a candidate whose views on abortion are so radical and so out of step with the views of most Americans.

Days ago, three of my Democrat colleagues broke ranks with their party to stand up for the many, many Americans who don't want their tax dollars going to pay for abortions. I urge them and all of my colleagues to join me in opposing the nomination of Xavier Becerra.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

REOPENING SCHOOLS

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, we have got an issue in this country related to the pandemic but, more specifically, related to children not going back to school. And one thing that is of incredible concern is it appears that the Biden administration, which campaigned saying that they were going to follow science—alleging that the previous administration was not—seems not to be following science but to prej-

udice their recommendations to fit a political agenda.

With that, let me develop my case. The harms of prolonged closure to school children are remarkable. They are well known. It has been up to a year since the schools have been closed, and in the Presiding Officer's home State of California, there are some school systems that are still not reopened.

Now, think about this: Places where children go, not just to learn but to have social workers make sure they aren't being abused at home, a dietary staff to make sure they have adequate nutrition—but also to learn—have been closed for a year.

Now, we can say: Wait a second, don't worry about that because the children have been given remote learning. There is ample data which shows that particularly the children from lower income families are not logging on even when they are given a broadband computer—given an internet-equipped computer to take home or given WiFi access to use at home. We can imagine it. Mom has to work. There is no one to supervise the child, so the 7-year-old is home by herself while mom is working.

We can also imagine that a family does not have a culture of being online. We can imagine a big family of seven or eight kids where things just kind of get lost in the shuffle, and there is not enough room for someone to be by themselves. Whatever, it is established that there are kids being left behind by not being in the classroom, and those kids, disproportionately, are poor. And that is why the Biden administration's pledge to follow science resonated, and that is why early indications that they are not is not just disappointing, it is a betrayal—and not a betrayal of a campaign pledge, a betrayal of those children who are at home.

Now, by the way, data shows that children can safely go back to school. There was a CDC study from January of 2021 finding little evidence of virus spread in a school setting when the recommended precautions were taken, which kind of calls them—and, by the way, there is a recent study by the following doctors—Henderson, Gandhi, Hoeg, and Johnson from universities such as the University of Chicago, UC Davis, and UC San Francisco—showing how safe it is to go to school, not get infected, and social distancing as minimal as 3 feet distant one from the other—OK, just 3 feet distant.

Now, that is important because if you say you can't bring kids back to school because you don't have enough classroom space for smaller classes, it is one thing if you say there must be 6 feet between each child and another if there only needs to be 3 feet. So these doctors from these prestigious universities found you only need 3 feet.

That begs the question: Why did the Centers for Disease Control, in their February 26 document, say that 6 feet was needed? Now, you may say: 6 feet, 3 feet, why does it make a difference?

Because schools aren't reopening, and their excuse is they need 6 feet between students. They are finding a reason to keep kids at home not learning—a spurious reason.

The doctors who wrote this paper just put an editorial in *USA Today* in a nice quote here. I say "nice." It kind of summarizes. It is disappointing that they have to say this. It is that—they open up with "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," which is a quote from Franklin Roosevelt. But they go on to say—they speak up for lost wages, for families, and the poverty and eviction that this is resulting in but that the research says there is greater risk to life expectancies with schools closed versus schools open, but they then ask that we overcome fear by following the science. And the science says we can safely reopen our schools now—full-time, nonhybrid—and keep them open. Unfortunately, that is not what the Centers for Disease Control is saying.

Now, by the way, there is a clear agenda here. Part of the agenda is that teachers unions in certain communities have not wanted to reopen. They are more concerned about the union than they are about the children. So whether it is a Democratic mayor of Chicago trying to force the teachers union in Chicago to reopen, whether it is Los Angeles or San Diego, which are still not reopened, with teachers unions objecting to reopening there, this is not based upon science, not based upon risk to the teachers or the children. They would just rather not be at work. Isn't that amazing?

Now, let me tell you who has been open. First, in Louisiana, over 75 percent of our schools have reopened. Hats off to my State. Private and parochial schools have been open. Hats off to them. They are kind of the business model: If you don't get paid, you show up for work. They show up for work. So let's give a hats off.

And that is why there should be school choice. If a parent can't get their child educated in Los Angeles, in San Diego, or in Chicago, then why are we keeping that child from going to a private school? "Oh, they can go," you say. Not if they are poor. If they are poor, they don't have the revenue.

We should take the money that we are giving to those public schools that will not open because the teachers unions oppose it and give it to the parents so their children can go to a school where their children will actually be educated, and the fact that we don't do that is politics over what is best for that child. It is a betrayal of those children.

This administration's policy, 4 months into their 4 years, demonstrates betrayal after betrayal after betrayal. Let's safely reopen schools now. We know we can do so. We knew that a year ago. The science and the data show it. Congress had provided \$68 billion before this latest bill in order to make sure we had everything we need-

ed in order to do that. A lack of funding has not been an excuse to reopen. What is clear is a lack of will, and I will repeat where I started: This administration is betraying the most vulnerable children in our country. Reopen schools now.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

NOMINATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I have to tell you, you can always tell how controversial a nominee is by how fast his supporters work to finish the confirmation process, and last night, at 6:12, we found out that the Democrats tried to pull a fast one on Xavier Becerra's nomination. They were trying to fast-track this, and I was able to object to that hotline request, but the fact that they tried it shows that they are worried about this nominee, and they should be. After two unimpressive hearings and seeing the split vote on the Finance Committee, I think my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have come to realize that his lack of experience in the healthcare sector is one of those big things.

You know, we have over 400 healthcare companies in Tennessee and tens of thousands of employees in that sector. They all—each and every one of them—have more healthcare experience than the Biden administration's nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services.

His greatest hits from his job keep coming back to haunt him, and as much as his allies here in the Senate try to spin his record, they just can't seem to convince people that he is fit to lead. I was curious how wide the divide is between Tennesseans and the Becerra nomination, so I asked my staff to look through our mailbag and see what people were calling and writing about.

This nomination was in the top five issues of concern. People in Tennessee are not happy. As I mentioned, healthcare, our religious organizations—what they are seeing is somebody who has crossed the line too many times. They do not see him as fit to lead.

His lack of experience in the healthcare industry explains why so many people would oppose him. He thinks it would be a good idea to take private health insurance away from 160 million Americans and throw them into a disastrous single-payer system. If that is what you want, then he would be a great Secretary of HHS for you.

If he has his way, he will use his new position to further undermine our immigration laws. He has admitted—his own admission—that given the chance, he would decriminalize illegal entry and extend Medicaid benefits to anyone who manages to make it across the border. It is like winning the lottery. If you get across that border, we are going to give you healthcare benefits, courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer.

We cannot afford to keep confirming nominees who have zero respect for the

rule of law—zero—and even less respect for the value of human life. Throughout his career, Mr. Becerra has made his appallingly radical positions on abortion very well known. He is proud to support abortion up until the moment of birth. He even opposed the 2003 partial-birth abortion ban. He defended a truly evil California law that forced pro-life crisis pregnancy centers to advertise abortion services offered by State-run clinics.

Recently, a physician friend of mine made a comment about Mr. Becerra's nomination that has really stuck with me. She said:

I'm horrified—

Bear in mind, this is a physician.

I'm horrified by his position on abortion because he would abort a baby that I would resuscitate. He would abort a baby that a family is willing to adopt.

Now, think about that. This is a guy, in his congressional career and in his job as the attorney general for California, he is a radical on abortion—a radical. You have physicians who stand there to resuscitate these babies that have difficulty during birth. He would allow those babies to be aborted when a physician would choose life, would choose to help that baby live.

According to Mr. Becerra, religious exemptions should be a thing of the past. He relentlessly harassed religious employers like Hobby Lobby and non-profit organizations like the Little Sisters of the Poor as part of his crusade to uphold ObamaCare's contraception mandate. I think it is clear why the Finance Committee split their vote on this nomination. It has nothing to do with politics.

Xavier Becerra's obsession with dismantling American society and rebuilding it in his own image can't be boiled down to a simple policy position. Instead, it signals his desire to force Americans to live their lives according to his twisted world view.

He may have the approval of leftists, but the American people and thousands of Tennesseans have already written him off as radically unqualified, and, frankly, so have I.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this motion to discharge and opposing the nomination. He is radically anti-life, anti-religion, anti-border security, anti-free speech. He is unqualified to lead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

NOMINATION OF DEBRA ANNE HAALAND

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Montana has a rich outdoor heritage. It is something we are known for not just across the country but even around the world and something, as Montanans, we are very proud of.

In fact, for generations, Montana families have enjoyed hunting, fishing, recreating on public lands. I myself am an avid outdoorsman. In fact, some of my fondest memories growing up in Montana are spending time with my

family, my dad, my mom, my grandpa hunting, fishing, backpacking in our State. And, thankfully, I have had a chance to pass it on to our own four children—something we still enjoy doing today, my wife and I, as we are now empty nesters.

Recreation on public lands is part of our Montana way of life. It is how we raise our families in Montana. And just as we cherish our access to our public lands, we also value the conservation of our lands, as well as the stewardship of our vast natural resources.

Energy development flourishes in Montana. It provides over 16,000 hard-working men and women with good-paying jobs to support their families, while funding conservation and protecting our landscapes and wildlife. Montana is still a State where hard-working moms and dads who work hard during the week are thankful for many jobs provided by the natural resources in our State. They work hard during the week, but on the weekends, they go down to Walmart, Bob Ward's Sports' warehouse, and Ace Sporting Goods store and buy an elk tag over the counter, a fishing license, and get into our public lands within 30 minutes of buying that license. That is uniquely part of our Montana experience. These jobs that we have in the natural resource industry, these energy jobs, are part of who we are as Montanans because we are a State full of diverse interests, competing priorities, sometimes opposing philosophies. But time and again, stakeholders have come together to find balance and achieve our most lasting conservation wins.

That is a word that is missing in Washington, DC, as we are seeing a new administration come to power; it is the word "balance." You see, as Montanans, we are proud stewards of our beautiful landscapes, our rivers, our natural resources, and our wildlife. We take pride in following the science and listening to our local experts on the ground to do what is best for our environment and our public lands, as well as our rural communities.

And this legacy of balance is intertwined within the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior. The Secretary of the Interior oversees much of America's lands, our water, wildlife, energy resources, and in many ways oversees our Montana way of life. Over the past few years, we have seen Secretaries of the Interior with a range of views—some I agree with, some I haven't. But one thing was consistent, they were consensus builders. They were able to listen to the needs of diverse stakeholders, bring folks together, come up with a solution that worked for almost everybody. I would use the word "balance" again.

Unfortunately, Representative HAALAND has a very well-documented and hostile record toward made-in-America energy, toward natural resource development, toward wildlife management, and sportsmen. Throughout her tenure as a Congresswoman,

Representative HAALAND championed the Green New Deal. She advocated for the most extreme positions, including banning all fossil fuels.

She cosponsored legislation to provide Federal protections for grizzly bears forever without considering the science that is very clear that supports delisting that species and returning it back to the States, just like we did with wolves back in 2011.

She has been enthusiastic in her calls to stop not just the Keystone Pipeline but all pipelines, calling for a ban for all pipelines. She even protested the Dakota Access Pipeline herself.

She has stated that trapping shouldn't be allowed on public lands. And as noted by several sportsmen groups, Representative HAALAND would not even commit to maintaining current access on our public lands during the hearing. I can tell you, these are not mainstream views held by most Montanans.

I am not opposed to Representative HAALAND's confirmation because she is a Democrat or because she was nominated by President Biden. In fact, I have supported many of the President's nominees. This is about her record, her very far-left, divisive positions that will fail to represent the West, to be in the mainstream of common sense and balance. And I fear she will harm the Montana way of life as we know it.

This is about protecting our Montana way of life, the ability to have a good-paying job during the week and enjoying our public lands on the weekends because if you kill the energy jobs, you kill all the pipelines, you kill our natural resources, Montana is left to be simply a playground for the rich and famous. We have to stand up for our hard-working Montanans and protect their way of life.

This is about maintaining a common-sense balance. We can develop our natural resources and protect our public lands at the same time. We can do both, and we must do both.

So I urge my colleagues, especially those from Western States that hold many of these same values, to really think about what Representative HAALAND would bring to the Department of the Interior as leader of that organization. I urge my colleagues to consider the impact this will have and to vote against Representative HAALAND's nomination for Secretary of the Interior.

I yield back my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I know we are having a vote in a moment. I ask unanimous consent that the vote not start until I finish my remarks.

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

NOMINATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I don't plan to speak long, but listening to my colleagues, I just wanted to make a few points.

Our former colleague, Representative Becerra, spent much time in the Congress—I think 12 terms—much of that in a position focusing on healthcare policy as a member of the Ways and Means Committee. I say that because I know so many of our colleagues, particularly House Members, have gone on to run Agencies, run Departments, be Secretaries of Defense, and, basically, they just had some congressional experience in that policy area.

So I am not sure why we are discarding that important policy background, consideration, balancing of those issues, weighing in on parts of our constituencies, as Mr. Becerra did.

And Mr. Becerra was the first Hispanic to be a member of the Ways and Means Committee. So I am pretty sure he brought forth a context to many of the healthcare policies. I know now that I bring a lot of focus on Native American issues to the Finance Committee because I represent so many Native Americans.

I think Mr. Becerra represents somebody who has a lot of healthcare experience and then, as attorney general, took on one of the biggest fights we need to have right now, which is the affordability of prescription drug pricing and the shortages that I believe are artificially created on things like insulin and other drugs that are spiking out of control the healthcare prices for Americans.

If you had to say, besides getting access to affordable healthcare insurance, what the second most important goal would be—or, actually, if you asked across the spectrum of millions of Americans—they would say it is the high cost of prescription drugs. And we have somebody who has taken on this battle and, basically, really understands what we need to do as a nation in lowering prescription drug prices.

So I just hope that people who are at home are listening. This is a unique individual who I think stands up truth to power many times in his career, and I think that we would be great if we have his vote and nomination out here on the Senate floor so the American people can hear more about the important policies.

If you want to vote against him because you don't want the Affordable Care Act, well, that is your prerogative. But if you want somebody who has just as much experience as any other Member of Congress who has gone on to run an Agency, I guarantee you he is as qualified, if not more qualified.

So I hope our colleagues will vote yes on this motion to bring Xavier Becerra before the United States Senate.

I thank the President.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge the nomination of Xavier Becerra from the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CARDIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 117 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—48

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blackburn	Hagerty	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Ernst	Moran	Tuberville
Fischer	Murkowski	Wicker
Graham	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Burr

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the provisions in S. Res. 27 and the motion being agreed to, the nomination will be placed on the Executive Calendar.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 26.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 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 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. 26, Isabella Casillas Guzman, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 29.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 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 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. 29, Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

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 calls for the cloture motions filed today be waived.

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

The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF DEBRA ANNE HAALAND

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, on Monday, the Senate will vote on the nomination of Congresswoman DEB HAALAND to serve as Secretary of the Interior. I have had a chance to vote on a number of nominations over the years. I want to tell the Senate that, on Monday, the Senate can make history.

The Congresswoman—and she faced some strong questioning in the committee—understands that protecting public lands and boosting rural communities and jobs are two sides of the same coin. Too often, in the debates in Washington, DC, they really involve something resembling false choices. You can either be for jobs or you can be for protecting your treasures. The Congresswoman understands that those two are not mutually exclusive and that, in the West, particularly when you look at our exciting recreation economic engine, this is a chance to really generate more jobs, protect treasures, and enhance our quality of life.

Now, I recognize that there have been powerful interest groups that try, for example, to protect the interests of big oil companies at taxpayer expense, at the expense of clean air and clean water, and, as I say, at the expense of everybody who wants to get outside. I know that part of the debate is proping up a dirty environmental policy and declining industry that, mostly, adds to the current climate crisis.

In the long run, what we need to do is find fresh ways to bring Americans together around areas, particularly for rural communities, that are going to bridge the urban-rural divide, reduce

inequality in America, and be a long-term solution for rural economies. The Congresswoman, our nominee on Monday, knows that there is a better way to protect and create rural jobs, and I will give you just one example.

Congressman NEGUSE and I have introduced a major piece of legislation to create the 21st Century Civilian Conservation Corps. Our legislation would create thousands of jobs in rural America, and these workers would help to preserve public lands and prevent the kind of massive wildfires America has seen in recent years.

What I can say to colleagues is that a major effort like this will create scores and scores of jobs for local businesses and local vendors. Certainly, we are talking about the local hardware store, chainsaw outlets, and those who sell logging equipment. There are going to be lots of opportunities for private sector employment stemming from the arrival of the 21st Century Civilian Conservation Corps. We will also have a lot more opportunity for outdoor recreation, boosting tourism revenues, and fewer communities reduced to ash by wildfire—a win all around.

Now, the Congresswoman also talked to us about another priority for rural America, and that is helping Native American Tribes across the country build and repair drinking water infrastructure and that she would make it a priority to help Tribes where there is a lack of drinking water, threatening the health of those Tribal members. This is especially a problem in Oregon, where in the Warm Springs Tribe has burst pipes and regular “boil water” notices, but I will tell you that Warm Springs is not alone in this country, and the Congresswoman understands. She said: Water is a basic human right.

The next point that I want to touch on with respect to this exceptional Member of Congress is that she really has a track record of bringing parties together with differing views. Now, I know some Members of the Senate have gone to great lengths to say: Oh, she is some kind of far-out radical.

Colleagues, that just doesn't pass the smell test. She has been a leader in generating bipartisan support for efforts in the House. She has one of the most conservative Members of the House singing her praises in coming before the committee, and I went several times just because I wanted to hear the Congresswoman address this crucial issue of how important rural jobs are, how rural jobs and protecting the environment are not mutually exclusive, and how you can bring people together. On each of these points, she conveyed the kinds of views that make her an ideal choice for serving as the Secretary of the Interior.

I was also interested in her thoughts on a major piece of legislation for rural Eastern Oregon. It is the Malheur County Owyhee legislation, which seeks to resolve differences in this extraordinary part of my State, the Owyhees—differences that have lit-

erally gone on for decades. We brought together ranchers and Tribes and environmental folks, and we said: Here again, what we can do is create rural employment. We can protect the ag economy and the farmer's way of life. We can also create great opportunities for recreation in that part of the State. The Congresswoman got it in a second. She said that is exactly what we need to do—build models that bring farmers and ranchers together with environmental folks and scientists who understand the nature of some of these challenges from a scientific and climate standpoint.

I will tell you that I have gone to more than my share of nomination hearings, but what I saw was a nominee with exceptional backbone and decency, who was being clear, being straightforward. At times, it was a little hard to take because the questioning, I thought, was not just strong but over the line. At the same time, the Congresswoman showed her calm, her knowledge, and her perseverance in the face of this.

I am just going to close with this.

Colleagues, I have tried to kind of make my calling card a public service of bringing people together, finding fresh ideas, and the very kinds of approaches that the Congresswoman talked about during two, I felt, very draining kinds of sessions. My view is that it is critical for the Senate to be able to recognize there are going to be disagreements. The Senate is made up of a lot of people with very strong views, and what I believe we ought to insist on of all candidates is a level of decency and respect for all concerned. The Congresswoman showed that in the face of some very strong questioning.

When I was done, I said: Not only am I going to support you because of your views on rural jobs and your recognizing that protecting jobs and the environment are not mutually exclusive—that we can do both—but because of your track record of bipartisanship, featuring Congressman YOUNG's coming here.

Also, I come to the floor of the U.S. Senate to say that I was there for both sessions, and I saw an elected official, a Congresswoman, handle a lot of very tough, strong questions, and at every level, she tried to stick to the facts. She tried to make the case for what she thought was a great opportunity, especially in the West, but that she would be in all of the communities that the Department of the Interior is responsible for and that everyone would get a fair shake. Every Democrat and every Republican would get a fair shake.

That is the kind of fundamental decency we want in a nominee.

And I will close with this: It sure stands in sharp contrast to what we saw over the last 4 years, two Secretaries, essentially, infamous rather than famous, who too often were willing to set aside the science and support the powerful and those who were going

to walk away making quick dollars at the expense of the environment.

People of this country now have a chance, almost like you take a dilapidated stage out of an auditorium, and now we have got a chance to start anew. We have got a nominee who is qualified. She is fair. She is going to concentrate on bringing people together, and she is going to make history.

It is long, long, long past time, colleagues, that this country had a Native American leading the Interior Department.

So I pledge after that second hearing, I am going to come back on the floor and not just vote for her but speak for her because her decency, her thoughtfulness—I see my friend from New Mexico here—that sense of caring and that fairness in the face of some very, very aggressive questioning makes me feel that this is a very special sort of leader.

Congresswoman HAALAND has my full, unqualified support, and westerners are looking forward very much to working with her, get her to Oregon, and see what our challenges are.

I urge all Members of the Senate on Monday to support the historic nomination of Congresswoman HAALAND to head the Interior Department.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I thank Senator DAINES for his leadership on this issue.

The only thing the previous speaker and I have in common is agreeing that it is high time that we had a Native American woman to lead the Department of the Interior.

On behalf of the people of Wyoming, I am opposing President Biden's nomination of Congresswoman HAALAND to serve as Secretary of the Interior.

As Secretary, she will continue the job-killing, anti-energy attack on Wyoming's livelihood that President Biden started during his first week in office.

Let's recap just how bad President Biden's Executive actions are for my State.

A University of Wyoming analysis found that Wyoming stands to lose nearly \$13 billion in tax revenue if we don't lift the Biden ban on new oil and gas leasing and drilling on Federal lands. To put this in context, \$13 billion in tax revenue would educate 60,000 Wyoming students from kindergarten through high school graduation. It would fund the University of Wyoming for the next 59 years. It would fund our public safety and corrections budget for the next 68 years. And it would fund the Wyoming Department of Health for the next 26 years. These are real numbers, and the Biden ban is having real consequences.

In Wyoming, we put the tax revenue from Federal land leases to use educating our kids, caring for the sick, and funding public infrastructure.

Maybe this sounds like my complaint is just with President Biden. That is

how Congresswoman HAALAND would have you see it. Congresswoman HAALAND says that she will simply be following the administration's orders and implementing its agenda at the Interior Department. This isn't exactly encouraging for a number of reasons.

The White House's very first action in implementing their climate change agenda is on track to cost my home State a whopping \$13 billion in revenue. I shudder to think what their next action will cost us, especially with Department heads committed to blindly enacting the Biden agenda without consideration for the extraordinary impacts it will continue to have on energy States like Wyoming.

Second, Secretaries have an incredible amount of power to make decisions on how an administration's agenda gets implemented. Based on her own public statements and actions, Congresswoman HAALAND is more radical in her positions than President Biden.

None of these facts are particularly encouraging to folks in Wyoming and the West who will be devastated by the policies that Congresswoman HAALAND plans to champion. What we need is a Secretary who understands the issues that westerners face. We need someone who knows the ways that States like Wyoming are contributing to America's energy independence and doing so in increasingly environmentally friendly ways. Banning permitting on Federal lands in Wyoming means banning access to 68 percent of Wyoming's minerals. For our State and our country to remain energy independent, we need someone at the Department of the Interior who recognizes that if we shut down producers at home, we are only increasing the power of polluters like Russia and China abroad.

Conservatives are regularly attacked as anti-science and anti-environment. This couldn't be further from the truth. I can tell you there are no greater stewards of our land than the people who actually work it, be it farmers, ranchers, or energy producers. We care more about the land and natural resources than just about anyone. It is our livelihood.

But it is more than that. It is our way of life. We know that responsible care for the land means that we have to have a healthy give-and-take with the land.

In Wyoming, we support both energy protection and conservation, fossil fuels and clean energy technologies. Wyoming leads the Nation as the biggest net energy supplier at the same time that we are driving the future of carbon capture and utilization technology.

Representative HAALAND and the Biden administration claim their ban on leases supports the environment, but this ban actually hurts environmental conservation efforts. Energy development on public lands helps to fund conservation, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the tune of billions of dollars.

Additionally, since 2000, the United States has had the largest absolute decline in emissions of any country. We did this while at the same time rising to become the world's top energy producer. The truth of the matter is, you can be both environmentally friendly and energy friendly. In Wyoming, we are doing both. Under the Biden and Haaland administration, we will do neither.

I want to add one more thing. I recognize the longstanding connection of Native Americans to the land. Representative HAALAND has that connection, and I honor her heritage and appreciate how significant the nomination of a Native American to lead the Department of the Interior is to the Tribes and to indigenous people. But there is no connection between her heritage and her support of the Green New Deal and attacking oil and natural gas production as a means to address climate change. If our goal is to reduce emissions, then our focus should be on clean air, not attacking energy production.

We can achieve our environmental goals through things like carbon capture while remaining energy independent.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose Representative HAALAND's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

MR. HEINRICH. Mr. President, what is the status of the floor?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering the Haaland nomination.

MR. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I rise today in support of my colleague in the New Mexico congressional delegation, my Representative in the House of Representatives, and President Joe Biden's nominee for Secretary of Interior, Congresswoman DEB HAALAND.

Congresswoman HAALAND is a member of the Pueblo of Laguna. She is what we like to call in New Mexico a 35th-generation New Mexican.

As many have noted, she will make history as the first-ever Native American Cabinet Secretary, something that, frankly, should have happened a long, long time ago in this country.

Deb also has lived experience—as a single mother, as a small business owner, as a Tribal administrator—experiences that will serve her well and bring real representation to President Joe Biden's Cabinet.

She grew up in a military family. Her father was a decorated Marine combat veteran, and her mother is a Navy veteran. She grew up like a lot of kids with parents in the military, moving frequently, actually attending 13 different public schools over the course of her childhood.

Before being elected to Congress, she owned her own business, she was the chair of the board of a tribally owned business, and also served as Tribal ad-

ministrator for the Pueblo of San Felipe.

Thanks to all of that experience, Congresswoman HAALAND knows firsthand how the decisions that we make here in Washington, and particularly in the Interior Department, affect communities across the country, especially in Tribal communities and rural Western States.

As Representative of the First District of New Mexico, my former district, Congresswoman HAALAND has served as vice chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources and the chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, a position where she made us very proud.

As a committee leader, she routinely demonstrated her commitment to working across party lines.

Of all the Members of Congress newly elected in 2018, she introduced the most bills with bipartisan cosponsors. She has always shown the ability to bring people together, something evidenced by her introduction in our committee by Congressman DON YOUNG, Republican of Alaska.

She has an open door. She has an open mind and will listen and consult with a diverse range of stakeholders to try and build real consensus.

I am confident that she is the leader that we need at Interior to take on the important work of restoring our landscapes, opening up new outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, and putting our public lands to work in confronting the climate crisis that too many of our colleagues have long ignored.

Americans want the Department of the Interior to create more equitable access to our public lands, to stand for environmental justice, to find real solutions for the climate crisis, to protect wildlife and clean water, and support rural economic development.

Many of us here in this body—in the Senate—demonstrated just last year, when we passed the historic and bipartisan Great American Outdoors Act, that making conservation and outdoor recreation a key part of our national economic recovery is a goal that has the ability to unite us all, Republicans and Democrats.

Implementation of that new law will allow us to put many Americans back to work repairing our campgrounds, repairing our trail systems, building new visitor centers, and Congresswoman HAALAND is eager to lead that work.

She is also uniquely qualified to help us restore the Department of the Interior's nation-to-nation relationship with Tribal nations and to help Indian Country recover and rebuild from COVID-19.

The Interior Department will play a leading role in implementing President Biden's American Rescue Plan in Indian Country. That historic rescue package, which the Senate just passed over the weekend—and I would point out did not have a single Republican vote—includes more than \$31 billion in emergency support for Indian Country.

Let me put that in perspective. That represents the single greatest investment in Indian Country in American history—in American history.

This emergency support is desperately needed in Tribal communities. Over the past year, American Indians and Alaska Natives infected by COVID-19 have been hospitalized at a rate four times higher than White Americans and have died from the disease at nearly twice the rate. That is not just some statistic. I know firsthand because of the people I know and have lost in Indian Country.

On top of these unacceptable public health outcomes, Tribal communities have also been disproportionately impacted by the educational and economic devastation of this past year—the lack of broadband, for example.

These disparities reflect the persistent inequities that are the direct result of decades of chronic underinvestment by Congress in Indian Country. That is why the American Rescue Plan includes \$20 billion in emergency funds for Tribal governments that have taken on enormous, unprecedented costs to protect the health and safety of their members. It also includes billions of dollars of investment in Indian Country to expand access to healthcare, education, transportation, housing, and even essentials that many of us just take for granted, things like broadband, like internet, like electricity or water.

The Senate urgently needs to take up Congresswoman HAALAND's nomination to lead the Department of the Interior so that Tribes will finally have the partner they need in effectively implementing the American Rescue Plan and to help them steer their communities out of this perilous moment.

Finally, it is unfortunate, frankly, that this needs to be said, but I do need to take a moment to address characterizations of Congresswoman HAALAND that were raised by some of my colleagues in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee that were neither accurate nor, frankly, appropriate to the kind of debate that we have in that committee.

I was disappointed by the tenor of the debate in our committee, as some of my colleagues described Congresswoman HAALAND as “radical” or as “extreme” for holding policy views that fall well within the mainstream and fairly represent many of her constituents—I would say the vast majority of her constituents.

As a westerner, Congresswoman HAALAND well understands that confronting the climate crisis, not denying it, and transforming our economy will not come without costs. We need to be honest about that. That is especially true for fossil fuel workers, including many of our fellow New Mexicans, who have long powered our economy and deserve our respect and support. But we need to be thorough on the details and thoughtful in preparing our traditional energy communities for a transition to

the clean energy future that the market has already told us is coming—is here—and we need to be honest with them.

I am absolutely certain that Congresswoman HAALAND will be a true partner to Western States like New Mexico, Alaska, Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming as we navigate this challenging transition.

As we confront the climate crisis that is already an existential threat to our land and water resources and the communities that depend on those resources in the West, we must diversify our economy. We must invest in those communities and remain a global leader in producing and exporting energy.

Despite the objections that have been raised against her nomination and the holds that have unfairly held up her confirmation, I am confident in Congresswoman HAALAND's commitment to work with every single one of us on these pressing challenges, and I am eager for the Senate to finally take up Congresswoman HAALAND's confirmation so that she can get to work protecting our natural heritage for future generations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today the Senate is debating the nomination of DEB HAALAND, a Member of Congress, to serve as Secretary of the Interior. If confirmed, she will be the first Native American Cabinet member in U.S. history. This is a historic moment, and it should be recognized.

I want to be very clear with you. Representative HAALAND's policy views and lack of substantive answers during her nomination hearing, in my opinion, disqualify her for this job.

In May of 2019, Representative HAALAND said unequivocally in an interview with *The Guardian*: “I am wholeheartedly against fracking and drilling on public lands.” On her campaign website, she stated she wanted to “keep fossil fuels in the ground.” On the same site, she pledged to “vote against all new fossil fuel infrastructure,” period.

I, along with many western Senators, have consistently opposed nominees who hold such views, and in my opinion and the opinion of my constituents, these views are extreme.

Representative HAALAND's views aren't just statements; they are backed up by legislation that she has cosponsored. As a Member of Congress, she was a day-one cosponsor of the Green New Deal. Now we are talking about destructive legislation that would not just overhaul American energy but would impact almost every sector of society and cause great harm to America's economy. That bill was so extreme that when it was brought here to the Senate floor, it received no support. None.

She also cosponsored legislation to provide permanent Federal protections for the grizzly bear. I believe that leg-

islation is also extreme, and I will tell you why.

The legislation that she proposed as a Member of the House completely disregards the scientific conclusions of the Bush administration, the Obama administration, and the Trump administration. How many things can we name that all three of those Presidents agreed upon? But the three of them did. They all concluded—the Obama administration, the Bush administration, and the Trump administration concluded that it was time to take the grizzly bear off the endangered species list.

Both Democratic and Republican Interior Departments determined that the grizzly bear was fully recovered, but Representative HAALAND has chosen instead to ignore the science and the scientists of the very Department that she is now nominated to lead. Representative HAALAND's policy views are squarely at odds with the mission of the Department of the Interior. That mission includes taking species off of an endangered species list when they are recovered, and the grizzly bear is fully recovered.

That Department also manages our Nation's oil, gas, and coal resources and does it in a responsible manner, not eliminating access to them completely.

Just as troubling as her policy views were her answers to questions during the confirmation process. She struggled or refused to answer the basic questions any nominee for the Department of the Interior would be expected to know and answer. She was unwilling or unable to respond to questions about the Department, about resource policy, and about the laws that she was asked to implement.

I asked her why the Biden administration wouldn't just let energy workers keep their jobs. She had no good answer.

American jobs are being sacrificed in the name of the Biden agenda, and Representative HAALAND wouldn't defend it—couldn't defend it. Senator RISCH had to ask her multiple times if she supported shutting down the Keystone Pipeline before she admitted that she did. He then asked her multiple times why she thought that was a good idea, and she never really gave an answer.

Her written answers to the questions for the record were equally vague and unacceptable. In one response to a question of mine, she refused to acknowledge that the United States has higher environmental standards for oil and for gas production than Russia or Nigeria—would not acknowledge that.

The American people deserve straight answers from a potential Secretary about the law, about the rules, and about the regulations that are going to affect so many lives and livelihoods. She gave very few of those at her nominating hearing and in her written responses.

Representative HAALAND's extreme views, cosponsorship of catastrophic

legislation, and lack of responsiveness disqualify her from this important position as Secretary of the Interior. If she is allowed to implement her Green New Deal-inspired policies at the Department of the Interior, the results for America's energy supply and economy will be catastrophic.

So I cannot support and will not support her nomination, and I urge other Senators also to vote against the nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 3 minutes.

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak today on the nomination of Representative DEBRA HAALAND to be the Secretary of the Interior. Her nomination was carefully considered by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, which I am privileged to chair.

Her hearing went well, and it went for 2 days. Every member of the committee questioned her. Most asked her two rounds of questions, and some asked three. We then asked her 70 pages of questions for the record—nearly 300 questions, many with multiple subparts.

The committee questioned her closely on her beliefs, her opinions, the President's policies, and what she will do if confirmed. In the end, the committee voted to report her nomination favorably, 11 to 9. I am proud to have voted to report her nomination, and I am proud to speak in favor of her confirmation today.

While I may not personally agree with some of Congresswoman HAALAND's past statements and policy positions, as Secretary she will be carrying out President Biden's agenda, the agenda that the voters elected President Biden to pursue.

At her hearing, she confirmed that she and the administration recognize that our country will remain dependent on fossil fuels for years to come, and a transition to a cleaner energy future must come through innovation, not elimination.

She also affirmed her strong commitment to bipartisanship. She understands the need to work across the aisle to find the bipartisan solutions needed to address the diverse needs of our country and has demonstrated that she can do so effectively.

I was also deeply impressed by the strong endorsement she received by Congressman DON YOUNG, for whom I have the utmost respect. DON YOUNG

has been in Congress long enough to be able to read people and know their heart and soul. He took the time and trouble to appear before the committee and testified to the productive working relationship he has had with Congresswoman HAALAND and her willingness to work with him on important issues. That meant a lot to me, and I hope it will also resonate with my colleagues.

President Biden is in perhaps the most difficult position a modern-day President has ever been in, bringing us back from the brink after January 6. That day changed me, and I feel strongly that with the deep divisions running through our country and the Halls of Congress today, we have to have people who have demonstrated they have the temperament and willingness to reach across the aisle. Congresswoman HAALAND has demonstrated she does and she will.

As the President works to bind together a nation split by deep political, racial, social, and economic divisions, he is also trying to assemble a Cabinet that reflects the rich diversity of our Nation, one that looks like America. And 230 years after Washington called his first Cabinet meeting, it is long past time to give a Native American woman a seat at the Cabinet table.

For these reasons, I support DEB HAALAND's nomination and will vote to report her and to support her, and I look forward to working with her to protect our public lands and ensure the responsible use of our natural resources in the most bipartisan manner. I strongly support her nomination. I urge all of my colleagues to vote to invoke cloture today and to confirm her nomination next week.

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. 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.

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 DEBRA ANNE HAALAND, of New Mexico, to be Secretary of the Interior, 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 Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 118 Ex.]

YEAS—54

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

NAYS—42

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	Marshall	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Tuberville
Ernst	Paul	Wicker
Fischer	Portman	Young

NOT VOTING—4

Burr	Kennedy
Cassidy	Moran

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we are a year into the COVID epidemic—a year. If you think about it, this week a year ago, in Oklahoma City there was a basketball game going on between the Utah Jazz and the Oklahoma City Thunder. They were 2 minutes away from tip-off, and the announcer came on the speaker and said: Ladies and gentlemen, there has been a case of COVID-19 that has been discovered by one of the players. This game is postponed.

And with that one announcement, a year ago this week, all professional sports stopped across the entire country, and the country, for a moment, woke up and realized: This is more serious than we thought. And everything shifted. Within a week, the United States had shut down for 8 weeks, and we went into lockdown.

At the beginning point of that, this Congress came together in a bipartisan way and passed something called the CARES Act, \$1.6 trillion, an enormous relief bill, because we were walking into uncharted territory. We created things like the Paycheck Protection

Program. We created ways to be able to assist behind the scenes. We even created a way to be able to help not-for-profits, knowing that if the not-for-profit sector collapsed, there is no way government could possibly keep up.

Lots of work went into that, in a bipartisan way, to be able to resolve that, and that CARES Act stabilized our economy—\$1.6 trillion. It was one of five bills that we passed in this body last year, all bipartisan, all of them with us working together to try to find out what are the essential things we have to do, knowing that every single dollar that was spent on COVID was not budgeted. Every single dollar was borrowed, all of it from last year, a total of \$4 trillion.

Only \$3 trillion of what was actually allocated last year has actually been spent. There is still \$1 trillion allocated in last year's five bills that is still unallocated—\$1 trillion. Over the weekend, this body passed on a straight partisan vote—and then the House did the same—to be able to add another \$2 trillion to the spending for COVID-19. But this bill was different. There was no bipartisan conversation. In fact, 10 Members of the Republican conference went to the White House and tried to sit down with President Biden and say: Let's do a bipartisan issue. There are issues that are unresolved. But, thankfully, we are on the back side of this pandemic. We are not at the same spot we were a year ago. We can now see the end. We know that we are going to have every adult have access to the vaccine by the end of May. The economy is turning around, and things are shifting dramatically, thankfully. So let's do the things that we have to do now and keep the same commitment we had last year.

Last year's commitment was simple: Do the things we have to do, knowing every dollar was borrowed, but not more than we have to do because none of this is budgeted, and none of this has gone through committees. Let's try to do what needs to be done and not more than what needs to be done—until now. Starting the next couple of days, the Treasury will begin to process borrowing another \$2 trillion.

I had an Oklahoman whom I talked to this morning who said: How are you doing spending my money at this point?

I laughed, and I said: Actually, this time, it is not even your money. It is not even tax dollars that are coming down; it is borrowed money—from the Chinese, from the open market, from everywhere that we can go get \$2 trillion of additional spending to be able to spend it.

While many people will be eager to be able to receive a check for \$1,400, because there are a lot of people having a hard time right now coming out of the back side of the pandemic, getting back to work, paying some bills—they may be a little surprised to be able to find out that they are getting a \$1,400 check, but so are prisoners. They are

also getting a \$1,400 check. They are also finding out that people who are not legally present in the country are getting a \$1,400 check.

There was an interesting interchange here on the floor on the night of that debate on whether people were getting checks or not getting checks who are not legally present, and so Newsweek magazine did a fact check on, are people not legally present getting a \$1,400 check? Just yesterday, they published their fact check and came out—true, people not legally present in the United States are about to receive \$1,400 checks in the mail based on the bill that was just passed on a partisan basis.

There are billions of dollars in this bill that are allocated for vaccines. Republicans were audacious enough to be able to raise their hands and say: What are those billions of dollars going towards? It says vaccines, but the problem is that the Biden team has already announced they have done the purchase for every single vaccine for every single adult in America.

In other words, for every single person who can actually get the vaccine, the vaccine purchases have already been done. Those are set and ready to go by the end of May because we still have \$6 billion left in the vaccine fund from last year. But this bill that just passed this week, adding another \$2 trillion in debt, also includes tens of billions of dollars for vaccines. So the immediate question is, Is that for international vaccines? No; that is a different account. There is money for international vaccines to be sent out, but this is supposedly for the United States, for the purchase of vaccines. Where is that money going when we have already purchased ahead of time all of the vaccines for every single adult in America? We don't know. Unfortunately, this bill was not taken through committee, so no one even had the conversation or time to even find out why.

There is a lot of money for education in this bill, and there is a lot of need in education across the country. In fact, the bill that just passed, this \$2 trillion, actually spends almost three times—in this one bill, almost three times—for education what typically the U.S. Federal Government does for the entire year for education. I would say there is a great need, except when you actually look at the unspent money for education from the five bills that were passed last year, there is still \$68 billion unspent from the education funds from the five COVID bills last year.

There is no requirement that the schools actually open or use that money to open the schools. In fact, 95 percent of the money allocated for COVID relief for education CBO has said can't even be spent this year at all. The earliest it could even be spent would be next year. And it is well in excess of \$100 billion.

There is a provision in this. The Small Business Administration, as I

was reading through the 600-plus pages of this bill—that is a real picture of really what this bill is shaped like. One provision of the Small Business Administration allocates \$390 million to administer the loan program, but the loan program itself disburses \$70 million.

Let me run that number past us again. The program cost for the administrative Washington, DC, cost of running the program is \$390 million; the actual amount that they anticipate that they will actually distribute is \$70 million, totaling a \$460 million program total. Just \$70 million of it actually gets to people; \$390 million of it stays in Washington, DC, for the bureaucracy.

All of those things could have been fixed if we actually went through committee.

In this COVID bill, there are things like new customs duties for South Korea. I have yet to figure out what South Korea and customs duties have to do with COVID.

There is also slipped in, for the first time ever, Federal funding for abortion. I have yet to see what abortion has to do with COVID, but this bill, for the first time in 44 years, uses Federal tax dollars to start paying for abortion. That has not been done before. In fact, when Joe Biden used to sit in that chair right over there, he often spoke about that we should not use Federal funds for abortion funding. Yet, in the COVID bill, somehow abortion funding has become relevant to fighting off COVID.

I have had some people ask questions about whether this bill could have been better if we had actually done it in a bipartisan way. It could have been significantly better. If you ask how I know that, it is because I saw the five bills we did last year, and they didn't have problems like this in them last year because we worked it out together. This one is different.

This bill could have been significantly improved in a major way. One of them is the way we deal with charities. You see, in previous bills, we sat down and talked about our not-for-profits.

I have a very strong belief personally that we have three safety nets in America. Families are the first safety net; nonprofits, churches, faith-based houses of worship are the second in society; and the third safety net is government.

Government can never keep up with all of the needs in America. If families collapse and if our not-for-profits collapse, government will never be able to keep up. So in previous versions, we have actually addressed that with not-for-profits. We did that in the Paycheck Protection Program to make sure that not-for-profits could get assistance and get help to be able to survive through this.

We also added in a way that we would encourage individuals to be able to donate to not-for-profits. We gave them a write-off. In the very first bill, we

added in \$300. If you gave to a not-for-profit, you get to write that off your taxes right away. In the December bill, we reupped that—\$300 for an individual and \$600 for a family that you could write off on your taxes immediately if you would donate to a not-for-profit.

Why did we do that? Well, I brought that issue up, quite frankly, and we had wide bipartisan agreement to say that was a good idea because we should encourage not-for-profits because we need them for that safety net. Not-for-profits are the faces that take care of the hungry and the homeless and the hurting in our society, and we need them to be strong. But in this bill that came out, we didn't address the not-for-profits. We didn't have the option to be able to bring it up and debate it and say: What should we do? So it just got left out.

Why should we continue to be able to push on this issue? Because we need them to be strong. They are a remarkable part of our economy, our safety net, and our community. They are Americans doing what we do best—serving each other, serving our neighbors, and helping in every possible way that we can.

So a group of us have gathered together to be able to drop a bill dealing with these not-for-profits and encouraging us, again, to accelerate this issue of giving Americans the ability to be able to write off on their taxes, whether they itemize or not, a below-the-line deduction for their taxes to be able to make sure that we encourage people to be able to give to not-for-profits. And it matters. If you want to be able to help do something significant, help those close to you and the ongoing work that they are doing.

Those folks have felt it a lot. According to a study by Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, between March and May of 2020, our nonprofits have projected job losses around 1.6 million workers. They leaned in and helped anyway, even though they were in real trouble. As of December 2020, the nonprofit workforce still remained down by about 930,000 jobs.

We have a long way to go to have that sector actually fully recover. They are such a significant part of our economy. According to the latest data—again, available from Johns Hopkins—it was found that nonprofit organizations employed the third largest workforce in the U.S. economy; nonprofits, a group that people just drive past all the time, but many people drive to or walk to because they need real help.

What happened when we actually passed the CARES Act and we added this deduction in and encouraged Americans to start donating to not-for-profits to help them survive this year? What happened with that? Well, I can tell you what happened because now we can look back and see the data. The most recent data we have for the fundraising effect for this project shows that there was an increase in the third

quarter of 2020 of charitable giving—a 6-percent increase in donors and an 11-percent increase in new donors when compared to 2019.

We put that incentive out, and people saw the need across the country and the opportunity to do that, and people gave. We saw increases in all donor categories in the third quarter of last year, the largest increase in giving coming from donors giving \$250 or less. That increased by 17 percent just in the third quarter of last year.

I understand there are a lot of factors to that. There were a lot of needs, and people were doing what they do best and engaging. But we need to continue to encourage the strength of our not-for-profits because if there is a focus to say “Well, government should do that,” government can send checks, but government has a hard time actually meeting human needs. That requires a face and a person and a commitment, and that is done differently when it is a not-for-profit.

We have great Federal workers all across the country who work really hard, but they also work often from a distance. Local not-for-profits in small, rural communities will have a much greater connection to individuals to be able to help in their time of crisis than someone 1,000 miles away who means well but doesn't see them on a daily basis. If we want to help human needs, we will find ways to be able to help not-for-profits.

Tuesday of this week, Senator COONS, Senator LEE, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator SCOTT from South Carolina, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator COLLINS, Senator CORTEZ MASTO, and myself—we all introduced the Universal Giving Pandemic Response and Recovery Act. We are just asking a simple question: Can we continue to strengthen our not-for-profits and encourage Americans to give to those not-for-profits with their time, with their money, and with their passion and joy? When you actually engage with a not-for-profit, you will find you are the one who really receives.

There is not a moment that I talk to somebody who serves in a not-for-profit that they don't tell me how hard the work is and how draining the work is, and then with a smile, they will say how rewarding it really is. There is not a time that I walk into a homeless shelter or a food bank and they don't tell me about the people they meet on a daily basis and the joy for them going home, talking to their own family, and remembering the blessings that they have, and the joy they have to get up the next day to be able to help those in greatest need. Let's encourage that.

If you want to have a Biblical example, Biblically, the calling for government is to encourage those who do good and punish those who do wrong. We have a lot of nonprofits around the country that are doing good. Let's encourage them, and let's encourage Americans to be able to be engaged in volunteering and in giving.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to talk about the unfolding, urgent situation on our southern border, and I do so as the ranking Republican on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

This unfortunate situation at the border includes a lot of kids coming over the border, UACs, as they call them, unaccompanied alien children. These children are making a long and dangerous journey north, putting themselves at risk and bringing our immigration system and our shelter system along the border to a breaking point.

You may have heard that the Biden administration insists this is not a crisis. Here are the facts. You decide.

This chart shows the dire situation that we are in. On Tuesday, the most recent confirmed information we have is there were 3,400 of these children in Border Patrol custody. Ten days ago, that number was 1,700. So in 10 days, this number has doubled. To put this in perspective, at the very height of the border crisis in 2019 that we all remember being talked about a lot on the floor of this Senate and around the country, families and children were coming in, in big numbers. At the very height, it was 2,600 unaccompanied kids. Today, based on some information we just received anecdotally from the Customs and Border Protection folks, it is over 3,500. It is a 35-percent increase even from where it was during the crisis, and it is growing.

Under law, these children have to be transferred to the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, HHS, within 72 hours of their being apprehended, and why we had that law in place was to be able to help these kids. So instead of being in a Border Patrol detention facility, which, by the way, were all designed for single males—they don't have any separation, don't have any trained people to help provide care to children, and it is law enforcement, Border Patrol agents—but within 72 hours, we had said that you have to transfer these children to a Health and Human Services facility that is appropriate for children. How is that working?

Again, as of Tuesday, there were 3,400 of these kids in Border Patrol custody in the wrong kind of detention facilities for children. There were 2,800 children who were ready to transfer to HHS. In other words, they had been screened, gone through a process. As of Tuesday, there were 500 beds available, meaning 2,300 children are remaining in Border Patrol custody in overcrowded, adult facilities without proper care because there is nowhere to take them.

Look, it is a bad situation. HHS contractors are supposed to be trained to care for the kids. The Border Patrol

agents are not trained for that. They are doing their best, but it is not a safe situation for the kids. By the way, nobody in Border Patrol believes it is a good situation for the kids. These facilities, the Border Patrol facilities at the Border Patrol stations and HHS facilities are all at a breaking point. They are busting at the seams. Is that a crisis? I don't know. You decide.

This influx comes, by the way, during a season when you normally don't have a lot of people coming over the border. This is in the winter. Normally, in the spring and then in the fall, you see the biggest influxes of families, kids, individuals. So we expect these numbers to get a lot worse. We expect it to get a lot worse into the spring.

By the way, we spoke to Customs and Border Patrol folks today. They told us the numbers are up again today. In fact, we have some internal document from the Department of Homeland Security that a media organization reported on. It is an official document that says DHS, themselves, predict there will be 117,000 children who will be placed in this situation this year. So they know it just is growing.

Again, is it a crisis? You decide. It is certainly a dangerous situation. By all accounts, many of these migrants, including children, face serious threats to their lives and well-being on the trip north.

Just as happened in the past surges in 2014 and 2019, we know this includes many victims of human trafficking who are deceived and coerced by traffickers and smugglers as they are taken from Central America up to the U.S. border. The trip is treacherous. We have evidence that exploitation and sexual abuse occurs along the way.

In 2019, again, the last time this happened, estimates of migrants who were victims of sexual or physical abuse along the journey ranged from 30 to 75 percent. Individual victims have described incredibly disturbing accounts of being subjected to violence, sexual assault, rape by traffickers and other criminals. It is a bad situation.

By the way, this situation is the direct result of policy changes. The new administration came in determined to dismantle all of what the previous administration had done to try to disincentivize people from coming to the border, and they have been effective in doing that. They have dismantled the immigration practices and proceedings that were working to reduce these incentives. It had resulted in very few kids coming to the border, as an example—almost none.

Last week, the Secretary of Homeland Security said in a press conference that the surge of unaccompanied kids is a "challenge" but not a "crisis." He then deflected blame to the previous administration. That is fine. Look, I wish it were just a challenge that didn't require an urgent response, but that is not the reality along the border today. I, frankly, don't care what we call it. Call it a difficult situation, a

challenge, whatever you want, but I care a lot about what we do in response.

There is an old saying that says Washington only responds to a crisis. I think, unfortunately, there is a lot of truth to that. We have to respond here. We have to do something. That is why I think we need to consider this dire situation a crisis before it gets much worse.

The next chart shows the reality, which is this surge happened almost immediately after President Biden and his administration were sworn in and they made these announcements about changes in policy. Here we have the election. Here we have the swearing-in. Look at this huge surge in both family units and in these kids. As I said, we have twice as many kids today as we had 10 days ago.

This is surging up. Nearly 10,000 unaccompanied alien children and twice as many family members crossed our border in February, and that is the shortest month of the year. These surges stopped under the previous administration because they put in place policies that reduce the incentives for individuals, families, and unaccompanied minors to try to unlawfully enter the United States. In less than 2 months, the Biden administration has systematically taken away these tools that were being used to reduce these incentives. On day one, the new administration revoked the emergency declaration for the border, stopped construction of the border fence, and placed a 100-day halt to deportations. Not surprisingly, this gave traffickers the green light to exploit the situation, and more people and more drugs are now moving across the border.

Next, the new administration reversed what is known as the Migrant Protection Protocols or the "Remain in Mexico" policy, which required asylum seekers to wait in Mexico rather than being released in communities around the United States while waiting for their asylum claims to be adjudicated. About 20 percent of the asylum seekers who went through the entire application process, including all of the hearings, were granted asylum in 2018.

So, if you go through all of the process, about 20 percent of those individuals actually got asylum. Now, that is a self-selected group because I know not everybody goes to the hearing. In fact, the best data show that most don't show up for all of the hearings. The long-term data show that about half of all asylum applicants eventually get removal orders due to their not attending all of their asylum hearings. We don't have great data on this, to be honest, and some people say that very few go to these asylum hearings. Some say more do. The point is that about half of them are getting removal orders—we know that—for not attending all of their asylum hearings.

Given that there is a 1.2 million-case backlog in America today for asylum applicants and that there were fewer

than 5,000 noncriminals deported last year by ICE, that tells us that, under the current system, if you are a noncriminal asylum seeker who is denied asylum and is subject to one of these removal orders, it is highly unlikely that you are going to actually end up being deported from the United States. Asylum seekers know that. So do the traffickers. It is no wonder there has been a surge of those who want to live in the United States who have come to the border and sought asylum in recent years.

I went to the border in 2019, and many of my colleagues have been down to the border to see this situation. I will be going back again soon to see firsthand what is happening and to see how we can help. It should not be a partisan issue. It should be one in which Democrats and Republicans alike see what is happening—see the tragedy unfolding along the border—and do something to address it. This Migrant Protection Program put in place by the Trump administration had resulted in a sharp reduction in the surge of asylum claims as people realized, pending their asylum hearings, they were not going to be released in U.S. communities. Now we are seeing the reverse happen.

Second, the Biden administration actually suspended Safe Third Country agreements with the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, which allowed migrants to apply for asylum in the first foreign country they crossed into. This, of course, reduced incentives for migrants from those countries to make the long, arduous, and dangerous journey to the southern border.

These agreements were in the process of being fully implemented, but they were already helping and had the potential of finding a much more expeditious way to identify and process those who would qualify for legitimate asylum-refugee status before they would come all the way to our border. All that work that has been accomplished has now been lost. I urge the administration to reinstate those Safe Third Country agreements with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Third, the new administration has also significantly changed the way we process migrants during the COVID-19 crisis. Instead of establishing the practice of turning away most immigrant and nonimmigrant visa holders to protect the health and safety of the American people, we are now learning from media reports, including the Washington Post, that this new administration has made an unofficial exception to the COVID-19 rules for children and for families.

Border Patrol agents and CBP officers who are on the frontlines are telling us that they are returning to the pre-COVID practice of bringing people into the country despite the health crisis that all of us understand. The reports are that either the CBP officers are not testing kids and families for

COVID at all or, if they are, they are still releasing some of those who test positive to shelters or into the United States with a request that they quarantine after they travel to their final destinations in the interior of the United States. In fact, we know of one instance in which more than 100 unlawful immigrants in Brownsville, TX, who tested positive for COVID-19, were simply told to quarantine when they reached their final destinations regardless of how many people they interacted with when taking a bus—in that case, most were taking a bus, apparently—or when taking a plane to their destinations. Obviously, that doesn't make any sense.

The final policy changes that encourage illegal entry is the new administration's advocating for amnesty for those here illegally without making it clear that such amnesty would not apply to anyone not already here. That is important. As the experience of the last amnesty in 1986 demonstrated, unless it is very clear that illegal entry won't be rewarded, it will spawn more illegal entries. Now, let's face it. The traffickers and the smugglers are going to take advantage of this, and they are going to misrepresent the reality, but, still, it is important that all of us as policymakers make it very clear, as we talk about amnesty, that it is not as to the people who might come in the future; it is as to the people who are already here.

I will say that the State Department has announced that it will be reinstating the Central American Minors Program, which was a streamlined refugee process that existed under the Obama administration and was run by the U.S. Government and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, but it was discontinued under the Trump administration. I think it is a positive thing that they are reinstating that.

We don't have all of the details yet, but I will tell you that standing up this program without incentivizing people to use it is not going to be very effective. Even if it were to be as effective as it was at the height of the program, which was during the Obama administration, it would not be nearly enough people. In 2 years, the program resettled 3,300 individuals. So 3,300 children were resettled in 2 years. That is not going to make a real impact when we are receiving, right now, 3,300 children every couple of weeks at the border. Again, I hope they do reinstate that program, as I think that would be positive, but they have to do much more in order to avoid this tragic situation from continuing and getting much worse.

The decision by the new administration to change all of these policies, which were working, without having viable alternatives is causing this chaos. It was done without thinking through the real safety and security concerns for both communities and citizens of the United States as well as for these unaccompanied kids and their

families. As a result, we have a surge of people being incentivized to enter our country unlawfully, and our systems are being strained during a public health emergency.

This influx is even worse than in 2019, not just because the numbers are greater but because we now have the COVID-19 pandemic, and children and families are being forced into tight quarters in detention facilities. Asylum seekers with COVID-19 are being released into our communities, and Customs and Border Protection officers who haven't been able to receive the vaccine yet, which is a problem, are being exposed to this influx of migrants who haven't been tested. So it is an even bigger problem—forgetting the numbers—given the situation we are in.

That ties in another concern I have about the way this crisis has been handled so far, which is the administration's response to the overcrowding at the shelter facilities. It has been to rush and potentially cut corners to place these unaccompanied children with sponsors because their goal, after HHS detention in HHS facilities, is to get these children out to sponsor families. The standards of due diligence that are required to ensure these children are not being placed in danger are not being met, as far as we can tell, which continues a troubling trend that goes back years and administrations.

It is an issue I have worked on since 2015, when we had a terrible situation in my home State of Ohio wherein kids were given back to the traffickers by HHS—the traffickers who had brought them up from Central America by lying to their parents about what they were going to do: take them to school and so on. These kids ended up working on an egg farm, 6 to 7 days a week, below the minimum wage. I have seen this. I have seen what happens when HHS does not take its time and do it right, and it is very difficult for HHS to do that with the surge that it has.

Over the course of three bipartisan reports and hearings as part of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which I chair, and across two different administrations, we found failures to ensure the safety of or to even keep track of these vulnerable children once they were handed off to sponsors as well as a fundamental refusal by Agencies to accept that they were responsible for the welfare of these kids. That is the reality. Our bipartisan investigations also found that the Office of Refugee Resettlement failed to exercise appropriate oversight at its facilities and wasted millions of taxpayer dollars on organizations and on contractors that could not acquire State licenses to safely open the planned shelter facilities.

As those in this administration attempt to process this influx of unaccompanied kids and safely get them to longer term housing solutions, it is urgent that they do the due diligence on who is going to be looking after these

children and not cut corners as some reports are indicating. That means fingerprinting the sponsors. That means background checks. That means home visits. The Federal Government cannot allow these kids to fall victim to human trafficking, to abuse, or other harm.

I, along with my bipartisan cosponsors, will be reintroducing the Responsibility for Unaccompanied Minors Act again in the coming days to help ensure these requirements are met to protect our kids.

Here is the reality: Once these children arrive at the border, there are no good options. The answer is to stop providing the incentives, the pull factor. That is the short-term imperative. We should not be encouraging these young people to make that arduous journey to then have them end up in a detention facility. That is wrong for them. It is a place where single males are crowded together but where kids are not taken care of. Then, when they have to go to the HHS facility, there is not enough room—again, making the point of there being 3,400 kids in detention and 2,800 kids who are ready to be transferred to HHS, to more appropriate facilities, but there are only 500 beds. So 2,300 are kept in these overcrowded facilities that are meant for single males. It is not a good option. There is no good option. The option is to keep them from coming up to the border in the first place.

Yes, we can do more on the push factors also. That means investing in Central America and other places to try to make those countries places where people would want to stay rather than come to the United States. Yet, my colleagues, that is what is called a long-term solution. Let's be frank. I am for it, but we have to recognize that this is not a solution to the current crisis that we face.

In the last 5 years, we have spent \$3.6 billion of U.S. taxpayer funds in aid for these Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. President Biden is proposing to spend another \$4 billion in those countries. I support smart investments that don't get wasted because of corruption or other challenges, but it won't fix the crisis this month, this year, or next year. The development of the Northern Triangle is a decades-long effort—one we need to do but one that is not going to address, again, the crisis that we face now.

I urge the Biden administration to also step up efforts to tie any aid to better collaboration with our international partners, including with the Governments of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, to address this challenge, discourage migration, and provide alternatives to those seeking to make the dangerous journey north. They need to help us, and they have in the past.

In the Trump administration, we had a valuable partner in Mexico, as an example. It used tens of thousands of its

own military to patrol its own southern border to ensure migrants could be processed, if necessary, and turned away if they didn't meet the requirements. That was very helpful. I am concerned that these troops have now been pulled back—that is the information that we are receiving—partly because, as we are told, President Biden is not encouraging the current Mexican leadership to continue this practice. I hope that changes. The current surge in unaccompanied children at our border, in the midst of a global pandemic, is a situation in which no one wins and the children lose the most.

I am disappointed that the Biden administration chose to overturn the policies put in place by the Trump administration, which were to help control the flow of migrants during this pandemic, without having any viable alternatives. I am concerned that leaders at key Agencies involved in the response to this crisis are somehow seeing it as in their interests to downplay the severity of the situation.

I urge the Biden administration to change course. Put back in place smart policies that reduce the pull factors, and address the need for legal and orderly processes for migration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, let me just congratulate our colleague from Ohio.

That was, perhaps, the most concise and informative speech I have heard on that topic, including speeches that I have given on that topic. In representing a border State, as I do, and in my having served on the Judiciary Committee and on the Immigration Subcommittee for my entire time here, the way he described it, I thought, was entirely accurate. I think you can call it a crisis, a challenge—whatever you want to call it—but it is getting worse all the time, and I think it will get much, much worse if we don't act and act together. So I thank him for his outstanding remarks.

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

REMEMBERING HOWARD BALDWIN

Madam President, I have had the privilege of working alongside some truly incredible public servants throughout my career. Without a doubt, one of the finest was Howard Baldwin.

Howard was brilliant, effective, humorous, and exceedingly humble—a rare combination made even more striking because of his kindness. He was an extraordinary person.

Over the weekend, I received the sad news that Howard had passed away, and I want to share just a few words about the incredible life and legacy of my late friend.

Howard and I crossed paths as young lawyers in San Antonio, TX, where we used to play a little pickup basketball together.

He graduated from St. Mary's School of Law a few years before I did, and

much to the benefit of families across our State, he quickly found his calling working on child support and family issues.

Howard spent time as a private lawyer, as a State-appointed judge, and as a regional director for child support enforcement. He bounced back and forth between the Texas Attorney General's Office and the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, and his colleagues would joke: Howard, how can we miss you if you won't stay gone?

But a man as talented and devoted and as effective as Howard is always in high demand. And when I was elected as attorney general of Texas in 1998, he was one of the first people I called.

At the time, the child support division of the attorney general's office was a disaster. Staff were completely overwhelmed by the sky-high number of cases. The office ran a computer system that was so dysfunctional it actually managed to decrease productivity, and a lack of support from previous leadership made even minor improvements impossible.

I knew turning things around wouldn't be easy, but it was absolutely essential that we do so, and I knew that Howard was the only man that I knew for that job.

A news article at the time summed up the monumental task of fixing the broken child support enforcement system by saying, "Howard Baldwin will look either like a fool or a hero; there won't be much middle ground."

Today, with the benefit of hindsight, I can assure you that Howard came out looking like a hero.

Unlike previous leaders of the child support division, Howard didn't view it as purely an enforcement or collection agency. He truly cared about the children and family welfare, and he wanted to help families get to a place where both parents could be involved in their children's lives.

To better serve these families, he shifted our focus to customer service. He hired more staff. He brought the division into the technology age, and he empowered the incredible attorneys and staff we worked with to implement changes at every level to affect not only the quality of service but also the quality of outcomes. And the results speak for themselves.

During my time as attorney general, the child support division collected more than \$3 billion in child support for more than 1 million Texas children. We broke records annually for the most child support ever collected in a year and the biggest year-to-year increases in collection.

The Texas Child Support Division at the Attorney General's Office went from an unproductive mess to the premier organization of its type in the country. We became a model for other States, and Howard was the guy with all the answers.

I had so much trust in Howard and his ability to steer the ship that I later

asked him to serve as my first assistant attorney general. This is the person who oversees the day-to-day operations of the AG's office which, at the time, employed more than 3,800 Texans.

Howard used his deep-seated knowledge of Texas State government to improve the attorney general's office across the board. He built strong relationships with folks on both sides of the aisle, and when something needed to be done, all he had to do was to pick up the phone and call a friend and a colleague. He knew who to call, what to ask for, and how to convince the biggest skeptic in the room to see things his way without ever breaking the smile on his face.

I say this in all candor with the greatest admiration: Howard was the most effective bureaucrat I have ever met.

As big an impact as Howard had on my State—our State—his influence has reached beyond the borders of the Lone Star State.

Howard was an active member of the National Child Support Enforcement Association, where he spent more than a decade as a board member and nearly 2 years as president. He earned the respect and admiration of folks across the country who shared his passion for helping children and helping families.

When a friend and former colleague of Howard's shared the news of his passing with his national network, the response was immediate and overwhelming. Friends and colleagues from Washington State, Kentucky, and New York said that Howard, the Texas bureaucrat, was their mentor.

For those who had the privilege of knowing Howard, this wasn't a surprise. After all, Howard had a wonderful way of advancing the careers of others around him. He wanted them to succeed as well. When their joint efforts were successful, he then made sure that they, not he, got the credit.

He was generous with his time and his knowledge, whether helping someone with an entry-level job or a division leader in another State.

Howard was consistently driven by his passion for helping children. More than two decades ago, he said: "It gets into your blood because it makes such a difference in people's lives."

And I can tell you that I have seen the difference firsthand time and time and time again. During my first term in the Senate, I was traveling to El Paso, TX, and I was about to get on my flight when a guy named Joe—I could see it on his uniform—who was part of the ground crew there, came up to me and said: Are you JOHN CORNYN?

I said: Yes, I am.

And he asked: I bet you don't remember me. Do you?

Well, as you can imagine, it caught me a little off guard, so I smiled and said: I am sorry. Can you remind me?

He said: I am Joe. You sued me and threatened to put me in jail for not paying my child support.

Well, that is not the response I expected, but he said: You took me to court because I wasn't paying my child support, but I didn't want to pay it because my ex-wife wouldn't allow me to see my children.

He was holding up the chocks that go under the wheels of the airplane to keep it from rolling, and at this point I was thinking: This guy is going to take a swing at me, or worse.

He then surprised me again. He said: But you know what? After I started paying it after you sued me, the judge ordered my ex-wife to let me spend time with our daughter, and I realized what kind of father I needed to be, what kind of man I needed to be, and I made things right.

He raised his left hand and pointed at his wedding ring. He said: My wife and I got back together.

Well, I was in awe, not only of Joe, but the power of people like Howard Baldwin and everyone at the child support division trying to protect children and trying to restore families. I don't think any one of us could have expected to help reunite a divorced couple, but Howard did everything in his power to help parents support their children, both financially and emotionally, to encourage positive outcomes.

There is no way to quantify the amount of good Howard did throughout his career and throughout his life, but I can say without a doubt he changed lives—many, many lives.

Howard's advocacy for children was his calling, but there were no children he loved more than his two boys, James and Eric. Howard's family was his entire world. His wife Rita was at its center. Throughout their 46-year marriage, Rita wholeheartedly supported and encouraged Howard. I know she was proud of him.

So on behalf of the State of Texas, I want to thank the Baldwin family for sharing their beloved patriarch with us for so many decades. I personally am grateful, profoundly grateful, for Howard's friendship and his impact on my life and the great example of service that he set.

Sandy and I send our deepest condolences to Rita, James, Eric, and the long list of friends across Texas and the country who are mourning the loss of this incredible public servant and friend.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

NOMINATION OF DEBRA ANNE HAALAND

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I rise today to speak in support of the historic nomination of Congresswoman DEB HAALAND to serve as our Nation's next Secretary of the Interior.

This Cabinet position is of great importance to our Nation and especially to Western States like mine—like ours, Madam President, and I can't think of anyone more qualified to fill this position than Congresswoman DEB HAALAND, one of the first Native American Members of Congress and a proven leader.

Let me start by telling you why this Cabinet position means so much to Nevada. In the Silver State, over 50 million acres of land is managed by the Interior Department. That is over 70 percent of our entire State.

People come to Nevada from all over the world to experience our pristine and our majestic public lands and monuments. These lands, well, they are not just a source of beauty; they are also a source of economic opportunity for Nevada.

In previous administrations, we have seen efforts to put those public lands on the chopping blocks. But that won't happen under DEB HAALAND's leadership.

I have had the chance to speak with Congresswoman HAALAND one-on-one, hear directly from her, and get to know her.

She has spent her entire career fighting to protect public lands, waters, monuments, cultural sites and natural beauties around our Nation and, of course, in our great State of Nevada.

And I know, if confirmed, she will work with me and Senator CORTEZ MASTO to strike the right balance between critical protections for our public lands, environment, and wildlife, and the needed economic development across Nevada.

DEB HAALAND, well, she has been committed to conservation as a Member of Congress, and she will be just as committed to conservation as our next Interior Secretary.

Congresswoman HAALAND, she will take the bold steps needed to confront climate change. And if this historic confirmation succeeds, she will bring new and needed perspective to the Presidential Cabinet—one that has been missing since the President's Cabinet was formed all the way back in 1789.

As Secretary of the Interior, DEB HAALAND will be the first—the first—Native American Cabinet member, and she will give a voice to Tribal communities in Nevada and across our country.

She will take steps to restore and respect Tribal sovereignty. She will continue to be an advocate and an ally to Native communities, and she will help to right the many historic wrongs and injustices that have been committed against Native Americans and Tribal communities.

DEB HAALAND is exceptionally qualified to lead this Agency. She brings a breadth of experience and diversity to the table. She will be a positive force for good. She will guide our Nation forward.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on DEB HAALAND's nomination.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING REX LEE

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I come to the Senate floor today in recognition of an anniversary of sorts. My late father, Rex Lee, died 25 years ago today after an extended and heroic battle with cancer.

I prefer to remember my dad not as someone who was ill but someone who was full of life and healthy for most of his life—in fact, his entire life, even while battling with a significant illness.

Rex grew up in the small town of St. Johns, AZ. It is a really, really small town. In fact, we used to joke that he may have been 21 years old before he realized that the true name of the town wasn't "Resume Speed." It was a little dot along the highway in eastern Arizona. It was a place that he loved, and it was a place where he learned to love those dear to him and close to him, a place where he was taught in school and in church, where he learned to serve his fellow beings.

He attended Brigham Young University as a freshman in the fall of 1953, somewhat under protest. He had wanted to attend the University of Arizona, like his cousins Mo and Stewart Udall before him.

His parents told him: You can go wherever you want, but your first year needs to be spent at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT.

He went there and was immediately smitten with the place and commenced a relationship that would extend for the rest of his life and would significantly impact his life in many, many ways.

Halfway through college, he left to serve a 2½-year mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mexico. During that time, to say he became fluent in the Spanish language and the Mexican culture would be an understatement. It was a fluency that never really left him.

While I was a missionary many decades later, he used to write me letters in Spanish, and even after I had been speaking and studying the language for some time, I knew I had to keep my Spanish dictionary close to me when I read letters from my dad, written in his adopted native tongue, Spanish.

While serving as a missionary there, he briefly met Janet Griffin, whom he would later marry and who was my mother. Janet was the daughter of an employee of the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. Treasury Attache in the Mexican Embassy.

While they didn't interact much then, they reconnected when they were both back at Brigham Young University about 6 or 8 months later. It wasn't exactly love at first sight for my mom, but it was for my dad. They went on to have seven children together, and I am grateful that they did. I am the fourth of those seven.

My dad ended up going to law school at the University of Chicago. As it

turned out, the law suited him well. He liked it, and it liked him back. He ended up finishing first in his class at the University of Chicago. He clerked at the U.S. Supreme Court for Justice White. Shortly after that, he joined the Phoenix law firm of Jennings, Strouss & Salmon and represented clients, both big and small, individual and corporate, mostly civil but also some criminal cases.

But he loved the law. He loved the opportunity that he had to represent clients. He loved the challenge that each case brought him. He loved the opportunity to digest large volumes of information and condense it down into a single legal brief and then into a single oral argument that he could present in court.

His enthusiasm was so intense that once in a while a judge would pull him aside afterward and ask him why he was so intense about the case, and he would respond by saying: OK, I will try to dial down the intensity next time.

Little by little, he became more conversant in court, never to the point of being chatty or inappropriately familiar, but at a point where he felt he was able to have a conversation with the judge and able to communicate to the judge the facts and the law of the case in a simple way.

As they were raising their seven children, there were a lot of things that were unexpected in life, including seven very loud, rambunctious children; including the fact that one day, as he was practicing law in Phoenix, he got a phone call informing him that Brigham Young University would be opening a law school and they wanted him to be its founding dean. I was just 1 year old at the time.

That is how my family ended up in Utah. We ended up being connected to Brigham Young University basically for the rest of my life ever since then.

My dad, in addition to serving as the dean of BYU's law school, served as the Assistant Attorney General during the Ford administration, over the Civil Division of the Department of Justice. And during President Reagan's first term, he served as Solicitor General. This is when I had my first real exposure to the law.

I found during that era of my dad's service that I could miss school once in a while if I asked my parents if I could just go with my dad to court. He would go into court, and it felt a little bit like sitting in an extended session of church in a different language. It may not sound exciting, but I was impressed by the majesty of the whole event. As much as anything, I was impressed by how much my dad generally enjoyed being in court and making arguments. He had a way of making it fun.

After serving as Solicitor General of the United States, he went back to BYU and resumed his teaching career while simultaneously continuing to argue cases in front of the Supreme Court as a private practice litigator.

It was during that period of time, in June of 1987, that my father, while at

the peak of physical condition, an avid runner and marathoner, got the news that he had stage IV non-Hodgkin's T-cell lymphoma, a pretty deadly and advanced form of cancer. With a young family still at home, this hit us pretty hard. We were afraid that we were going to lose him.

Through the able help of some excellent doctors and as a result of a fortuitous set of circumstances culminating in him receiving some experimental treatment then going on at the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health, they were able to prolong his life, and he lived nearly another 9 years. They put him into remission within a few months, very nearly losing him in the process, but then he came back.

He had some of the best years of his life after that bout with cancer. It was just a couple of years after that that he was asked to serve as president of Brigham Young University. I still remember this happened shortly after I had been accepted as a freshman at BYU, just as I was graduating from law school.

Later that summer, as I was preparing to enter as a freshman at BYU, I got a letter in the mail. The letter was signed by my dad. It was a letter that welcomed me to the university and then ended with the words: "I look forward to meeting you on campus this fall." So I put it on the refrigerator with a Post-it note, saying: "Dad, thanks so much for the really personal note."

My dad had a great sense of humor, and notwithstanding his love of law and his professional accomplishments, at home, he was just our dad and our friend. In fact, calling him just our dad doesn't really even do it justice. He was someone who had so much energy and enthusiasm for life.

When we were little kids, he would come home from work, and we played a great game. We called it "run around dad," and we didn't know that that wasn't necessarily an entertaining game. We didn't know that it probably wasn't that fun for him, but we would run around him, and he would figure out ways to trip us, and it was hilarious every single time it would happen. My mom would watch patiently in the corner, realizing that after four or five trips, someone was going to cry, but it all worked out OK.

Our dad taught us to work hard. He taught us to be kind to each other and to others, and he did that not just through the profession of his faith with words—and there was that. Of course, he was a devoutly faithful father and husband, and he taught us to pray and to read and love the Scriptures, but he also taught us those things through his very actions.

I remember when I was a boy and decided that I wanted to set up a small business enterprise shoveling driveways, and after a couple of particularly heavy snowstorms, I wasn't sure whether I could complete all of the jobs

that I had. He offered to be my indentured servant. I graciously offered to pay him, but he said: No, this one is on me. You are not going to pay me. You can get paid, in fact, for the fact that I am going to work for you. It was a fantastic deal. It was one of my favorite memories of my life because he had a lot of other things to do, but he chose to help me, not just to teach me to work but also so he could spend time with me, and it was a lot of fun.

He loved amusement parks. He loved roller coasters, and he loved being really, really exceptionally, unusually, embarrassingly loud while going down said roller coasters. He loved to ride, and he loved every aspect of it, even when he knew how it was going to end.

As my brother Tom once remarked, recalling the circumstance in which my brother Tom had asked my dad for the name of a particular tool that my dad was using while assembling a swing set, he said: Dad, what is that?

My dad looked at it and couldn't tell whether it was a wrench or something else. It was a specialized tool used only for a swing set. My dad said to him: I don't know what it is called, but when you need one of those, nothing else will do.

Tom later remarked, that same description can be used of my dad. There is not really a single word that you can place to describe him, but when you need one of him, nothing else will do.

During most of the last 6½ years of his life, he was serving as president of BYU. He stayed exceptionally busy. He even managed to argue a case or two in front of the Supreme Court every single year he was serving as president of BYU, even though during most of that time his cancer had come back. It had come back in a slightly different form—slower growing but less treatable.

Notwithstanding the pain that he was enduring and the discomfort caused by the treatment, he never lost his optimism, the zeal for his work, or his love for his family. He was such a blessing to all of us to watch him go through that. We didn't feel sorry for him as much as we should have, but part of the reason we didn't feel as sorry for him is that unless you really paid attention, you couldn't tell he was in pain. He didn't complain about it. It certainly didn't slow him down, not at least until the very end.

I will always remember, as if it were yesterday, the moment when I took him to the hospital for what I feared would be the last time, and indeed it was. Just a couple of weeks before his death, I was in my second year of law school, and my mom and my wife let me know that things weren't going well and I needed to go and help my dad get to the hospital.

As we were wheeling him into the hospital that day, I could hear him. He was almost unconscious. Once we got him into the hospital, they put an oxygen mask over him. His voice was muffled, but he was muffling something. I

listened closely, and because I was, by then, a second-year law student, I recognized some of the legal vernacular that he was using, and I quickly discerned, based on some of his appellate briefs that I recently had read, he was preparing for what he hoped and expected and genuinely believed would be his next argument before the U.S. Supreme Court. And I thought: Way to go. There to the bitter end, he is ready for what is next. He is ready to stand for vindicating the interests of his client and for doing his job and doing it well.

At no moment during any of this, notwithstanding his service in education, in government, and the practice of law, and his extended church service as a lay minister in my faith, did I ever feel that we were neglected as a family. To be sure, he was gone a fair amount of time. He was a busy man, but when he was home, he was 100 percent home. He was all in. He loved—or at least if he didn't love it, he at least had us convinced that he loved being at home and loved working with his kids, studying with them, and helping them with their homework.

When someone serves you that well, that faithfully, and that consistently over that many years, it has an effect and a very positive one. To this day, I still, from time to time, hear his words echoing in my head reminding me to do things as best as I possibly can do them; reminding me, as a lawyer, when you are in court, when you have won your case and you know you have won it, he said sit down and don't say another word; reminding me that when you have got a choice between a ten-cent word and a three-dollar word, choose the ten-cent word every time if it will do the job; reminding me to be kind to others and that you will never regret doing so. He reminded me to give others the benefit of the doubt. Those are things that stick with all of us.

So I know I speak certainly for myself and for my siblings—Diana, Tom, Wendy, Stephanie, Melissa, Christie, and my mom Janet—that we miss him. The State of Utah and the Western United States and the United States of America is a better place because of the fact that he was here. I will never forget, on the morning of March 11, 1996—again, exactly 25 years ago today—I saw the Sun rising over the Wasatch Mountains to our east in Provo, UT. It was at that moment when I realized that it would likely be the last time the Sun would rise with my father on the Earth. The Sun has risen and set on that same mountain range many, many thousands of times since then, but we remain better off for the fact that he was here.

If he were here, I would tell him: I miss you, Dad. I love you, and I thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam 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.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last week the Congress passed and tomorrow the President will sign into law the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which includes \$10 billion to respond to COVID-19 internationally. While this is a tiny fraction of the \$1.9 trillion in the Rescue Plan, it is critically necessary. As long as the virus continues to spread and mutate into more transmissible and deadlier variants in other countries, it will remain a threat to Americans.

Within that amount, \$580 million is included to support the U.N. Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 through U.S. voluntary contributions to international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and other international organizations.

UNICEF offers critical operations and technical assistance to ministries of health and education around the world as countries continue to adapt their health and education activities to meet COVID-19 protocols. UNICEF also focuses on strengthening risk communication and community engagement to ensure that women, children, and their families know how to prevent COVID-19; providing supplies to communities and educational and health facilities to support the prevention and treatment of COVID-19, including WASH supplies and personal protective equipment; and ensuring that children and women have continued access to basic healthcare, education, child protection, and gender-based violence services, including ensuring access to immunizations, prenatal and postnatal care, and HIV care in an environment safe from infection by the virus.

It is obvious that UNICEF has a critical role to play in the international COVID-19 response. The same can be said of the World Food Programme, UNHCR, and WHO. I am pleased that Congress was able to provide additional funding for these and other international organizations to support their lifesaving work.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I rise to talk about the passage of the historic American Rescue Plan. This monumental legislation will help us get this pandemic under control and help families and small businesses weather the economic crisis. It includes critical funding for vaccine production, testing, and additional PPE. It includes the resources we need to help kids get back to school safely, enhanced unemployment to help workers who are suffering during this pandemic, food assistance for low-income families, and stimulus checks to help make ends meet with hours cut and expenses rising. It also makes long-overdue enhancements to EITC and CTC that will help lift millions of children out of poverty. And it provides resources to keep families in their homes during this pandemic.

First, it provides critical assistance for renters and people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Before the pandemic, an estimated 568,000 people, many with underlying health conditions, were already experiencing homelessness. One out of four renters was paying more than half of their income in rent, leaving too many making impossible choices between essential expenses or even at risk of eviction. COVID-19 has both revealed and exacerbated these housing problems. One out of five renters reports being behind on rent, and renters were an estimated \$57 billion dollars behind on rent as of January.

I am pleased that the Senate-approved bill includes new resources to assist people experiencing or at risk of homelessness through emergency housing vouchers and homelessness assistance and supportive services administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as emergency assistance for rural housing for residents of properties financed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Service.

In addition, the American Rescue Plan provides \$21.6 billion in emergency rental assistance through States, localities, and territories, including \$2.5 billion reserved for high-need grantees.

This funding supplements the \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance funding provided by Congress in December, Section 501 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116-260, Section 501, but includes additional flexibilities to ensure grantees can better stabilize renters. The Biden administration should again extend the Federal eviction moratorium that expires on March 31, 2021, so that grantees have time to distribute assistance to renters in need to prevent evictions and displacement.

With the emergency rental assistance provided in this bill, renters will be able to receive up to 18 months of financial assistance, including future rent and utility payments, including paid rents in manufactured housing communities, and unpaid rent or utility bills that have accumulated. Renters can also receive assistance for

other housing-related expenses necessary to promote housing stability, such as but not limited to security deposits; relocation and rental fees for displaced households; late fees related to a former or current rental unit; and internet service provided to the rental unit. Section 3201 does not preclude grantees from continuing payment processes provided in section 501. These processes are the provisions that govern payments of rent and utility assistance either to property owners and utilities or directly to tenants and the application for assistance by landlords and owners under subsection (f). Additionally, funds can be used to provide housing stability services, such as but not limited to case management; tenant-landlord mediation; legal services related to eviction and housing stability; housing counseling; fair housing counseling; and specialized services for people with disabilities, people with chronic health conditions, seniors, or survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking. Similar to section 501, section 3201 permits grantees to use a certain percentage of their funds on administrative costs to support eligible program activities, including the provision of financial assistance and housing stability services. After deducting the amount grantees may use on program administration, grantees may also use up to 10 percent of their funds on providing housing stability services. As in section 501, funds are provided to States to assist renters throughout the State, including in rural communities, as well as cities and counties that receive a direct allocation.

Given how badly these resources are needed, the Department of Treasury and grantees must do all they can to implement this rental assistance program quickly and successfully and not create any artificial barriers to assistance. With some benefits provided by the CARES Act, documentation requirements to prove eligibility have erected artificial barriers that have cut people off from the benefits Congress intended them to receive. Indeed, diverse stakeholders, including tenant advocates, landlords, and State and local government agencies, have raised concerns that such requirements that have been applied in existing emergency rental assistance programs have prevented renters from completing applications and are overly burdensome for program staff. It is critical that any renters who are struggling to pay their rent during the pandemic are not barred from accessing this assistance due to cumbersome documentation requirements or other barriers. An applicant's simple attestation should be the only documentation required to meet program eligibility requirements. Additionally, grantees may continue the income assessment procedures pursuant to section 501 to determine eligibility.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had broad impacts on individuals, families,

businesses, availability of government services and supports, and throughout our economy. It has changed where and how many people work. It has made it more difficult not just to keep a job but also to find a new job, to get enough hours, and to find childcare or someone to care for a sick loved one. All of these challenges brought on by the pandemic have made it more difficult for families to make ends meet. These effects are likely to exist for months and years to come. Given these factors, Treasury and grantees should broadly read the requirement regarding the connection between a renter's hardship and the coronavirus pandemic when determining the eligibility of the renter. As the language states, the hardship must have occurred "during or due, directly or indirectly, to the coronavirus pandemic." The economic effects of the pandemic will be felt long after the virus is contained. Certain industries and communities have been particularly hard-hit from the pandemic and will likely take years to recover. Treasury should issue guidance that makes this point clear to ensure renters are not cut off from needed assistance as they try to recover from economic downturns caused by the pandemic.

Section 3201 also provides that after October 1, 2022, certain grantees may expend funds on "other affordable rental housing and eviction prevention activities" that benefit any very low-income renter household. Such activities can include but are not limited to affordable housing development, preservation, or acquisition, and other forms of rental assistance and eviction prevention activities targeted to very low-income renters.

To ensure continuity in monitoring funds provided by section 3201 and section 501 and ease of grantee implementation, Treasury should maintain the same reporting requirements that were included in section 501.

The committee encourages the administration to create and maintain a central public repository of information on State and local rental assistance programs, which at a minimum identifies the program's administering agency and contact information, so that renters and landlords can more easily identify available assistance.

Finally, to the extent there is any confusion with regard to the taxability of assistance, Treasury, in consultation with the Internal Revenue Service, should provide guidance to clarify this for grantees and program participants.

The American Rescue Plan also provides vital home ownership assistance to families across the country. This much-needed assistance would not have been possible without the dedication and diligence of our colleague, Senator JACK REED, who is the author of the Homeowner Assistance Fund we have enacted. For nearly a year, he has been leading the charge to keep families in their homes and avoid another foreclosure crisis, and I am grateful to him for his leadership on this issue.

There is no question that homeowners are struggling as a result of this pandemic. In January, more than 3.3 million homeowners were more than 30 days behind on their payments or in foreclosure. More than 2 million households are more than 3 months behind, putting them at risk of foreclosure. Many of these households are in forbearance, but others are not. And the number of homeowners behind on mortgage payments doesn't account for other costs, such as utility and insurance bills, that are building up not just for homeowners with a mortgage but also for the more than one-third of homeowners who own their home outright.

Black, Latino, and Asian households are more likely to report that they have fallen behind on their mortgages. As with so much else in this health and economic crisis, the burden is falling the heaviest on the communities of color and low-income communities.

We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past. We cannot allow this pandemic to become a housing crisis that exacerbates economic inequality and widens the racial home ownership gap. This time, we must give communities the tools to help homeowners weather this crisis and remain in their homes.

Many homeowners who are in forbearance have loans backed by a Federal agency or Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. Throughout this pandemic, these agencies have extended forbearance and post-forbearance options to help borrowers resume making regular payments at some point or get an affordable loan modification. Many borrowers in forbearance today will also be able to get back on track with these existing options. But these options won't help all homeowners. Many homeowners do not have the benefit of the loan workout options that come with a federally backed or Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac-backed loan, have accumulated other utility or housing costs, or have a manufactured home loan that is not a mortgage. And still other homeowners have a federally backed loan but, given the severe disruption to our economy, just need more help than is available through their mortgage program. These homeowners will need direct assistance, and they will need it quickly.

That is exactly what the Homeowner Assistance Fund will do. The American Rescue Plan Act's Homeowner Assistance Fund creates a nearly \$10 billion fund at the Department of the Treasury to provide resources to States, Tribal governments, and Tribally designated housing entities to help homeowners staying in their homes. Treasury will allocate funds among the States and other eligible recipients, taking into account the number of individuals in a State who have been unemployed in recent months, as well as the number of homeowners who have fallen at least a month behind on their mortgage, regardless of whether they are in forbearance, or who are in foreclosure. States and eligible recipients

will use the funds Congress has provided in this bill for direct relief to eligible homeowners and to set up, staff, and administer the programs providing that relief.

As Congress has established in the bill, direct relief through the Homeowner Assistance Fund can include help with missed mortgage payments, financial help to make a mortgage modification viable, assistance with broadband and utility costs; and other relief that homeowners need to get back on track financially. At least 60 percent of a State or other eligible entity's funds must go to households at or below 100 percent of area median income or households below 100 percent of the national median income, whichever is higher, to ensure that help reaches those homeowners who need it most. Including homeowners with incomes of up to 100 percent of the national median income when that is higher than the area median income will ensure that funds adequately reach homeowners in Tribal areas and rural areas, where localized incomes may be lower. Remaining assistance funds are targeted to socially disadvantaged individuals, including homeowners of color, who too often are left behind in our economy and who data indicate are at disproportionate risk of foreclosure.

While Congress has authorized the program, the intent is for Treasury to play a vital role in making this program a reality by administering the Homeowner Assistance Fund prudently and flexibly to keep the greatest number of families in their homes. In the days ahead, Treasury must provide States and other eligible entities with the certainty they need to accept and distribute these funds efficiently. Treasury must set clear expectations for the types of eligible programs States can administer and the guidelines States must follow to administer these programs equitably and in accordance with the law. That includes ensuring States and other eligible entities understand up front that they can use a portion of the funds provided through the Homeowner Assistance Fund to establish and administer their programs, so that States can immediately get the systems and staffing in place to put funds into the hands of the people who need them. And if there is any uncertainty among States or individuals who might apply for assistance, Treasury should immediately clarify that any assistance received through the Homeowner Assistance Fund is not income for a homeowner.

Treasury must also establish reporting to ensure that funds are reaching the households who need them most. Both to comply with the law and to ensure funds are being used equitably, Treasury must establish periodic public reporting by State of key metrics, including the amount of funds disbursed, the acceptance rate of applicants, reasons applicants are denied, the number of individuals assisted, the number of households assisted by in-

come range, the types of assistance provided, the average amount of assistance per household, and household outcomes. These data should also be assessed by race, ethnicity, gender, and other factors to determine compliance with all laws, including the Fair Housing Act. While Fair Housing Act enforcement remains the jurisdiction of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, this program and all housing programs must be developed and administered to comply with this foundational civil rights law.

States and other eligible recipients will also be vital partners in getting relief out quickly. Too many homeowners have been struggling for nearly a year. We need to get them relief now. Following the 2008 economic crisis, State housing finance agencies in select States were great partners in providing direct relief to homeowners through the Hardest Hit Fund. In my home State of Ohio, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency helped tens of thousands of people with mortgage payment assistance, modifications with assistance, and more. We need all States to be prepared to get these funds out quickly and without unnecessary barriers. Treasury can help facilitate this with clear guidance and templates that allow States to put out funds without delay.

I will continue to fight for the assistance people experiencing homelessness, renters, and homeowners need to stay in their homes. I also look forward to working to successfully deploy the historic resources provided in this bill.

CONFIRMATION OF MERRICK BRIAN GARLAND

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I rise today to voice my support for the President's nominee for Attorney General, Judge Merrick Garland, who is not only a fellow Marylander, but somebody I have known personally for many years. And I know that President Biden has picked a nominee with impeccable credentials and unimpeachable character. His experience stretches from the halls of the Justice Department to the chambers of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, and he embodies the decency, the impartiality, and the commitment to justice that our Nation deserves as the Attorney General of the United States. I am confident that Judge Garland will serve admirably and faithfully as the next Attorney General.

The Nation already knows Merrick Garland because of his Supreme Court nomination and as the former Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, where he earned a reputation as one of our Nation's finest and fairest jurists. But his tenure on the D.C. Circuit was just the most recent achievement in a life dedicated to serving the rule of law. After excelling at law school, Judge Garland

clerked for the Second Circuit Court of Appeals and then for the Supreme Court. He then rose through the ranks of a prominent law firm before jumping back into public service feet-first as a Federal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office during the administration of President George Herbert Walker Bush and then later served as the Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice.

As a senior DOJ official, Judge Garland was tasked with overseeing the case of the Oklahoma City bombing, one of the deadliest domestic terrorist attacks in American history. It left 168 Americans dead and hundreds more injured. Merrick Garland brought a steady hand to an operation that involved massive amounts of evidence, pressure from the public, and a large team with diverse skills and backgrounds. With fidelity to the law and meticulous attention to detail and unrelenting focus, Merrick Garland helped bring the bomber, Timothy McVeigh, to justice. He has called this case the most important thing he has done in his life.

Mr. Chairman, ranking member, and committee members, we are going to need his experience as we once again confront the rise of domestic terrorism, particularly in the wake of the horrific events of January 6. And the next Attorney General must not only take on the rise of White supremacists and radical militia groups, but also ensure that justice is rendered equally and fairly by promoting and ensuring racial equity, rooting out discrimination in our criminal justice system, addressing police reform, and ensuring that we don't see a concerted effort to limit people's citizens' right to vote in the United States of America. As Justice Garland has himself stated, ensuring the rule of law and making real the promise of equal justice under the law are "the great principles upon which the Department of Justice was founded and for which it must always stand." Judge Garland has spent his career doing both, and I have no doubt he will honor that tradition as Attorney General.

During Judge Garland's confirmation hearing his commitment to public service and ensuring equal justice were on display. He shared that he felt an obligation to payback our country for protecting and welcoming his grandparents who fled to the United States to escape anti-Semitism and persecution. He stated that serving as an Attorney General that combats injustice and discrimination would be "the highest, best use of my own set of skills."

While his professional experiences have prepared him for this job, it is his character that makes him right for this moment. Should he be confirmed, Judge Garland will be charged with restoring credibility and independence to the Department of Justice, making it clear that the Department is not the political instrument of the White House. I know Merrick Garland is up to

the task. The lengthy list of testimonials speaking to his fairness and sound judgement span the political spectrum. He is respected by lawmakers, scholars, and lawyers of every legal persuasion and political philosophy. And on a personal note, I can attest to the fact that his brilliance is matched by his kindness. His many achievements have never gone to his head. He has always stayed humble and treated everyone with respect.

It is for these reasons and many more that I was honored to vote for the President's nominee to serve as the next Attorney General of the United States, Judge Merrick Garland.

CONFIRMATION OF MICHAEL STANLEY REGAN

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, now is the time to take substantive action to combat climate change, address environmental justice, and help clean up the Chesapeake Bay. To help address these critical issues, President Biden nominated Michael Regan to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Michael Regan most recently served as secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. During that time, Mr. Regan led the implementation of North Carolina's Executive Order 80, a landmark effort to address climate change's impact and transition the State's energy economy. Mr. Regan also created North Carolina's first Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Board to address societal disparities exacerbated by environmental issues during his tenure as secretary.

Mr. Regan has a strong record of bipartisanship, having previously served at the EPA under both Democratic and Republican Presidents. He is committed to rebuilding EPA's Federal workforce, which saw record departures during the Trump administration. During the Trump administration, we saw the EPA workforce shrink to levels not seen since the Reagan administration, and those who resigned or retired include some of the Agency's most experienced scientific veterans, as well as young environmental experts who traditionally would have replaced them, causing a brain drain at the EPA. Maryland is home to many of those Federal employees, and I look forward to working with Mr. Regan to rebuild the civil servant backbone of the EPA.

One of EPA's most critical roles for the State of Maryland is its role in the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay. We are at a very critical junction in the implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and our mutual goal of clean water in the Chesapeake Bay by 2025. On December 29, 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load—TMDL—a historic and comprehensive agreement that includes accountability features to re-

store clean water in the seven jurisdictions within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The agreement is a national and indeed international model for watershed restoration. It sets limits for pollution that equate to a 25-percent reduction in nitrogen, 24-percent reduction in phosphorous, and 20-percent reduction in sediment. As the Bay TMDL states, "The TMDL is designed to ensure that all pollution control measures needed to fully restore the Bay and its tidal rivers are in place by 2025[.]"

I look forward to working with Mr. Regan to make sure that EPA uses every tool available to them, including enforcement measures when necessary, to make sure that all jurisdictions are on track for our mutual goal of clean water in the Chesapeake Bay by 2025.

Furthermore, I am pleased that Mr. Regan has indicated that he will reconstituting the position of Senior Advisor to the Administrator of the EPA for the Chesapeake Bay.

I believe that Michael Regan is a strong choice to lead us into a new era at the EPA. For these reasons, I supported Michael Regan's nomination as the Administrator of the EPA.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS DAVIES

• Mr. DAINES. Madam President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Dennis Davies of Lewis and Clark County for his compassion and dedication to his community during the pandemic. While schools were closed to in-person instruction, Dennis saw that students needed a place to do their work at home. He rose to the occasion and began building desks for young Montanans enrolled in virtual school.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Dennis was inspired by a TV segment that profiled a teacher from Iowa who made desks for students and thought he could do the same for Montana's students.

At first, he paid desk supply expenses out of his own pocket. After the community recognized the service he was providing, donations began rolling in. Now, with the assistance of donated supplies and funds, he is able to expand his operation and build even more desks for kids. Dennis works alongside many Montanans who volunteer their time to help him build and deliver desks, and he hopes to provide 2,000 desks to students across the State. Though that amount may be daunting, he is excited to help do his part to help Montana families get through the pandemic.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Dennis for his compassion and dedication to the people of Lewis and Clark County in this trying time. His kindness and charitable approach to work serves as an inspiration to all Montanans. •

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:54 a.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 bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1. An act to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

H.R. 842. An act to amend the National Labor Relations Act, the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, and the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, and for other purposes.

At 4:14 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, without amendment:

S. 579. An act to make a technical correction to the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 8. An act to require a background check for every firearm sale.

H.R. 1446. An act to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to strengthen the background check procedures to be followed before a Federal firearms licensee may transfer a firearm to a person who is not such a licensee.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 842. An act to amend the National Labor Relations Act, the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, and the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MANCHIN for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*David Turk, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

By Mr. MENENDEZ for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Wendy Ruth Sherman, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

*Brian P. McKeon, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources.

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

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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 Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. COONS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 697. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. COLLINS, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. KING, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 698. A bill to establish a pilot program through which the Institute of Museum and Library Services shall allocate funds to States for the provision of internet-connected devices to libraries; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 699. A bill to require a review of women and lung cancer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 700. A bill to establish a portal and database to receive and maintain information regarding blocked railroad-highway grade crossings and to require the Secretary of Transportation to evaluate the requirements of the railway-highway crossings program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 701. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to provide equal coverage of in vitro specific IgE tests and percutaneous tests for allergies under the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. HAGERTY, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 702. A bill to prohibit Federal funding of State firearm ownership databases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 703. A bill to reduce the excessive appreciation of United States residential real estate due to foreign purchases; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 704. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish a grant program to improve the resiliency of the power grid to natural disasters and reduce the risk of wildfires caused by power lines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. 705. A bill to amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 with respect to future interstate designa-

tions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 706. A bill to modify a provision relating to adjustments of certain State apportionments for Federal highway programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 707. A bill to require a certain percentage of natural gas and crude oil exports be transported on United States-built and United States-flag vessels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 708. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to convene a task force to advise the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use on a national strategy for preventing mental health and substance use crises during a public health emergency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 709. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to ensure health insurance coverage continuity for former foster youth; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 710. A bill to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study to evaluate the activities of sister city partnerships operating within the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 711. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to award grants to organizations for the provision of transition assistance to members and former members of the Armed Forces who are separated, retired, or discharged from the Armed Forces, and spouses of such members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 712. A bill to amend the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act to provide for immediate eligibility for former foster youth under Medicaid; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 713. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to temporarily suspend increased line speeds at meat and poultry establishments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. REED):

S. 714. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for current year inclusion of net CFC tested income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 715. A bill to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to require the submission of certain reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 716. A bill to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to provide for

legal reform, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 717. A bill to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to impose time limits on the completion of certain required actions under the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BARASSO, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 718. A bill to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to reform agency process requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 719. A bill to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to provide for project delivery programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 720. A bill to encourage States to permit members of the Armed Forces who are outside of the State under orders to renew a permit to carry a concealed firearm through the mail, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BARASSO, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 721. A bill to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to impose time limits on the completion of certain required actions under the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MERKLEY:

S. 722. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to establish a program to provide grants and loan guarantees to improve the energy efficiency of publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. 723. A bill to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to extend the covered period for the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. LUJAN (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 724. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to make the provision of Wi-Fi access on school buses eligible for E-rate support; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 725. A bill to end offshore corporate tax avoidance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 726. A bill to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for use as a national cemetery, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CASEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. REED, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 727. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 728. A bill to facilitate the expedited review of COVID-19 hate crimes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 729. A bill to establish an Educational Equity Challenge Grant program administered by the Department of Education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BRAUN:

S. 730. A bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to remove the prohibition on States and territories against lowering their taxes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Ms. SINEMA, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 731. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the management of information technology projects and investments of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BROWN, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 732. A bill to strengthen Buy American requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 733. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to create an innovation zone initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 734. A bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to provide for grants in support of training and education to teachers and other school employees, students, and the community about how to prevent, recognize, respond to, and report child sexual abuse among primary and secondary school students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 735. A bill to amend the Scientific and Advanced-Technology Act of 1992 to further support advanced technological manufacturing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. REED, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. PADILLA, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 736. A bill to regulate assault weapons, to ensure that the right to keep and bear arms is not unlimited, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 737. A bill to establish a Federal cost share percentage for the Milk River Project in the State of Montana; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. KAINE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 738. A bill to provide for grants for States that require fair and impartial police training for law enforcement officers of that State and to incentivize States to enact laws requiring the independent investigation and prosecution of the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 739. A bill to specify the state of mind required for conviction for criminal offenses that lack an expressly identified state of mind, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COONS, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASEY, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 740. A bill to help charitable nonprofit organizations provide services to meet the increasing demand in community needs caused by the coronavirus pandemic, preserve and create jobs in the nonprofit sector, reduce unemployment, and promote economic recovery; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 741. A bill to establish a broadband infrastructure finance and innovation program to make available loans, loan guarantees, and lines of credit for the construction and deployment of broadband infrastructure, and for other purposes; 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. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BROWN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WARNER, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. Res. 105. A resolution condemning the coup in Burma and calling for measures to ensure the safety of the Burmese people, including Rohingya, who have been threatened and displaced by a campaign of genocide conducted by the Burmese military; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. HAGERTY):

S. Res. 106. A resolution recognizing Girl Scouts of the United States of America on its 109th birthday and celebrating its legacy of fostering civic action and community service among girls and creating leaders in Gold Award Girl Scouts, including the 2020 National Gold Award Girl Scouts; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 107. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate relating to the 10th anniversary of the March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami in Japan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. Res. 108. A resolution to make technical corrections to the amendments made by Senate Resolution 30 (117th Congress) to Senate Resolution 458 (98th Congress), and for other purposes; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 127

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 127, a bill to support library infrastructure.

S. 141

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 141, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny the deduction for advertising and promotional expenses for prescription drugs.

S. 212

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 212, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refundable tax credit against income tax for the purchase of qualified access technology for the blind.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to promote the general health and well-being of individuals accessing work through digital marketplace companies, and for other purposes.

S. 377

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 377, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 444

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 444, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide or assist in providing an additional vehicle adapted for operation by disabled individuals to certain eligible persons.

S. 501

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 501, a bill to prohibit earmarks.

S. 563

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) were added as cosponsors of S. 563, a bill to amend the Federal

Reserve Act to prohibit certain financial service providers who deny fair access to financial services from using taxpayer funded discount window lending programs, and for other purposes.

S. 610

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 610, a bill to address behavioral health and well-being among health care professionals.

S. 611

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 611, a bill to deposit certain funds into the Crime Victims Fund, to waive matching requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 628

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 628, a bill to increase access to agency guidance documents.

S. 632

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 636

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) were added as cosponsors of 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.

S. 675

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 675, a bill to provide for the reporting to State and local law enforcement authorities of cases in which the national instant criminal background check system indicates that a firearm has been sought to be acquired by a prohibited person, so that authorities may pursue criminal charges under State law, and to ensure that the Department of Justice reports to Congress on prosecutions secured against prohibited persons who attempt to acquire a firearm.

S. 682

At the request of Mr. PETERS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 682, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish a vaccine for COVID-19 to certain individuals who are not enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

At the request of Mr. KELLY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 682, *supra*.

S. RES. 34

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from North Caro-

lina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 34, a resolution recognizing the 200th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

S. RES. 35

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 35, a resolution condemning the military coup that took place on February 1, 2021, in Burma and the Burmese military's detention of civilian leaders, calling for an immediate and unconditional release of all those detained and for those elected to serve in parliament to resume their duties without impediment, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 37

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 37, a resolution expressing solidarity with the San Isidro Movement in Cuba, condemning escalated attacks against artistic freedoms in Cuba, and calling for the repeal of laws that violate freedom of expression and the immediate release of arbitrarily detained artists, journalists, and activists.

S. RES. 96

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) 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 Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. COONS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 697. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to celebrate Harriet Tubman, one of the most notable individuals in Maryland's history. Congress began officially recognizing March 10th as Harriet Tubman Day in 1990 and I am always grateful to speak to her accomplishments. Throughout her life she served as an abolitionist, soldier, spy and, most famously, as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. I would like to reflect on her contributions to human rights, civil rights, and women's rights in our Nation and to renew my commitment

to addressing the shameful legacy of slavery in Maryland and across the U.S.—particularly as it pertains to environmental justice.

Harriet Tubman was born Araminta Ross to enslaved parents in Bucktown, Maryland in 1822. After emancipating herself, she dedicated her life to the advancement of freedom and the fight against slavery. Araminta adopted the name "Harriet" at the time of her marriage to John Tubman, a free Black man, around the year 1844. Tubman and her husband continued to live in Dorchester County until her escape from slavery in 1849, at the age of 27. She would courageously return to make over thirteen dangerous trips to lead nearly 70 enslaved people seeking freedom, repeatedly risking her life in pursuit of our Nation's highest aspirational ideal.

Throughout the American Civil War, Tubman served the Union at various times as a cook, nurse, scout, and even spy. She helped orchestrate the Combahee River raid in South Carolina that freed over 700 enslaved men, women, and children. After the war's end, Harriet focused her efforts on women's suffrage. In 1908, Tubman established the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged in Auburn, New York. Five years later, she died of pneumonia on March 10, 1913. Although she spent her final decades in New York, the marshes and forests of Maryland's Eastern Shore are where Harriet Tubman first grew spiritually and physically strong.

Harriet Tubman made an indelible impact on my State and our Nation's history and I am proud to have played a role in memorializing her story to future generations. I worked to secure the authorities and funding for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, which tells the story of her life in Dorchester and Caroline counties, and for the Harriet Tubman Underground National Historical Park. The National Park Service administers the national historical park Congress created in December 2014 and the national monument authorized by President Obama in 2013 as a single unit. The Park Service works in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, and the State of Maryland, which owns and co-manages the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, to commemorate and interpret Tubman's remarkable story. Visitors can access the marshlands, largely preserved since her time, at the Visitor Center and nearby Refuge. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park centers her life's work not in physical structures, but instead through the landscape in Tubman's native Dorchester County, which we must defend against the social and ecological hazards of climate change.

While climate change is a global issue, it is felt on a local scale. Dorchester County's low-lying landscape of

tidal marshes, narrow peninsulas, and country roads linking isolated communities is threatened by sea level rise and land subsidence. Over one-half of the county lies in the 100-year floodplain; much of it in the tidal floodplain; even minor storms and routine high-tide events can flood vast portions of the county. In addition to flooding, saltwater intrusion threatens the failure of rural septic systems, and damage to roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure. Climate-driven changes to the coastal ecosystem are also making it harder to earn a living through the primary local sources of income: agriculture, forestry, and the seafood industry.

Local communities are at the front-line of adaptation, and initial social inequality causes the disadvantaged groups in those communities to suffer disproportionately from the adverse effects of climate change, resulting in greater subsequent inequality. Dorchester County is no exception. After the Civil War, freedmen and women settled the land, which was often less arable and therefore more affordable. Today, the county has a population of 32,000, 26 percent of whom are Black. Black individuals are almost twice as likely to be unemployed or live below the federal poverty level as their white neighbors, attributable to systemic racism that has roots in Harriet Tubman's time of enslavement. The Union of Concerned Scientists developed a Climate Equity Tool to identify communities that face conditions that heighten their vulnerability to harm and are therefore high-risk environmental justice areas, including Dorchester County. UCS projects that the county will see a six-inch rise in sea level by 2030 and 13-inch rise by 2045.

Absent national or international climate policy direction under the Trump administration, cities and towns on the Eastern Shore and around the world have been focusing on solving their own climate problems. They are working to build flood defenses, plan for heatwaves and higher temperatures, install water-permeable pavement to better deal with floods and stormwater, and improve water storage and use. Dorchester County has a flood mitigation plan that identifies projects to protect resources at risk of being lost, including historic and cultural sites. However, implementation of such plans requires significant funding. It is essential that Congress enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities in Dorchester County and across the Eastern Shore—and the Nation—whose residents have been forced to manage periodic flooding and other climate impacts in relative social and political isolation. Frontline communities in Dorchester and neighboring Eastern Shore counties with strong historical and cultural ties require sufficient federal financial and technical assistance now to help plan for the future and make choices about how best to protect themselves from tidal flooding,

saltwater intrusion, and coastal disasters.

Environmental justice is an essential component to carry on with respect to the anti-racist work that Harriet Tubman pioneered. The American Rescue Plan Act will provide debt relief and assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who have faced disproportionate impacts from the pandemic as a result of longstanding discrimination, as well as \$50 million in funding to reduce the air pollution that is linked with contributing to COVID-19 deaths, targeted to low income communities and communities of color. These provisions present only a small down payment on the types investments needed to address inequality, and have yet to squarely address climate change.

The local communities on the Eastern Shore that served as Harriet Tubman's training ground in resistance are rarely credited for their outsized influence on Maryland's maritime industry, culture, and environment. We must do better to enshrine their place in our historical consciousness and provide them with the tools necessary to prepare for climate change. I am grateful for the opportunity to showcase the exceptional efforts of one particular Marylander and honor her by pursuing climate and environmental justice policies.

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

S. 723. A bill to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to extend the covered period for the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the PPP Extension Act of 2021. I'm pleased to be joined in introducing this bill by my colleagues, Senators CARDIN and SHAHEEN. Last March, the three of us, along with Senator RUBIO, formed a Small Business Task Force that crafted the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)—a forgivable loan program designed to help keep small employers afloat and their employees paid during the pandemic. The bipartisan bill that we are introducing today would simply extend the current application deadline for new PPP loans from March 31st to May 31st of this year, and then provide an additional 30-day period during which time the Small Business Administration may continue processing applications received prior to the new May 31st deadline. Representatives VELÁZQUEZ, LUETKEMEYER, BOURDEAUX, and KIM (CA) have introduced a companion bill in the House.

The PPP has been hugely successful in helping our Nation's small businesses and nonprofits survive the pandemic and continue paying their employees. In 2020, more than five million small employers received forgivable PPP loans, helping to sustain upwards of 50 million American jobs. This in-

cludes more than 28,000 Maine small businesses, who received nearly \$2.3 billion in forgivable PPP loans.

Recognizing the importance of this program for our Nation's small employers, the bipartisan December 2020 COVID-relief law provided an additional \$284.5 billion to reopen the Paycheck Protection Program and allow the hardest hit small employers to receive a second forgivable loan. The December law also made other improvements to the PPP, such as expanding forgivable overhead expenses to include supplier costs and investments in facility modifications and personal protective equipment needed to operate safely.

Since reopening in January, more than two million additional forgivable loans—totaling nearly \$165 billion—have been approved for small businesses across the Nation. In Maine, more than 10,000 small employers have been approved for more than \$692 million in forgivable loans since PPP's reopening. In total, Maine small employers have been approved for nearly \$3 billion in forgivable loans since the program was created last year.

I have heard from countless small employers about the impact this program has had on them and their employees. The owner of Shipyard Brewing Company in Portland told me that without the relief that PPP provided, his company would be bankrupt. The Ecology School, a non-profit environmental education program in Saco, would have had to lay off the majority of its staff without the support of two forgivable PPP loans. I've heard from the owners of Jeff's Catering in Brewer, the Poland Spring Resort, and the Hamilton Marine in Searsport that PPP helped keep their businesses alive and their employees paid.

With the ongoing distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and the promise of warmer weather throughout the Nation, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We're not there yet, which is why we need to extend the deadline to apply for new loans. Extending the deadline would also help address concerns I continue to hear from Maine small employers about delays in the processing of new loan applications because of difficulty in resolving error messages generated by the Small Business Administration computer system.

By extending the PPP for another two months and then providing an additional 30 days after that time for the SBA to process applications that are still pending, this bill would help our Nation's small employers retain access to forgivable PPP loans. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 105—CON-
DEMNING THE COUP IN BURMA
AND CALLING FOR MEASURES
TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE
BURMESE PEOPLE, INCLUDING
ROHINGYA, WHO HAVE BEEN
THREATENED AND DISPLACED
BY A CAMPAIGN OF GENOCIDE
CONDUCTED BY THE BURMESE
MILITARY

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BROWN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WARNER, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 105

Whereas, on February 1, 2021, the Government of Burma was overthrown by the Burmese army, or Tatmadaw, returning the same army responsible for the genocidal military campaign against the Rohingya people to a greater position of power and authority, at least temporarily;

Whereas the hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens who have taken peacefully to the streets to protest the coup have been met with increasingly brutal displays of force by the Tatmadaw and the Myanmar Police Force, and over 50 citizens have been killed to date;

Whereas, since the February 2021 coup, the Tatmadaw-enforced media and communications blackouts and travel limits are limiting the ability of journalists and humanitarian actors to provide services or monitor the safety and security of people across Burma, including approximately 600,000 Rohingya remaining in Rakhine State;

Whereas media reports that the Burmese military have recently blocked shipments of humanitarian assistance intended for persons displaced by the ongoing offensive and militarization in the ethnic states;

Whereas recently announced United States sanctions target Tatmadaw actors specifically for their role in the coup, but ethnic minorities living within Burmese borders have suffered a wide range of systematic abuse and discrimination for many years;

Whereas, since August 25, 2017, approximately 740,000 Rohingya have fled from Burma to escape the Burmese military and security force's well-documented and systematic campaign of persecution and atrocities;

Whereas most of the Rohingya fled to neighboring Bangladesh, resulting in the creation of the world's largest and most densely populated refugee camp, while others escaped to India, Thailand, Malaysia, and other parts of South and Southeast Asia;

Whereas, on December 3, 2018, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum concluded that "there is compelling evidence that the Burmese military committed ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Rohingya";

Whereas the May 2019 Amnesty International report on war crimes in Rakhine State outlines continued human rights violations, including "indiscriminate attacks" on civilians, and expresses alarm about the impact of continued fighting on the food security of Rakhine State;

Whereas then-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein

testified that the Tatmadaw's brutal campaign against the Rohingya was a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" and "without regard for basic principles of international law";

Whereas, in his nomination hearing, Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated that he would oversee an interagency review to determine whether Burma's crimes against the Rohingya amount to genocide;

Whereas, after many years of hosting hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees while bearing other internal challenges, media report that the Government of Bangladesh is growing weary of hosting the Rohingya, building new barriers to restrict the ability for Rohingyas to work, access education, buy SIM cards, learn the local language, exercise their right to freedom of expression, including peaceful assembly, or move freely;

Whereas, in a step toward reducing the refugee population on the mainland, the Government of Bangladesh has relocated over 10,000 Rohingya from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char, a flood-prone island in the Bay of Bengal, but has denied the United Nations access to the island and the ability to undertake independent technical and protection assessments to verify whether the island is safe and habitable to host this vulnerable population;

Whereas it has not been verified that Rohingya refugees' ongoing relocation to Bhasan Char is fully informed and voluntary, as required under international law;

Whereas the United Nations Refugee Agency reports that 2,400 Rohingya refugees chose dangerous boat journeys to escape their limited futures in Bangladesh over the last year, leading to at least 200 deaths and missing persons;

Whereas efforts to force the return to Burma of more than 800,000 Rohingya refugees now living in Bangladesh would constitute a gross violation of international human rights law and would come at increased risk during this time of political instability and military rule;

Whereas the fundamental operational principles of voluntary repatriation must be based on informed consent, legal and physical safety, dignity, and the absence of any form of coercion, economic or otherwise, as well as the full protection of the returnees' human rights, including the right to restore their citizenship status in Burma;

Whereas approximately 236,000 Rohingya refugees returned to Burma from Bangladesh under the terms of a 1992 agreement after a previous bout of violence against the Rohingya forced them to flee, only to face continued denial of restoration of their citizenship, prejudice, violence, and persecution, and in many instances forced to live in internally displaced persons camps with their freedom of movement restricted;

Whereas Burma's 1982 citizenship law stripped Rohingya of their Burmese citizenship, rendering them stateless;

Whereas the Government of Burma continues to systematically discriminate against the Rohingya people, including by restricting registration of Rohingya births and denying them freedom of movement as well as access to healthcare, land, education, marriage, voting rights, and political participation;

Whereas, on November 23, 2017, the Government of Burma and the Government of Bangladesh signed an agreement, known as the "Arrangement", on the return of displaced persons from Rakhine State, which is modeled after the 1992 repatriation agreement between Burma and Bangladesh;

Whereas the Arrangement includes references to restoring normalcy and human rights in Rakhine State, ensuring refugee re-

turns comply with international standards of safety, dignity, and voluntariness, and commencing a process to address root causes in line with the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations;

Whereas Rohingya refugees currently hosted in Bangladesh demonstrated in protest against an initial November 2018 repatriation plan between the Governments of Bangladesh and Burma, citing concerns for their security and the lack of meaningful political reforms in Burma to include restoration of their full citizenship; and

Whereas, following the 2021 coup, human rights groups, humanitarian actors, and refugees in Cox's Bazar continue to express grave concerns about the heightened risk for a renewed campaign of genocide in Burma, calling for a halt to any efforts to move or adjust the status of any Rohingya persons: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the February 1, 2021, military coup that deposed an elected government and cast a pall over years of hope, investment, and progress toward a more democratic and free Burma;

(2) expresses deep concern for the safety and security of the hundreds of thousands of Burmese people who have taken to the streets to protest the coup, and condemns the Tatmadaw and the Myanmar Police Force for their acts of terrorism against Burma's civilian populations;

(3) calls on Burmese authorities to allow journalists, human rights organizations, United Nations monitors, and humanitarian actors full and safe access to every part of the country, including Rakhine State, to ensure that humanitarian needs of all internally displaced persons are being met and that human rights of every population in Burma, including ethnic minorities, can be monitored and protected;

(4) asks the governments of countries neighboring Burma, including Bangladesh and Thailand, to provide immediate, direct cross-border assistance to adequately address humanitarian needs of all refugees suffering from ongoing Burma Army militarization and offensives;

(5) welcomes steps by the Government of Bangladesh and other neighboring states to receive Rohingya refugees, but raises substantial concern regarding reports of refugees being turned away or moved into holding centers, as well as for the health and safety of all refugees, including those currently living in camps at Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char;

(6) appeals to Bangladesh and other countries in the region to commit to providing safe harbor for Rohingya refugees, until their human rights, including their right to restoration of full citizenship, can be guaranteed;

(7) calls on international organizations and all host governments, including the Government of Bangladesh, to ensure improved access for Rohingya refugees to basic services, education, and livelihood opportunities;

(8) asks the Government of Bangladesh to allow the international community, including the United Nations and other human rights and humanitarian actors, full and complete access to all Rohingya in Bangladesh while refraining from any forced relocation of Rohingya refugees into temporary settlements or other "model villages";

(9) urges the Government of Bangladesh to grant the United Nations access to conduct independent, comprehensive technical and protection assessments of Bhasan Char and to verify that any relocations of Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char are voluntary and done with fully informed consent;

(10) encourages the Government of Bangladesh to guarantee Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char freedom of movement, including the right to choose to return to Cox's Bazar;

(11) commends the significant contributions of numerous donor nations, including the United States, and encourages donors to increase future investments to better meet the significant humanitarian needs in Burma and Bangladesh, while taking particular care to ensure that no donor funding supports the Burmese military regime or individuals who supported or benefited from the coup;

(12) affirms United States Government efforts to engage regional partners, including the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to coordinate pressure on Burma to end all oppression of minority communities and address all related human rights concerns;

(13) urges countries in the region to abide by commitments made under regional declarations to provide assistance and safe disembarkation to Rohingya and others stranded at sea;

(14) enjoins United States and multinational business that have invested in Burma to discontinue investment in military-owned businesses and State-owned enterprises that fund the Tatmadaw and enable the oppression and mistreatment of the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in Burma; and

(15) urges the President of the United States—

(A) to fully investigate and continue to hold accountable Burmese military leaders, including Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, for gross violations of human rights, war crimes, crimes against humanity, including sexual and gender-based violence, or genocide;

(B) to suspend all political and financial support to the State Administrative Council and the peace process including to the Joint Peace Fund;

(C) to make a formal determination on behalf of the United States designating the actions against the Rohingya by the Burmese military as genocide;

(D) to advocate with counterparts from other donor nations to reinstate all humanitarian aid for Burmese refugees and internally displaced persons that can be provided directly to those needing assistance without passing funds through the army, government, or military-owned enterprises; and

(E) to work with interagency partners to impose any additional targeted sanctions through existing authorities, including under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114-328; 22 U.S.C. 2656), the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-61; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) and the Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-286; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note), to prevent further egregious violations of human rights against ethnic minorities in Burma.

SENATE RESOLUTION 106—RECOGNIZING GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON ITS 109TH BIRTHDAY AND CELEBRATING ITS LEGACY OF FOSTERING CIVIC ACTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AMONG GIRLS AND CREATING LEADERS IN GOLD AWARD GIRL SCOUTS, INCLUDING THE 2020 NATIONAL GOLD AWARD GIRL SCOUTS

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. HAGERTY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 106

Whereas the Girl Scout Movement was founded on March 12, 1912, in Savannah, Georgia, by Juliette Gordon Low, whose life mission was to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place;

Whereas Girl Scouts of the United States of America (in this preamble, referred to as "Girl Scouts") has emphasized public service, civic engagement, and fostering a sense of community in girls across the country for over a century;

Whereas Girl Scouts works to champion the ambitions, cultivate the talents, and develop the skills of girls to be leaders in their communities and in the world;

Whereas, in these challenging times, Girl Scouts provides community, consistency, and connection for girls and a safe haven through uncertainty;

Whereas, in the time of COVID-19, Girl Scouts offers girls a place to safely connect and share experiences with "Girl Scouts at Home" and other skill-building digital programming and adventures as they continue their Girl Scouts journeys;

Whereas Girl Scouts has made many programs available to all girls, regardless of membership, as Girl Scouts embraces the role it plays in enhancing girls' educational journeys, especially at a time when their lives are disrupted by the pandemic;

Whereas Girl Scouts have continued to make a positive difference in their communities during the pandemic by creating masks, safely delivering Girl Scout Cookies to first responders and health care professionals, collecting goods for local food banks, and other active, creative ways that demonstrate concern and commitment to their fellow citizens;

Whereas Girl Scouts believe in sisterhood, justice, and fairness by committing to make the world a more equitable place for all girls, no matter their race, ethnicity, or religion;

Whereas, at a time when civics education is missing from many schools, Girl Scouts introduced new K-12 Civics badges to bring girls experiences that deepen their understanding of democracy and government, prepare them for a lifetime of civic engagement, and motivate them to be catalysts for change;

Whereas Girl Scouts offers girls 21st century programming in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), as well as the outdoors, entrepreneurship, and beyond, helping girls develop invaluable life skills and take the lead early and often;

Whereas Girl Scouts in grades 9 through 12 can advance their civic engagement by earning the Gold Award, the most highly regarded award in the world for girls;

Whereas Gold Award Girl Scouts take on projects that have a measurable and sustainable impact on a community by assessing a need, designing a solution, completing a project, and inspiring others to sustain it;

Whereas, each year, Girl Scouts selects 10 exceptionally inspiring Gold Award Girl Scouts, nominated by local councils, as National Gold Award Girl Scouts;

Whereas National Gold Award Girl Scouts have completed projects that demonstrate extraordinary leadership, have a measurable and sustainable effect, and address a local challenge relating to a national or global issue; and

Whereas the 2020 National Gold Award Girl Scouts hail from regions throughout the country, including Los Alamos, New Mexico, Chesapeake, Virginia, Greensboro, North Carolina, Johns Creek, Georgia, Downers Grove, Illinois, Bakersfield, California, Kenosha, Wisconsin, Houston, Texas, Trussville, Alabama, and Arvada, Colorado: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes Girl Scouts of the United States of America for 109 years of inspiring girl leadership, including civic and community engagement;

(2) congratulates all Girl Scouts who earned the Gold Award in 2020, including the National Gold Award Girl Scouts; and

(3) encourages Girl Scouts of the United States of America to continue to nurture and support the leadership development of girls, including their ambitions, talents, and skills as future women leaders.

SENATE RESOLUTION 107—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE RELATING TO THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARCH 11, 2011, EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI IN JAPAN

Mr. HAGERTY (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 107

Whereas, at 2:46 p.m. on March 11, 2011, an earthquake initially reported as measuring 8.9 on the Richter scale, the strongest recorded in more than 100 years in Japan, occurred near the Tohoku region of Northeast Japan, 81 miles off the coast from Sendai City;

Whereas intense shaking could be felt from Tokyo to Kamaishi, an arc of roughly 360 miles;

Whereas the earthquake generated a massive tsunami that caused widespread damage to a swath of the northeast Japanese coastline and traveled across the Pacific Ocean, causing damage to coastal communities as far away as the States of Hawaii, Oregon, and California;

Whereas authorities in Japan confirm at least 15,899 deaths from the earthquake and resulting tsunami;

Whereas, within minutes of the earthquake, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration alerted emergency workers in the States of Hawaii, California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska that a potentially catastrophic tsunami was heading toward those States and mobilized the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific;

Whereas the earthquake forced the emergency shutdown of 4 nuclear power facilities in Japan, representing a significant loss of electric generation capacity for Japan and necessitating rolling blackouts in portions of Tokyo;

Whereas the earthquake and the resulting tsunami severely damaged the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station, precipitating a loss of power for cooling systems at that facility and necessitating emergency measures to prevent serious radiation leakages;

Whereas international response to the disaster was swift, with search and rescue teams arriving from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, France, and China, among other countries;

Whereas the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and its support vessels were deployed to the earthquake region to participate in search and rescue and relief operations;

Whereas elements of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), a United States Agency for International Development Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), and other United States military and civilian personnel were deployed to Japan to render aid and help coordinate United States relief efforts;

Whereas the United States-Japan alliance is based upon shared values, democratic ideals, free markets, and a mutual respect for human rights, individual liberties, and the rule of law, and is central to the security and prosperity of the entire Indo-Pacific region;

Whereas the Self-Defense Forces of Japan have contributed broadly to global security missions, including relief operations following the tsunami in Indonesia in 2005, reconstruction in Iraq from 2004 to 2006, and relief assistance following the earthquake in Haiti in 2010;

Whereas Japan is among the most generous donor nations, providing billions of dollars of foreign assistance, including disaster relief, annually to developing countries;

Whereas, since 2011, Japan has committed tremendous resources and effort to decommission the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station by taking measures on contaminated water and extracting fuel;

Whereas, since 2011, Japan has committed tremendous resources and effort to restore the environment in Fukushima Prefecture, in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency, to ensure that citizens can live with peace of mind with safe water and food; and

Whereas, 10 years after the earthquake and resulting tsunami, Japan is seeking to host a successful Olympics in Tokyo where the best athletes from across the world can showcase their talents amidst the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) mourns the loss of life resulting from the earthquake and tsunami in Japan on March 11, 2011;

(2) expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the tragedy;

(3) expresses its sympathies to the survivors who are still suffering in the aftermath of the natural disaster;

(4) commends the Government of Japan for its courageous and professional response to the natural disaster; and

(5) supports the efforts already underway by the United States Government, relief agencies, and private citizens to assist the Government and people of Japan with the revitalization efforts in Fukushima Prefecture.

SENATE RESOLUTION 108—TO MAKE TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO THE AMENDMENTS MADE BY SENATE RESOLUTION 30 (117TH CONGRESS) TO SENATE RESOLUTION 458 (98TH CONGRESS), AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 108

Resolved,

SECTION 1. PAY OF STAFF DISPLACED BY A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP.

Section 6 of Senate Resolution 458 (98th Congress), agreed to October 4, 1984, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (3)(A)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “an employee”;

(ii) in clause (i), by inserting “an employee” before “of a committee”;

(iii) in clause (ii)—

(I) by inserting “an employee” before “in an office”; and

(II) by striking “or or” at the end;

(iv) in the first clause designated as clause (iii), as added by Senate Resolution 805 (116th Congress), agreed to December 17, 2020—

(I) by inserting “an employee” before “in an office”; and

(II) by adding “or” at the end;

(v) by redesignating the second clause designated as clause (iii), as added by Senate Resolution 30 (117th Congress), agreed to February 3, 2021, as clause (iv); and

(vi) in clause (iv), as so redesignated, in the matter preceding subclause (I), by inserting “an employee or officer (including the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate and the Secretary of the Senate) in the office” before “of”; and

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clause (iii), by striking “employment described in paragraph (3)(A)(iii)(I)” and inserting “an individual described in paragraph (3)(A)(iv)(I)”;

(II) in clause (iv), by striking “employment described in paragraph (3)(A)(iii)(II)” and inserting “an individual described in paragraph (3)(A)(iv)(II)”;

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) by striking “or after the expiration” and inserting “after the expiration”; and

(II) by inserting “or after the change in the individual occupying the position described in clause (iii) or (iv) of subparagraph (A), as applicable,” after “clause (ii) or (iii) of paragraph (3)(A),”; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking “clause (i) or (ii)” and inserting “clause (i), (ii), or (iv)”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “such employee” and inserting “such displaced staff member”.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1399. Mr. SCHUMER (for Ms. ROSEN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 96, designating March 8 through March 14, 2021, as “Women of the Aviation Workforce Week”.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1399. Mr. SCHUMER (for Ms. ROSEN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 96, designating March 8 through March 14, 2021, as “Women of the Aviation Workforce Week”; as follows:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the first week of March is internationally known as “Women of Aviation Worldwide Week”;

Whereas Women of Aviation Worldwide Week was created by the Institute for Women of Aviation Worldwide;

Whereas the aviation industry is anticipating a significant shortage of skilled professionals in the coming years;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor projected that, in the next 10 years, the overall employment of airline and commercial pilots is expected to grow more than 6 percent in the United States;

Whereas less than 2 percent of the aircraft maintenance technicians in the world and less than 10 percent of all working aeronautical engineers are women;

Whereas the Federal Aviation Administration reports that less than 8 percent of pilots and only 26 percent of air traffic controllers in the United States are women;

Whereas women make up only 24 percent of the employees in the aerospace industry;

Whereas aviation is a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (commonly known as “STEM”) focused career path;

Whereas the future of an abundant aviation workforce depends on a robust and diverse pool of candidates; and

Whereas women such as Amelia Earhart, Cicely Williams, and Bessie Coleman have inspired, and will continue to inspire, young women to pursue careers in aviation: Now, therefore, be it

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

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

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nomination.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

MAKING TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO THE AMENDMENTS MADE BY SENATE RESOLUTION 30 (117TH CONGRESS) TO SENATE RESOLUTION 458 (98TH CONGRESS)

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 108, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 108) to make technical corrections to the amendments made by Senate Resolution 30 (117th Congress) to Senate Resolution 458 (98th Congress), and for other purposes.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 108) was agreed to.

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

RECOGNIZING GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON ITS 109TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 106, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 106) recognizing Girl Scouts of the United States of America on its 109th birthday and celebrating its legacy of fostering civic action and community service among girls and creating leaders in Gold Award Girl Scouts, including the 2020 National Gold Award Girl Scouts.

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

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 106) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

WOMEN OF THE AVIATION WORKFORCE WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 96.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 96) designating March 8 through March 14, 2021, as "Women of the Aviation Workforce Week".

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the Rosen amendment at the desk to the preamble be agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 96) was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1399) to the preamble was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble)

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the first week of March is internationally known as "Women of Aviation Worldwide Week";

Whereas Women of Aviation Worldwide Week was created by the Institute for Women Of Aviation Worldwide;

Whereas the aviation industry is anticipating a significant shortage of skilled professionals in the coming years;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor projected that, in the next 10 years, the overall employment of airline and commercial pilots is expected to grow more than 6 percent in the United States;

Whereas less than 2 percent of the aircraft maintenance technicians in the world and less than 10 percent of all working aeronautical engineers are women;

Whereas the Federal Aviation Administration reports that less than 8 percent of pilots and only 26 percent of air traffic controllers in the United States are women;

Whereas women make up only 24 percent of the employees in the aerospace industry;

Whereas aviation is a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (commonly known as "STEM") focused career path;

Whereas the future of an abundant aviation workforce depends on a robust and diverse pool of candidates; and

Whereas women such as Amelia Earhart, Cicely Williams, and Bessie Coleman have inspired, and will continue to inspire, young women to pursue careers in aviation: Now, therefore, be it

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 96

Whereas the first week of March is internationally known as "Women of Aviation Worldwide Week";

Whereas Women of Aviation Worldwide Week was created by the Institute for Women Of Aviation Worldwide;

Whereas the aviation industry is anticipating a significant shortage of skilled professionals in the coming years;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor projected that, in the next 10 years, the overall employment of airline and commercial pilots is expected to grow more than 6 percent in the United States;

Whereas less than 2 percent of the aircraft maintenance technicians in the world and less than 10 percent of all working aeronautical engineers are women;

Whereas the Federal Aviation Administration reports that less than 8 percent of pilots and only 26 percent of air traffic controllers in the United States are women;

Whereas women make up only 24 percent of the employees in the aerospace industry;

Whereas aviation is a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (commonly known as "STEM") focused career path;

Whereas the future of an abundant aviation workforce depends on a robust and diverse pool of candidates; and

Whereas women such as Amelia Earhart, Cicely Williams, and Bessie Coleman have inspired, and will continue to inspire, young women to pursue careers in aviation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 8 through March 14, 2021, as "Women of the Aviation Workforce Week";

(2) celebrates the aviation workforce of the United States;

(3) encourages educational and training institutions to recruit women to join the aviation workforce;

(4) encourages employers in the aviation industry to hire a diverse workforce, including women, veterans, and other underrepresented individuals; and

(5) commits to—

(A) raising awareness about the gender gap in the air and space industry; and

(B) taking legislative actions to address the gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (commonly known as "STEM") fields.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d–276g, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Vice Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group conference during the 117th Congress: The Honorable MICHAEL D. CRAPO of Idaho.

The Chair, on behalf of the Republican Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 99–93, as amended by Public Law 99–151, appoints the following Senators as members of the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: The Honorable CHARLES GRASSLEY of Iowa (Vice Chairman); The Honorable JOHN CORNYN of Texas; and The Honorable JAMES RISCH of Idaho.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d–276g, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group conference during the 117th Congress: The Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota.

The Chair, on behalf of the Republican Leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 64, adopted March 5,

2013, appoints the following Senators as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the 117th Congress: The Honorable JOHN CORNYN of Texas (Administrative Co-Chair); The Honorable DEB FISCHER of Nebraska (Co-Chair); The Honorable BEN SASSE of Nebraska (Co-Chair); The Honorable MARCO RUBIO of Florida; The Honorable ROY BLUNT of Missouri; The Honorable LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina; The Honorable JIM INHOFE of Oklahoma; The Honorable JIM RISCH of Idaho; The Honorable MITT ROMNEY of Utah.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 15,
2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, March

15; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the HAALAND nomination, with all postcloture time expiring at 5:30 p.m.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, at 5:30 p.m. there will be a rollcall vote on confirmation of the HAALAND nomination to be Secretary of the Interior.

As a reminder, cloture was filed today on the Guzman nomination to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration and on the Tai nomination to be United States Trade Representative.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,
MARCH 15, 2021, AT 3 P.M.

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:02 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 15, 2021, at 3 p.m.

DISCHARGED NOMINATION

The Senate Committee on Finance was discharged from further consideration of the following nomination pursuant to S. Res. 27 and the nomination was placed on the Executive Calendar:

XAVIER BECERRA, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.