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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our rock and redeemer, by Your will we came into being, and at Your command, when the right hour is come, we shall one day leave this world. Do not be silent when we need to hear You speak.

Lord, let Your Spirit lead our Senators. May they increase in self-forgetfulness, in simplicity, in courage, and in trust so that each day they will approach nearer to Your likeness.

Lord, help them to offer themselves afresh to be used in Your service. Show them Your ways, and may they obey Your precepts.

Give wisdom to the perplexed, fresh vigor to the discouraged, and a clearer vision to all who seek Your will.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, February 28, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, negotiators in both Chambers continue working to ensure the government will not shut down at the end of the week. We continue to make very good

progress on an agreement, and we are very close to getting it done.

I met yesterday with President Biden, with Speaker JOHNSON, with Leader MCCONNELL, and Leader JEFFRIES; and we all agree a shutdown is a loser for the American people. In a shutdown, costs would go up, safety would go down, and the American people would pay the price.

I am hopeful that the four leaders can reach this agreement very soon so we can not only avoid a shutdown on Friday but get closer to finishing the appropriations process altogether.

If our House Republican colleagues of good will want to avert a shutdown—if they want to govern responsibly, as they say they do—they must resist the centrifugal pull of the extreme hard right who want to burn everything down, who openly use the threat of a shutdown to push their extreme agenda. They are brazen about it. They are brazen.

We know what the hard right has been pushing. They want to restrict women's reproductive freedoms—we saw the case in Alabama. They want to rip apart gun safety laws and reward corporate polluters. Or else, they say, they want a shutdown. This is no way to govern.

If our House Republican colleagues of good will want to do the right thing, they must accept a fundamental truth about divided government: Republicans cannot pass a bill without Democratic support; it takes both sides working together—and ignoring the extremes of the hard right—to get anything done.

I have said this over and over again directly to the Speaker, even in my first conversation with him: The only way we will get things done is by bipartisanship. And I am proud in our Chamber, not just on the supplemental but in bill after bill after bill, we are working in a bipartisan way. I am proud of that record. The Speaker should understand that.

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



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So I am hopeful that soon we will have an agreement for keeping the government open beyond Friday's deadline. We will keep working very diligently today. And I ask my colleagues to stay flexible and be ready to act quickly when the time comes.

## UKRAINE

Mr. President, on Ukraine, the meeting I had yesterday with President Biden and congressional leaders over Ukraine was one of the most intense discussions I have ever had—or witnessed—in the Oval Office.

Every single one of us yesterday understood the basic facts: The situation in Ukraine is getting increasingly dire. Russia has made a major advance by taking the city of Avdiivka, which they did simply because Ukraine was running short of ammo and long-range artillery basic equipment. It wasn't the lack of the will of the fighters. It wasn't the lack of plan. It was, simply, that they ran out of ammunition. Imagine being a brave soldier fighting for freedom, fighting for your country, and you no longer have the ammo.

Without more aid from the United States, Ukraine will lose. In fact, one American leader over there told me that he wouldn't be surprised if Russian tanks were on the Polish border if we didn't give any aid. What kind of legacy would that leave for the House Republicans who seem to want to stall that aid? It is not all of them, of course, but too many.

Everyone in the room, with the exception of the Speaker, agreed that Congress must finish the work on the supplemental ASAP because the future of Ukraine and the West is at stake. Speaker JOHNSON said he wants to continue to think it over.

I was candid with the Speaker that I hope he gives it careful thought because the eyes of history are upon him.

I said to the Speaker: If you are the one stopping Ukraine aid, then no matter what the consequences may be in the short term, you will regret your decision 2 years from now and could potentially regret it for the rest of your life, because this will be remembered as a turning point in America for our strength, our credibility on the world stage, for our national security.

If we don't provide this aid, every year the United States could lose out to its enemies: the autocrats of the world, the Putins, the Xis, the heads of North Korea, and Iran. We could lose out economically, militarily, diplomatically, politically because of a shortsighted decision not to provide the much needed aid.

The Speaker has a legacy-defining decision to make on Ukraine. If he lets this bill move forward, he can go down as a fierce defender of America's core values. But if he shrinks from the importance of the moment, it will be the greatest gift Putin, other autocrats, and enemies of our country could possibly ask from the American Congress.

## ALABAMA IVF COURT DECISION

Mr. President, on the Alabama IVF decision, after last week's stunningly

radical decision by the Alabama Supreme Court jeopardizing IVF access, the United States has become an embarrassment to the world when it comes to reproductive freedom.

Even sadder, this didn't happen in a vacuum. The hard-right MAGA Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* opened the floodgates for Republicans to force their anti-reproductive freedom—their anti-women agenda—down the throats of all Americans.

The decision by the Alabama Supreme Court is as cruel as it is enraging. There are countless people today who have the joy of children because of IVF. But now, families have to worry that this option could be taken away.

Make no mistake, Republicans own the consequences of the Alabama Supreme Court's decision. Republicans know it. That is why Republicans are scrambling, desperate, to backpedal and try to sound reasonable and supportive of IVF all of a sudden, because they see what they have done.

Republicans in Alabama—even a conservative State like Alabama—are now trying to save face by introducing legislation they claim will protect IVF providers. Even they know how the American people are reacting to this terrible decision—even in Alabama.

Republicans in Florida are now trying to save face by postponing the consideration of anti-abortion legislation. This is the State that said no abortions after 6 weeks, when most women don't even know they are pregnant. And, by the way, the popularity of the Governor has dramatically dropped after he passed that legislation, because Floridians don't like it.

Even Republicans here in Washington are trying to save face by putting off the introduction of national abortion bans because they recognize the mess they have gotten themselves into.

And, of course, they are not fooling anyone. Republicans are like the arsonists who set the house on fire and then said: Why is it burning? Amazing, confounding, perturbing, and sad.

Let me be clear: Republicans spent decades calling for a national abortion ban. Republicans spent decades packing our courts with hard-right MAGA reactionary judges. So Republicans deserve zero benefit of the doubt now that the consequences of their agenda are sinking in and even spreading.

Republicans can do and say all they want to try and run away from the truth, but the American people are not buying it. They are not buying it today. They won't buy it tomorrow. They won't buy it come November.

Democrats remain absolutely committed to doing everything—everything—we can to protect women, families, reproductive freedom.

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRADY BILL

Mr. President, back when I introduced the Brady bill, I was a House Member representing Brooklyn and Queens. I knew firsthand the terrible toll of gun violence because the streets of my district—and so many other dis-

tricts—were witness to it. So I jumped at the opportunity to work alongside two brave and stalwart people, Jim and Sarah Brady—two American heroes whose lives, of course, were forever changed by gun violence—to help write and pass the Brady Law.

Looking back at the legacy of the Brady bill after three decades, there is no doubt it has saved countless lives. There is no way to count because you don't know who didn't get the gun who would have, but it is going to be a number with many, many zeros. And it paved the way for future gun safety legislation, like the bipartisan bill we passed 2 years ago.

The bipartisan gun safety legislation we passed in 2022, in fact, was the most significant and comprehensive action on gun safety since the Brady bill. And just like its predecessors, it, too, is already saving lives.

But it shouldn't take an assassination attempt against a President or a mass shooting among these innocent children in elementary school for elected leaders to make change happen. Gun violence is one of America's greatest ills. But it shouldn't have to be that way. And so our work, thinking of Jim and Sarah hovering over us, is far from over.

Democrats remain committed to combating gun violence and making our communities safer. And we will keep pushing. We will keep fighting. We will never let the grief of parents and kids and neighbors and teachers—and all of those who have been scarred by gun violence—to recede to the back of our memories.

Again, a salute to Jim and Sarah Brady and what they have done for America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

## ENERGY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been a month since the Biden administration announced its de facto ban on new export permits for America's abundant stores of natural gas; 1 month since the President chose to bring growth in a critical sector of our economy, with massive, global consequences, to a screeching halt.

At the risk of understating things, the condemnations of President Biden's decision were swift and full-throated, and it is not hard to understand why. With the stroke of a pen, the President threatened the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Americans, from Texas to Pennsylvania, who produce and transport natural gas.

From the outset, the administration tried to cast the freeze as an effort to look out for American consumers, but the facts tell a different story. By the Energy Department's own analysis, the United States has more than enough natural gas to meet both domestic and export demand.

In fact, if the Biden administration was really concerned about access to one of the Nation's most abundant, reliable, and affordable energy sources, they would release their stranglehold on domestic energy exploration and energy infrastructure. Millions of Americans live near massive natural gas reserves but can't reap the benefits because the President is afraid of upsetting climate activists by investing in safe and efficient energy infrastructure.

Some of the most scathing criticism of the President's decision has come from his own former Democratic colleagues. As former Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana observed last month, the administration's so-called "pause" on LNG export permits was like "throwing a match in a bale of hay."

America's allies and partners already doubt our resolve to deter common adversaries, but now the world wonders why the Biden administration just handed them a gift.

Just last week, a German state-owned energy company confirmed that it would actually keep an LNG supply contract with Putin. But it gets worse. The company had a contract in hand to begin purchasing American LNG instead until the administration announced its freeze last month. In other words, the President of the United States essentially told a NATO ally to keep on enriching the dictator responsible for the first major land war in Europe since 1945.

To make matters worse, it is increasingly clear that President Biden's decision had another adversary's fingerprints all over it. Leftwing activists have been in the driver's seat of the President's energy policy since day one. That much is not news, but his top climate advisers taking private meetings with influencers on a Chinese-owned social media platform or the campaign to ban LNG permits being driven by a private foundation invested heavily in China's funds—that is news.

LNG exports are one of the only areas of U.S.-China trade in which the PRC is reliant on the United States. Beijing would be all too happy for an excuse to buy less clean U.S. energy and more of what President Biden's Energy Secretary called "the dirtiest form of natural gas on Earth"—Russian LNG. Well, it appears that President Biden has given our top strategic adversary precisely such an excuse.

It is hard to understand the President's decision as anything other than a compulsive, shortsighted grab for more fleeting praise from his activist base. Clearly, it makes no strategic or economic sense. As one expert analyst

and Deputy National Security Advisor under the previous administration put it, "Our partners and allies are baffled and [our] adversaries are pleased. That's never a good formula."

#### COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. President, on another matter, 3 days ago, a member of Harvard's anti-Semitism task force stepped down over concerns the university would not actually implement the group's recommendations. Unfortunately, if recent events are any indication, this professor's concerns about the unchecked wave of hate on campus are well-founded.

A few weeks ago, multiple Harvard student groups circulated a blatantly anti-Semitic cartoon of Muhammad Ali and former Egyptian President Nasser being hanged by a hand bearing a Star of David with a dollar sign at its center. True to form, the university's response amounted to a sternly worded letter.

Not to be outdone on this backslide into brutish hate, fliers were found on Columbia's campus depicting an Israeli flag in the shape of a skunk. A Columbia Law School student senate rejected a proposal from fellow students seeking to form a club to combat anti-Semitism.

By now, it is also painfully clear that the moral failures of campus administrators go well beyond weak responses to student behavior. Rutgers recently hosted an event with a professor who described the events of October 7 as "awesome scenes . . . witnessed by millions of jubilant Arabs." City University of New York tried to schedule a panel titled "Globalize the Intifada."

As the glaring moral rot on college campuses invites scrutiny, even further evidence of decline has emerged. Not only are some of the Nation's most elite institutions breeding grounds for the world's oldest form of hate, they are also infested with academic misconduct.

Last month, Harvard's chief diversity officer was found to have copied her husband's work extensively without citation, and perhaps even more shockingly, a top neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School was found to have falsified data in 21 different papers—profoundly unserious behavior at a university that professes world-leading academic caliber.

So it is no surprise to see donors continue to vote with their checkbooks. Another prominent billionaire and longtime donor to Harvard announced last month that he would end his support. He said that until Harvard got back on the right track and focused on educating future leaders, he said, "I'm not interested in supporting the institution."

For their part, American families are right to reconsider whether an Ivy League diploma is worth the cost—or, for that matter, the hate.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration isn't making it any easier for students and parents to make informed

decisions. Beginning with the failure to launch last fall, the Department of Education was slow to post the Free Application for Federal Student Aid online. Now, months behind schedule, prospective students and parents are stuck with incomplete information on the cost of attending college.

But while the Department is slowing down and muddling the financial aid process, they are simultaneously speeding up their student loan socialism scheme rollout. It is almost as though the Biden administration wants more young people to incur excessive debt so that they can turn around and force taxpayers to foot an even larger bill to bail them out.

Not only has the Supreme Court ruled President Biden's student loan socialism unconstitutional, the scheme is also profoundly bad policy, and it won't help American families struggling to afford college. Heaping billions of dollars of student loan debt on taxpayers will only drive up tuition prices at universities that are failing miserably at their most basic responsibilities.

So perhaps—perhaps—it is time the government followed the lead of parents and business leaders and stopped providing taxpayer subsidies to institutions that have clearly lost their grip on reality.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Republican whip.

#### FARM BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, America needs farmers and ranchers. We need the men and women—and often entire families—who are willing to do the hard work to feed our country and the world. In places like my home State of South Dakota, farming and ranching are just part of our way of life.

But this important work involves a great deal of risk. Few jobs, for example, are as subject to the whims of the weather and fluctuations of the market. So, for almost 100 years, Congress has regularly passed a farm bill to back agriculture producers with programs and policies that mitigate risk and help them to keep going through the tough times.

And with the 2018 farm bill expiring last year, Congress needs to take up this important task once again. And while I am glad Congress passed an extension of critical farm bill programs through the 2024 growing season, a temporary extension is no substitute for a full, updated bill.

I have been able to help craft four farm bills during my time in Congress, and, for me, the process always begins and ends with farmers and ranchers. In

addition to my regular discussions with farmers and ranchers as I travel around our State, I have held a number of roundtable discussions across South Dakota, focused on the next farm bill, to receive direct input from our State's agriculture producers, and most of my priorities for the farm bill come directly from the conversations that I have had.

One thing I consistently hear from farmers and ranchers is the importance of a farm safety net. Crop insurance, commodity, and livestock programs play a critical role in helping producers manage risk in their operations.

Crop insurance is the cornerstone of the safety net, and we need to strengthen it wherever possible in the next farm bill. And while crop insurance has historically supported row crop production, I am pleased with the progress we have made in recent years to improve and expand insurance options for livestock producers.

But commodity programs like Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage need to be improved so that they sufficiently mitigate producers' losses. And livestock programs like the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock Program need to be modified to improve the assistance that they provide and make them workable for producers.

So one of my top priorities for the next farm bill is improving commodity and livestock programs so they provide the support that farmers and ranchers need during tough times.

As I said, while I am glad we have extended key provisions of the 2018 farm bill through this growing season, we are overdue for a full, updated, multiyear farm bill, and Republicans on the Agriculture Committee are ready to get to drafting a bill.

I am disappointed, however, that some of my Democrat colleagues don't seem to share our sense of urgency.

The Biden administration and congressional Democrats have put funding their climate and nutrition priorities ahead of helping farmers and ranchers, which has stalled what has traditionally been—traditionally been—a bipartisan farm bill process.

With an expected \$1.5 trillion pricetag for the next farm bill—thanks in part to the Biden USDA's SNAP Thrifty Food Plan update, which is expected, by the way, to cost more than a quarter of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years—there needs to be some give and take when it comes to meaningfully funding the farm safety net and other components of the farm bill.

Since the last farm bill passed in 2018, farmers and ranchers have faced a number of challenges. Inflation has driven up farm production expenses by \$100 billion since the last farm bill. USDA is forecasting another decrease in net farm income this year, following last year's drop. And farm input costs are projected to stay near record highs this year.

The Biden administration's failure to promote trade and new market access opportunities will continue to negatively impact farmers and ranchers in their bottom lines. This year, the United States is on track to post a record-high agriculture trade deficit, and recent disruptions to shipping in the Middle East could have impacts on global markets that negatively affect American farms and ranches.

Our focus needs to be on helping farmers deal with these challenges. Simply put, we need to put more farm in the farm bill, and we need to get moving now.

America's farmers and ranchers can't afford more unnecessary delays or partisan exercises. It is time to get the farm bill done and done right.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, tomorrow President Biden will do something he has done only once before in his term as President of the United States, he will travel to the U.S.-Mexico border to Brownsville, TX, in an attempt to address his biggest political liability. Since the President took office 3 years ago, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has logged more than 7.2 million migrant encounters at the southern border. By that, we mean people who have shown up at the border and, by and large, have simply been released into the interior based on an initial claim of asylum which has yet to be put in front of an immigration judge. And it may be as long as, in places like New York, 10 years in the future before they ever get in front of an immigration judge; or, as we have seen tragically here most recently, these migrants will be paroled or simply released into the interior of the country—even without a claim of asylum—given a work permit, and stay here indefinitely.

Mr. President, 7.2 million is higher than the total number of migrants who came across the southern border under President Obama, who served 8 years, and President Trump, who served 4 years. So the Biden administration has done in 3 years what it took 12 years for the two previous administrations to accomplish. We have experienced more illegal immigration in the last 3 years than in the last 12.

The American people have become increasingly concerned at the southern border because they see with their own eyes that this is a humanitarian crisis, and it is a public safety crisis. And they overwhelmingly—and quite appropriately—blame Biden administration

policies and the President himself. They see that his policies and his rhetoric, rather than deter illegal immigration, have actually encouraged it.

Let me say that again: They understand that the policies of this administration and the rhetoric that has been used are the driving force behind America's most serious border crisis in history.

But, as usual, the President refuses to accept any responsibility. He has tried to blame everybody but himself. He has blamed congressional dysfunction. He has blamed MAGA Republicans. He has blamed anybody and everybody that he can possibly think of, rather than accept responsibility himself. Not only that, he has, at different times, claimed that he lacks the tools to fix this crisis. At different times, he has claimed that his hands are tied unless Congress passes new laws.

The problem with that storyline, that narrative, is the facts simply don't support it. For one, the suggestion that only Congress can fix the crisis implies that Congress created the crisis. I would point out the same laws that were in effect during President Trump's administration are still in effect during President Biden's administration with far different outcomes.

As each of our colleagues knows, Congress has struggled to pass any immigration laws in recent years; and, certainly, it has not passed any that would cause the dramatic surge in immigration that began the day that President Biden took office. The President was dealt exactly the same hand as his recent predecessors. The only difference is he used these authorities entirely differently and sent an entirely different message.

As I have spoken before on the floor, the Border Patrol, which are the experts on border security, tell me that there are two main drivers of illegal immigration: One is push factors, they call it—poverty, violence, a desire for a better life. And we understand that. America is a nation of immigrants, of legal immigrants.

But there is also the pull factors, like a magnet encouraging people to make the dangerous journey to our border, even in the form of unaccompanied children designed to exploit gaps in Biden administration policies and permanently reside in the United States.

Earlier this week, I was surprised by a New York Times article that acknowledged the fundamental hypocrisy behind President Biden's efforts to shift the blame once again. This is a quote from February 26, 2024, the New York Times. David Leonhardt is the columnist. He said, in part:

Biden is the president, after all, and a president has significant authority to shape immigration policy even without new legislation. Biden himself has been aggressive about using this authority—albeit to loosen immigration policy rather than tighten it.

So the current phenomenon, this crisis—humanitarian and public safety crisis—is as a result of President

Biden's own policies. It is not the laws that are broken or inadequate; it is his will to actually enforce the law and his active encouragement for people to come to the border because they know they will successfully be able to stay in the United States.

I have mentioned before about a trip that several of us colleagues on a bipartisan basis went to Yuma, AZ, a little sleepy agricultural community in southwest Arizona right across the border from Mexico. The Border Patrol Chief said: Welcome to the Yuma sector. Last year we welcomed people from 140-plus countries—not Mexico, not Central America, but from 140-plus countries that speak more than 200 languages.

Senator KELLY, our colleague from Arizona, pointed out that there was an airport in northern Mexico, in Mexicali—which is a fairly large city in northern Mexico—and, apparently, what happens is people fly into Mexicali and literally Uber over to the Border Patrol and declare amnesty—well, declare “asylum” is the right word.

Well, I know the President will have a hard time with this, his second drive-by of the American-Mexico border during his term as President, but, of course, his goal is to try to shift the blame once again. As this journalist wrote, President Biden is the President. He wanted to be President. He got elected President. He ought to do the job that Presidents do, which is to enforce the laws. That is what the executive branch of government does: Congress passes laws. The judicial branch decides disputes about those laws as applied to given facts, but it is the President and the executive branch—the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security—that are responsible under our constitutional order for actually enforcing the law.

And what has President Biden done with that authority? He has loosened immigration policy rather than tightened it. This is what I have been saying for 3 years; and, even now, I can't tell you how surprised and pleased I am to see this stated in the *New York Times*. But President Biden could listen to Mayor Adams, the mayor of New York City. He has said: This has been a disaster for New York. You hear the similar complaints from people like the Mayor of Washington, DC, the mayor of Chicago. These are self-styled sanctuary cities that you think would welcome these migrants, but they have been overwhelmed.

Well, what about 7.2 million that are showing up on our back doorstep in Texas? It is hard to have much sympathy for the mayors of New York and Chicago and Washington, DC, when they have dealt with just a fraction of the numbers that we have had to deal with in Texas without any help from the Federal Government.

And the Federal Government has been actively undermining efforts by

the State of Texas to reduce illegal immigration.

During his first few days in office, President Biden signed a raft of Executive orders related to immigration and border security: He halted construction of the border wall. He dismantled the agreement we had with Mexico that migrants could remain in Mexico while they waited for their asylum claim to be adjudicated. But he ripped that up too. He ended an asylum agreement with Northern Triangle countries and even issued a 100-day pause on deportations. So even if you were here illegally, you knew, at least for 100 days—and very likely for the rest of your life—that you would not be deported because of President Biden's policies.

These are just a few examples of the Executive orders President Biden issued within days of taking office. In the 3 years since, he and other leaders in the administration have gone to great lengths to roll out the welcome mat.

One of the most egregious examples is the administration's widespread use of parole. Parole, in this context, means that is a temporary entry for foreigners under rare and dire circumstances. It was never meant to be used categorically or in a blanket fashion as the Biden administration has done. It is meant to be used on a case-by-case basis in extreme cases—someone experiencing a medical emergency at a port of entry; somebody is donating a kidney or serving as a witness in a trial. It was meant to be used on a case-by-case basis which, by nature, gives the administration a good amount of discretion. But to provide some comparison, during the two previous administrations, an average of 5,600 migrants were paroled into the United States each year—5,600. Once President Biden took office, that number skyrocketed.

The Biden administration has used parole to facilitate catch-and-release at the border at an unprecedented pace, but its use of parole extends beyond illegal crossings at the southern border. The Biden administration announced a new program which allows individuals from four countries—Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela—to enter and remain in the United States, all under the guise of parole. You don't need to claim asylum. If you can make it to the border, if you pay the smugglers enough money to get you there, you know you are going to be able to stay here. This program that the Biden administration set up intentionally and with great deliberation provides 2 years of legal status and work authorization to 30,000—30,000—migrants from these four countries each month. That is 360,000 a year. The Biden administration: Roll out the welcome mat. Give them a work permit. Say “You can stay,” knowing that they probably will be able to stay indefinitely.

In total, the Biden administration has used its case-by-case parole authority to grant parole to 1.6 million mi-

grants in less than 2 years—1.6 million. As President Biden has shown repeatedly, if you give him an inch, he will take a mile.

Another example of gratuitous discretion came from Secretary Mayorkas, who has been impeached by the House of Representatives. Secretary Mayorkas issued a final directive for immigration enforcement priorities in the fall of 2021. This really should be called—instead of immigration enforcement priorities, this should be immigration nonenforcement priorities. That would be a more accurate title.

But under this guidance—one headline summed up the contents rather succinctly. It said the “U.S. Will No Longer Deport Illegal Immigrants Based on Undocumented Status Alone.” We are not going to deport people who are illegally entering the country? What kind of message does that send?

But the memo went on to explicitly discourage ICE officers. ICE is Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Once you get past the border, ICE is the one responsible for repatriating or returning people who are here illegally. This memo explicitly discouraged ICE officers from arresting or removing illegal immigrants unless they have been convicted of a serious crime.

It defies all common sense to ask law enforcement officers, who take an oath to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States—it makes no sense to tell them at the same time to turn a blind eye when you encounter people who are here illegally just because the Biden administration doesn't want to enforce the law.

Secretary Mayorkas went further. He laid out mitigating factors that should be considered before arresting or removing illegal immigrants, including their age, how long they have been in the United States, and the impact the removal would have on their family. Even in the case of an alien convicted of a very serious offense, like murder, like rape, receipt and possession of child pornography, ICE would have to consider these mitigating factors before they could take action and remove that person.

The reality of the situation, no matter how inconvenient it may be for our Democratic colleagues, is that by entering the United States illegally, these migrants are breaking the law.

There is nothing wrong with prioritizing the removal of the most dangerous criminals. Previous administrations have prioritized certain categories of illegal immigrants, like those suspected of terrorism or those who could be a threat to national security or public safety. But there is a difference between prioritizing certain groups for removal and exempting entire categories from enforcement.

Given everything we have witnessed over the past 3 years, President Biden has no right—no right—to claim that

his hands are tied when it comes to addressing the border crisis by Executive action.

From day one, President Biden made clear that he was willing to use Executive action, as David Leonhardt notes here, but he did it to loosen illegal immigration, make it easier, not harder. He used Executive action to stop border wall construction, end the “Remain in Mexico” policy, halt deportations, exclude broad classes of migrants from removal, parole more than 1.6 million migrants into the United States, and so much more. So this is a crisis of President Biden’s making. This is a manmade disaster, and that man is President of the United States.

If the President believed that he had this much latitude to loosen immigration policy, he shouldn’t feel constrained by Congress when it comes to tightening immigration policy. It would be good politics for him. I pointed out that this is a major political liability for the President going into an election. He could fix it, just like he broke it.

Executive actions have been used in the past to address migration surges—and with a great deal of success.

Back in 2005, then-DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that I serve on and spoke about the Department’s response to a surge of migrants from Brazil.

All of a sudden, a bunch of migrants from Brazil showed up at the border. But what did they do? What did the Bush administration do? They used their existing authorities to expand the use of expedited removal, which allows agents to quickly remove migrants who have no legal basis to remain in the United States. As Secretary Chertoff noted, word spread fast. After 30 days, the number of Brazilians dropped by more than 50 percent. After 60 days, it dropped more than 90 percent.

President Biden can do precisely the same thing, but he won’t do it. President Biden has the exact same authority to replicate that effort today. He could expand expedited removal, send a clear message that our southern border is no longer an open corridor. But, as Mr. Leonhardt points out, all the messages he is sending are “You can come. You can stay.” What more powerful magnet, what more powerful pull factor for illegal immigration can you imagine?

As I pointed out time and time again, it is not just about illegal immigration; it is about the drugs, because the cartels have figured out that if you flood the border with people, you can overwhelm the Border Patrol. Many of them would have to leave the frontlines to process paperwork, provide transportation, food, shelter, clothing to migrants in order to treat them humanely while they are here, but they are not on the border.

Last year alone, 108,000 Americans died from drugs that come across that

border, 71,000 of them from fentanyl, the synthetic opioid pressed into counterfeit-looking pills that high school-age children are taking across the country, thinking that they are taking something relatively innocuous, but, in fact, it kills them. Fentanyl is the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 18 and 45. We know where it comes from. It comes across that border. It is manufactured in Mexico from precursors shipped in from China. But that is part of the disaster that the Biden administration’s open border policy has wrought—108,000 dead Americans last year alone.

Well, news reports are that President Biden could announce new Executive actions on his trip to the border tomorrow. I am eager to see whether he will reverse course and issue an Executive order that will actually tighten the border or actually do his duty of securing the border or whether these are measures more designed to loosen immigration policy.

Of course, I expect that the American people, being very smart, will understand why President Biden has chosen this time to take this trip—the second driveby of the border since he has been President. It is all about the election in November, and he understands that this is a gaping political liability, and he is trying to plug that. Not only is he trying to plug that hole, he is also trying to blame others for his failure, and that will not work. The American people, being very smart and perceptive, can see through that smoke screen.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled rollcall vote begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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. 472, Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.

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 Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

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

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted “nay.”

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 55 Ex.]

#### YEAS—54

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

#### NAYS—43

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

#### NOT VOTING—3

Klobuchar	Smith	Tillis
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(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The yeas are 54, the nays are 43.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

#### SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as some of you may know, this has been a particularly difficult time for my family. We tragically lost Elaine’s younger sister, Angela, just a few weeks ago.

When you lose a loved one, particularly at a young age, there is a certain introspection that accompanies the grieving process. Perhaps it is God’s way of reminding you of your own life’s journey to reprioritize the impact on the world that we will all inevitably leave behind.

I turned 82 last week. The end of my contributions is closer than I would prefer.

My career in the U.S. Senate began amidst the Reagan revolution. The truth is, when I got here, I was just happy if anybody remembered my

name. President Reagan called me Mitch O'Donnell. Close enough, I thought.

My wife Elaine and I got married on President Reagan's birthday, February 6. It is probably not the most romantic thing to admit, but Reagan meant a lot to both of us. For 31 years, Elaine has been the love of my life, and I am eternally grateful to have her by my side.

I think back to my first days in the Senate with deep appreciation for the time that helped shape my view of the world. I am unconflicted about the good within our country and the irreplaceable role we play as the leader of the free world. That is why I worked so hard to get the national security package passed earlier this month.

Believe me, I know the politics within my party at this particular moment in time. I have many faults. Misunderstanding politics is not one of them.

That said, I believe more strongly than ever that America's global leadership is essential to preserving the shining city on a hill that Ronald Reagan discussed. For as long as I am drawing breath on this Earth, I will defend American exceptionalism.

So, as I have been thinking about when I would deliver some news to the Senate, I always imagined a moment when I had total clarity and peace about the sunset of my work, a moment when I am certain I have helped preserve the ideals I so strongly believe. That day arrived today.

My goals when I was narrowly elected to the Senate in 1984 were fairly modest: Do a good job for the people of Kentucky and convince them that, by doing so, they might rehire me for a second term. That was it. That was the plan. If you would have told me, 40 years later, that I would stand before you as the longest serving Senate leader in American history, frankly, I would have thought you had lost your mind.

I have the honor of representing Kentucky in the Senate longer than anyone else in our State's history. I just never could have imagined—never could have imagined—that happening when I arrived here in 1984 at 42. I am filled with heartfelt gratitude and humility for the opportunity.

But now it is 2024. I am now 82. As Ecclesiastes tells us, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven."

To serve Kentucky in the Senate has been the honor of my life. To lead my Republican colleagues has been the highest privilege. But one of life's most underappreciated talents is to know when it is time to move on to life's next chapter.

So I stand before you today, Mr. President and my colleagues, to say this will be my last term as Republican leader of the Senate. I am not going anywhere any time soon. However, I will complete the job my colleagues have given me until we select a new leader in November and they take the helm next January. I will finish the job

the people of Kentucky hired me to do, as well, albeit from a different seat. And I am actually looking forward to that.

So it is time for me to think about another season.

I love the Senate. It has been my life. There may be more distinguished Members of this body throughout our history, but I doubt there were any with more admiration for the Senate. After all this time, I still get a thrill walking into the Capitol and especially on this venerable floor, knowing that we—each of us—have the honor to represent our States and do the important work of our country.

But Father Time remains undefeated. I am no longer the young man sitting in the back, hoping colleagues would remember my name. It is time for the next generation of leadership.

As Henry Clay said in this very body in 1850, "The Constitution of the United States was not made merely for the generation that then existed, but for posterity—unlimited, undefined, endless, perpetual posterity."

So time rolls on. There will be a new custodian of this great institution next year. It won't surprise you to know I intend to turn this job over to a Republican majority leader. I have full confidence in my conference to choose my replacement and lead our country forward.

There will be other times to reminisce. I am immensely proud of the accomplishments I have played some role in obtaining for the American people. Today is not the day to discuss all of that because, as I said earlier, I am not going anywhere anytime soon.

There are many challenges we must meet to deliver for the American people, and each will have my full effort and attention.

I still have enough gas in my tank to thoroughly disappoint my critics, and I intend to do so with all the enthusiasm with which they have become accustomed.

So to my colleagues, thank you for entrusting me with our success. It has been an honor to work with each of you. There will be plenty of time to express my gratitude in greater detail as I sprint toward the finish line, which is now in sight.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I just want to very briefly recognize my good friend, the Republican leader, for his extraordinary service, not only to our caucus but, more important, to the Senate as an institution and to our country.

His tenure as leader will be remembered, not just for its historic longevity but also for his unparalleled devotion to this great institution, which he has always defended.

I also admire the leader for stepping forward when it wasn't popular to do the right thing for our country and for our world.

There will be plenty of time for all of us to honor him in more detail as time goes on, but I felt compelled to speak today to thank him—to thank him—for devoting his life to public service for all the right reasons: to improve the lives of the people living in our great country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President:

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

That is the oath that we all take once we become Senators of the United States.

Just imagine that you are Allyson and John Phillips. Last Thursday afternoon, you get a phone call from law enforcement in Athens, GA. The voice on the other end of the phone says that your daughter has been murdered by an illegal immigrant. I cannot imagine what that feels like. I cannot even begin to understand the shock and sadness and anger.

Laken Riley was a nursing student at Augusta, GA, this past year. On Wednesday morning, she went out for a jog on the campus of the University of Georgia. She never came back. Police found her body in the woods a few hours later around noontime. She was covered with blood and injuries from head to toe.

An autopsy found that she died of blunt force trauma to the head. The charging documents in this case say that her skull was disfigured. This was a brutal murder of an innocent young woman.

Laken Riley was just 22 years old. She had her whole life ahead of her. She had a bright future. Now that future will never be realized.

You know, I spent 40 years of my life on college campuses. I have dedicated my life to coaching young adults, but I wasn't just a coach; I was also a mentor. There is nothing more heartbreaking than losing a promising young person like Laken Riley, and I want to offer my condolences to the Riley family.

Our No. 1 commodity in this country is our young people. Laken's death is even more heartbreaking because it could have been prevented and should have been prevented. On Friday night, police arrested and charged Jose Antonio Ibarra with malice murder, felony murder, aggravated battery, aggravated assault, false imprisonment, kidnapping, and hindering a 911 call.

Jose Ibarra is an illegal immigrant from Venezuela. In other words, he should never have been in this country in the first place. This brutal and horrific murder would have been prevented



if Joe Biden and Democrats had done their job by enforcing the law.

Jose Ibarra crossed the southern border in El Paso in September of 2022, a year and a half ago. He was paroled into our country, and I will talk about parole here in just a minute. His social media accounts show that he went from El Paso to New York City. New York is a sanctuary State and city. That means that illegals who commit crimes will not be turned over to the immigration police when their jail time is up.

This is an open invitation by New York City to criminals. We have a lot of these sanctuary cities in our country today. According to ICE immigration police, he was arrested just 5 months ago in New York, charged with acting in a manner to injure a child and for driving without a license. Specifically, he was arrested for allegedly endangering a 5-year-old child, 5 months ago.

Athens police called the murder of Laken Riley a crime of opportunity. In other words, this was, essentially, a random act of violence. It could have been anyone's daughter. She did absolutely nothing wrong.

So my question is: Where are Georgia's Senators today? What are Georgia Senators doing to secure the border, to protect more people like Laken Riley? Where is their outrage? Soon, the Senate will hold a trial on articles of impeachment against Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas, the guy that is in charge of our border.

Georgia Senators, how are they going to vote when the trial comes up? Are they going to vote for Secretary Mayorkas since he has been impeached in the House? Because he is the one that let this killer in.

Are Senators from border States like California and Arizona going to save Mayorkas' job, the job that he has refused to do for the last 3½ years? We will find out and find out soon.

In the House, every single Democrat fell in line and voted—and voted to save Mayorkas' job just a few weeks ago, every single Democrat—and the guy hasn't done his job in 3½ years.

Every single House Democrat endorsed the job that Secretary Mayorkas is doing; that includes five Democrats from the State of Georgia where Laken Riley was killed.

In a separate vote, 150 House Democrats voted against deporting illegals who had been convicted of drunk driving.

Mr. President, 150, all Democrats, voted against deporting illegals if they got caught drunk driving. That includes all five of Georgia's Democrats in the House.

This is today's Democrat Party, and I go back to the oath that we all took to protect domestic and foreign, to protect.

Are Senate Democrats going to put their political careers on the line by continuing to support the least popular President in modern history, who has

not done his job at the border? We will soon find out.

Or are they going to stand beside somebody who has broken the law? If Laken Riley were my daughter—if Laken Riley were my daughter, Secretary Mayorkas would have a lot more to worry about than a pending impeachment trial. He would need to go into hiding. It is embarrassing to this country of how these people are holding people accountable under the law.

I would do everything in my power to ensure he never forgot her name and that his inaction led to her death. Blood is on his hands.

I cannot possibly understand what this family is going through today. But for open borders—all the open-border crowd—she is just collateral damage, just somebody else that has been murdered. It won't be talked about again. Don't worry about it. All we care about is votes. All we care about is power.

To Democrats in this administration, Laken Riley is just another sacrifice on the altar of woke ideology. The blame for this crime lies with this administration and with the Democratic Senate majority. Democrats run Washington right now. The buck stops with them. They uphold the laws.

Democrats could have stopped this if they would have secured the border, if they had done their job. But they have utterly refused for the last 3½ years.

In fact, this administration has done exactly the opposite. This is globalism. This is putting the interest of other countries ahead of our own country, our own people, our own citizens.

Joe Biden has effectively erased our southern border—we don't have a border—and has invited the world in with no oversight or plan to figure out who is here and why.

I have been talking about this issue since I was elected to office 3 years ago. Nearly every American—excuse me. Nearly every Republican has been talking about it in both the House and the Senate.

I haven't seen Georgia Senators down here on the floor sounding the alarm on the southern border, not one time in the last 3½ years. I haven't seen California Senators giving speeches about the border and why is it open, because they are being overrun. I haven't seen Arizona Senators down here giving speeches on the border: You have got to help us. Let's close the border.

I haven't seen that. I am not sure I have seen one Democratic Senator on this floor in the last 3½ years talking about the open borders that we have—not one.

This is the biggest problem facing our country by far. President Biden says it is climate change. You have got to be kidding me.

Democrats don't want to talk about this. Republicans have tried to fix the problem.

I introduced the Border Safety and Security Act, which would close the border until the Federal Government regained control of operations along

the southern border. I have sponsored legislation like H.R. 2, which is the best border security bill that we have had. I have offered more than 50 border amendments to the recently passed national security supplemental bill—any one of them which would have helped fix the border crisis.

Democrats have blocked me and the Republicans at every turn. They are the majority of the Senate, and they control the floor. I understand that.

A few weeks ago, we almost took up a so-called border bill from Senator SCHUMER and Senator MURPHY. They worked on it for months. For months, they worked on it—embarrassing. It was more of a border giveaway—a border giveaway—than a border bill.

This would have not stopped the deaths of these young people. It would not have stopped and prevented the death of Laken Riley.

Unbelievably, the senior Senator from California actually opposed it for being too conservative. The people of California are suffering because of a wide-open border, just like all the people across our country.

I will just mention a few, starting in California. Last May, an illegal alien named Carlos Dominguez stabbed three people in Davis, CA. Two of them died, David Breaux and a student named Karim Najm. A third person was stabbed but survived, named Kimberlee Guillory. The alleged attacker in this case, Carlos Dominguez, came here in 2009 as an unaccompanied minor. He just had his first preliminary hearing in court this past week. Where is the outrage from the California Senators about the death and the stabbings of these people?

Let's talk about Arizona. Last year a young man named Harly Sellers was killed by a drunk driver in Fountain Hills, AZ. The alleged drunk driver who killed him is named Hilario Ortiz Cruz. He is an illegal alien who had previously been deported in 2013.

It is a felony to reenter this country after being deported. A lot of people don't realize that, but it is. We don't go by many laws anyway.

Harly Sellers was 29 years old. He was engaged to be married in just 2 months. That wedding will never happen. Harly Sellers left behind two young children, including a 1-year-old baby named Carter. Carter will never know his dad.

This was a crime that could have and should have been prevented. Where are the Senators from Arizona? Where is their outrage? The silence is deafening.

Part of the blame for this crime falls on this city, here in Washington, DC. This city should be blamed because we make the laws, and we push the laws.

Just a couple of weeks ago in Texas, a 16-year-old girl named Lizbeth Medina was killed in her own bedroom—just a couple of weeks ago. A grand jury has now charged an illegal alien in the case. He is charged with breaking into the home and then beating her to death and stabbing her.



This is happening all across our border. But it is not just limited to the border. Every State in our country now is a border State.

Just last night, people arrested and charged an illegal alien just a few miles from this building—just a few miles. It is about a 30-minute drive from the U.S. Senate. Police allege that an illegal alien named Nilson Granados-Trejo was among a group of gang members who shot at another group of gang members. Police say it was all about a drug dispute.

Caught in the middle of the crossfire was a mom and her 2-year-old son. That 2-year-old, Jeremy, has died. He didn't have a say about the border.

Nilson Granados has previously been arrested twice for alleged theft. The guy that shot this kid right here, twice has been arrested. He was subject to a deportation order from a judge in New Jersey, but he was released from custody several times, even though immigration police filed a detainer. He was never sent back.

Nilson Granados should not and should have not been in this country. He should have never been here in the first place. He should have been deported when he was caught the first and second time. Like the judge says, this crime could have and should have been prevented. But it was not prevented because of Joe Biden's open border.

Just this week, an illegal alien was arrested in Louisiana for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl. He also allegedly stabbed someone in the face during an armed robbery a few weeks before.

A month ago, an illegal alien pled guilty in court to stabbing a man to death in Bozeman, MT, in 2022.

Just yesterday, in my home State of Alabama, in Albertville, police arrested two illegal aliens for alleged child exploitation. This goes on and on and on. I could have been up here all day.

Americans are dying due to our open borders at the southern and northern borders, and they are dying every single day. Who cares? We are worried about a budget here. We are worried about sending \$60 billion to Ukraine. We are not worried about the citizens of the United States.

People are going to wake up, and when they do, there is going to be a huge change around here, and I hope it happens.

Americans are dying due to open borders every single day when it comes to drugs, and 100,000 Americans die every year because of drug overdose. You would think that would be something that people would talk about. Nobody cares. Nobody cares. That is 300 Americans a day dying from fentanyl—300 a day. That is like a commercial airliner crashing every day.

Nobody cares. This building doesn't care. Everybody is worried about their next election, getting reelected. That is our problem here. They don't do what is right.

The DEA tells us drugs that were brought here over our southern border are absolutely destroying the young people in this country. So Joe Biden, our President, is going to the southern border tomorrow—hallelujah.

This will be only—I want you to think about this. This is a guy who has been up here for 50 years. Now, I don't know why. I don't know why anyone would want to be up here 50 years to watch what goes on here. He has been up here 50 years as Senator, Vice President, and President. This is only the second time he has been to the border. And he asked why we don't have border policies.

Well, hell, man, you have been here forever. What did you do while you were in office?

He did zero. His first time ever at the border was last January, after 50 years in politics. And he is trying to run for reelection again. Good luck.

He went to El Paso. Border Patrol cleared the streets of all illegal camps and immigrants. There was nobody there. He didn't talk to any illegal immigrants. He didn't go to the Border Patrol station. He just took his picture, walked around with his sunglasses on, had a relaxing day, not worrying about the border, not worrying about what is coming across the border. He just went down there to have his picture taken.

Now, the media says he is going to Brownsville, TX, tomorrow to get his picture taken. He is going to Brownsville, TX. Yesterday, 12 illegals come across at the border there.

You know we have got another President, former President Trump. He is also going to the border tomorrow. He has been down there many times. He is going to Eagle Pass, TX. Yesterday, there were over 500 that came across the border there. No matter what you think about President Trump, he actually cares.

One of Joe Biden's Executive orders was to let asylum officers give out asylum at the border without ever going to a judge.

In other words, when you come to this country, you are supposed to be given a time and a day to go see a judge to see whether you get to stay here or not. But, in the last 3½ years, we have been giving asylum at the border, giving a piece of paper which has a destination that you are going to; put on an airplane and flown somewhere across the country, and finding out what you can do to make a living and where you can go.

I know. I was on a plane not too long ago with a plane load from McAllen, TX, of illegals that were put on there, on this plane, going to cities all over the country. I was on there with them.

I am watching them come on. I am thinking: You know, it took me 45 minutes to go through TSA. I got patted down. All my stuff was scanned and didn't have anything on.

They brought them up straight to the plane, opened up the door, and let them get on. It was absolutely amazing.

Why do we need TSA? That is another point.

Meanwhile, as we are giving out all this asylum, Joe Biden has taken 94 Executive actions against immigration enforcement since he has been in office. In other words, 94 times he says: OK, we don't need this at the border. That is my law. That stands. We don't need this one—94 times.

Meanwhile, he said we can't do anything to fix the border.

If you want to fix the border, Mr. President, just take those 94 Executive actions and put them back somewhere on the shelf, and let law enforcement do their job. One of these Executive actions was the abuse of the parole system, and I said I was going to say something about this.

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

That is how Jose Ibarra, who killed Laken Riley, got into this country. Joe Biden paroled him into the country, meaning he was arrested when he got to the border by Homeland Security and then released.

Federal laws say that parole is supposed to be used only on a case-by-case basis. Why are you here? Why do you need to come here? Full information given by the immigrant and should be on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons. That is the reason you are here. They just wave him on through.

That is not what Joe Biden is doing. He is not looking into the backgrounds of these people. They are just coming right through the front door, laughing at us—we have seen the pictures at the border—and going on.

Joe Biden is paroling massive numbers of people into this country. We better wake up. This is illegal, but Joe Biden is doing it anyway. And now Laken Riley is dead. People will forget about her, except for her parents and her friends. I mean, we will go on to some other tragedy down the road. But we had better wake up. We had better wake up.

We need to bring back the "Remain in Mexico" policy. We have to bring it back. We do not need more asylum officers. Joe Biden has just turned our Border Patrol and our asylum officers into Walmart greeters at the border. Again, I have been down there several times, and these people need help.

He is going to go there tomorrow and say: Oh, we need a lot more help down here, more secretaries. We don't need law enforcement.

We don't need any more Walmart greeters. We need a wall. We need to bring back the "Remain in Mexico" policy, as I said a few minutes ago. We need to go back to the policies of President Trump. President Trump's policies worked, and the reason Joe Biden changed them is because he wanted to do exactly opposite of what Trump was doing. He didn't want to give him any credit. Joe Biden has the exact same laws on the books that President Trump had, but the difference is day and night.

Laken Riley's death and the death of every other American caused by this border crisis rests with President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas. I hope they can't sleep at night, because this could have been prevented. We need to go back to the policies that work, stop playing these dang games, and stop playing politics. Otherwise, this will keep happening.

We are here, and we took an oath of office to say we are going to watch over the citizens of this country. If we don't do something, more Americans will die, more Americans like Laken Riley. More parents will be forever scarred for what happened last week. We have to do something. We can't forget about this.

Every time we have somebody who has lost their life in this country because of an illegal alien, I am coming back up here and I am going to rub it in the faces of the Democratic Party, Secretary Mayorkas, Senator SCHUMER, and Joe Biden. It is 100 percent their fault.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, earlier this month, House Republicans impeached Secretary Mayorkas because the Homeland Security Secretary refuses to carry out his constitutional duty of securing the homeland.

More than 9 million illegal immigrants, including 1.7 million known "got-aways," have entered our country under the Biden administration. Now, this number is larger than the population of 39 States. At the same time, hundreds of individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist have been caught on the southern border, including 58 since the start of fiscal year 2024. Just in January, there were more than 176,000 illegal crossings along the southern border. This is the worst January on record. Yet, under Secretary Mayorkas and President Biden, Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported just 142,000 people in all of 2023. That is less than 5 percent of illegal crossings.

There is no doubt that this administration has abused both our asylum and our parole systems, but unlike asylum—you have parole, which is granted by DHS for different reasons, and President Biden has abused his parole authority to usher in millions of migrants who are unknown to us and who receive both public benefits and work authorizations.

One thing is clear: The parole system is just another way for the Biden administration to circumvent congressional authority and make illegal immigrants legal.

Over the course of four Presidents—go back and look at the years from 1983 to 2003—the average yearly total for all paroles was no more than 150,000, and on average, the Obama and Trump administrations paroled just 5,600 migrants per year. There is a contrast here. In 2022, Joe Biden paroled nearly

800,000 migrants into the country, and in fiscal year 2023, the Biden administration paroled approximately 1.2 million migrants. That is more than 200 times the number that President Obama and President Trump paroled into this country. This administration is abusing the parole system and that authority.

This administration's open border agenda is already having tragic consequences. Last week, an illegal immigrant in Georgia was arrested for allegedly murdering Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student, while she went for a jog on the University of Georgia's campus. The suspect should never have been allowed to set foot in America. Yet the Biden administration paroled him. They paroled him into this country after he illegally crossed our border in 2022.

There is no doubt that Secretary Mayorkas has breached the public trust by making illegal immigration legal, but according to recent reports, Majority Leader SCHUMER is looking for any way he can to prevent a Senate trial when the House transmits the Articles of Impeachment on Secretary Mayorkas to this Chamber. By tabling the Articles of Impeachment, Democrats would be abandoning our core constitutional duty to hold an impeachment trial.

The American people suffer through this administration's border crisis every single day, and they deserve an open debate about whether Secretary Mayorkas, who has done so much to cause this national security and humanitarian catastrophe, is fit to hold public office. Based on everything we have seen over the last 3 years, Secretary Mayorkas is not fit for office, and if this Chamber upholds its constitutional duty, I will vote to convict him.

#### KIDS ONLINE SAFETY ACT

Madam President, late last month, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing with the CEOs of five big tech companies—Meta, TikTok, X, Snap, and Discord. We did it for a simple reason: Big Tech needs to be held accountable for putting profit over children's safety.

When our children are online on these platforms, they are the product. With addictive algorithms, infinite scroll, and endless push notifications, social media sites are keeping teenagers on their platforms for an average of 8½ hours a day. It is a disaster for the mental health of young Americans.

But the more time minors spend on these platforms, the more data Big Tech can collect, allowing them to rake in billions of dollars in revenue. Discord's 2022 revenue, the latest available, was \$445 million. X—their revenue for 2023 is estimated to be \$3.4 billion. Snap—their 2023 revenue was \$4.6 billion. The 2023 revenue for ByteDance, TikTok's Chinese Communist Party-affiliated owner, was \$110 billion. Meta's 2023 revenue was \$134.9 billion.

At the same time, big tech companies have turned a blind eye to how their

platforms are exposing minors to harmful content, drug dealers, and predators. But when provided the opportunity to explain themselves, the CEOs continued to make excuses for their platforms' failures to protect our children online on their platforms.

During this hearing, Meta's Mark Zuckerberg said he would absolutely work with lawmakers to address these problems, but for years, Meta and other Big Tech platforms have funded an army of lawyers and lobbyists who have fought us on this issue every single day in every single possible way. Many of these groups argue that the free market can solve this problem, but even though the free market is an incredible force for good, it can't stop Meta from putting a lifetime value of \$270 per teenager who is on their site during their teenage years.

Still, Zuckerberg claimed that Meta is "on the side of parents everywhere working hard to raise their kids," and he wants "everyone who uses [their] services to have safe and positive experiences." Yet, when questioned about this issue—and it is a vast pedophile network. That is not how I termed it; it is how the Wall Street Journal termed it in a report. So I questioned him about how this vast pedophile network was allowed to grow on Instagram, including content showing teenagers for sale to older men. The tech CEO was unable to explain how this content does not violate Meta's terms of service and their community standards.

Now, we would think that building out what the Wall Street Journal called a "vast pedophile network" and having postings showing teenagers for sale to older men would indeed violate community standards or terms of service, but he could not answer that question. Instead, he insisted that his company is not "perfect"—his choice of word. I have to tell you that is a huge understatement.

Just last month, newly released internal documents revealed that Meta executives refused to take action after learning that their algorithms connected children with potential child predators. According to the documents, which were revealed through a lawsuit brought by the New Mexico attorney general against Meta, Meta executives refused to act even though they knew about this and knew that 100,000 minors were receiving sexually abusive content from adults on their platform every single day. Think about those numbers.

Last week, the Wall Street Journal reported that, last year, Meta employees warned executives that Facebook and Instagram's paid subscription service enabled child exploitation by likely pedophiles, but the company pushed ahead with this feature anyway even though they knew it was endangering children.

These are stunning revelations. They corroborate the testimony from Facebook whistleblower Arturo Bejar,

who testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee last November. Bejar is a former engineering director at Facebook. He told us that Meta executives knew that millions of teens face bullying, eating disorder content, the solicitation of lethal drugs, and sexual exploitation on their platforms while they are using those platforms, but rather than raise the alarm that their platforms were endangering children, company executives withheld this damaging information from congressional oversight, rolled back safety tools, and dismantled teams responsible for children's safety. In other words, they chose to make the problem worse instead of fixing it.

Why did they do that? Because when our children are on their platforms, our children are the product. They are the product. They need money. Remember that \$270 per-teen amount that they subscribed? That is of value.

So to parents, think about this next time your child is on Instagram. Meta sees them as a \$270 profit—profit. They put the profit before the kids.

Unfortunately, this isn't just limited to Facebook and Meta. Across the board, we have seen social media platforms, including Snapchat and the Chinese-owned TikTok, become open drug markets where dealers connect with children and sell illicit drugs, including fentanyl.

We have heard from countless families from across the country who have seen their children die from suicide after facing relentless bullying on social media. And we have seen digital platforms become havens for sex traffickers and child predators who use social media to prey on the most vulnerable among us.

For years, Big Tech companies have made empty promises about how they will address the rampant abuse, the malicious content, criminal activity on their platforms. But do you know what? Nothing has changed.

Big Tech has proven they can't police themselves. They won't act. So it is imperative that Congress steps in.

Over the last 3 years, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have crafted the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act, which would provide parents and children with the tools, safeguards, and transparency they need to protect against these online harms. This legislation, which has reached a total of 64 cosponsors, includes crucial provisions to hold Big Tech companies accountable; mandatory audits to ensure that platforms are mitigating harms to children; new tools for parents to identify harmful behavior and report abuse directly to these social media platforms; new controls for families to support their children, including to opt out of algorithmic recommendations. Perhaps most importantly, the legislation would create a duty of care for online platforms to prevent and mitigate specific dangers to minors, including the promotion of suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, and sexual exploitation.

Without real and enforceable reforms, social media companies will only continue to pay lipservice to the issue of protecting children while continuing to put profits above their safety. Yes, they need that \$270 per kid. That is what our children are worth to them.

Now is the time to bring about some real change. Now is the time—it is past time—to hold Big Tech accountable. We have to make certain, we have to ensure, our children can be free to be children again.

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. CARDIN. 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.

VLADIMIR PUTIN

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, when Alexei Navalny died 2 weeks ago, he had been in solitary confinement for almost 300 days. Outside his window, the Russian dissident and anti-corruption campaigner could only see a tall fence and no light.

Far above the Arctic Circle, the prison was built on the site of a Soviet gulag, a place the Kremlin has sent generations of Russian citizens to break their spirit. But despite the sub-zero temperatures, despite the months of darkness, despite the violence, Alexei Navalny never gave up. He never lost his sense of humor. He never wavered in his commitment to fight for a better Russia. And what really bothered the Kremlin: He never gave up on telling the truth about Putin. After all, he is the one who aptly described Putin's United Russia party as "the party of crooks and thieves." He saw that Putin is still the KGB agent who never turned away from the Soviet legacy that crushed rebellion in Hungary in 1956, that suppressed reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and that declared martial law in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to crush Solidarity in Poland in 1981.

There was a chance for Russia to take a different path in the 1990s. Many Russians leapt at the opportunity after the collapse of the USSR. There were independent political parties. There were open elections. There was a free press. Civil society emerged. Russians connected with counterparts in Europe and around the world.

But since his rise to power at the turn of the century, Putin has turned Russia in a very different direction, ruling with a regime as repressive and corrupt as anything under Brezhnev or Khrushchev. He is old-school Soviet. Today, Putin wraps himself in an ideology of White Christian nationalism. He has cracked down on ethnic and religious minorities. He has persecuted the gay and lesbian community. He has

shut down independent media and jailed journalists like Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, a Russian-born American citizen who went to visit her ailing mother, and even Americans like Evan Gershkovich of the Wall Street Journal, who was imprisoned for doing his job as a reporter.

Vaclav Havel would have recognized these Soviet tactics. He was a playwright, a dissident, and of course, later, President of the democratic Czech Republic. He wrote in the Washington Post:

I come from a country where, as late as mid-1989, while all around us totalitarian icebergs were cracking and thawing . . . I was in prison. Yet by the end of that same year, I was elected the president of a free Czechoslovakia.

Long before that, Havel wrote a famous essay, "The Power of the Powerless." In it, he explained that dictatorial regimes are mortally afraid of the courageous individual who speaks up for their rights, who tells the truth when the regime is telling lies. Havel could have been writing about Alexei Navalny.

The Putin regime is a house of cards built on corruption and violence.

I was in Germany earlier this month at the Munich Security Conference when the news of Navalny's death broke. I met with his widow, Yulia, who spoke movingly about her husband's death. I wanted to convey condolences and demonstrate solidarity with her at a painful time.

Despite Putin's continuing threats, she is not afraid, and she is committed to continuing her husband's mission. His team at the Anti-Corruption Foundation is not afraid. They still have their list of "bribe-takers and warmongers." Navalny himself was not afraid. Even after they poisoned him and left him in critical condition, he still went back to Russia. Courage only begets more courage. That is what scares Putin: Navalny was not alone.

I want to speak briefly about another brave Russian democrat who is unjustly imprisoned in Putin's gulag. Only a few weeks after appearing before a Helsinki Commission hearing I chaired, they also poisoned Vladimir Kara-Murza. Like Navalny, he refused to be intimidated. He refused to be exiled from his homeland and returned to Russia time and again. They threw him in jail almost 2 years ago for his criticism of Putin's unjust war in Ukraine. There are others, too, like Ilya Yashin, who was sentenced to 8 years after publishing reports about the war crimes by Putin's forces in Ukraine in 2022.

We in the free world must do everything we can to lift up their voices. We must give material support to activists, both inside Russia and across the diaspora.

I was pleased to see the Biden administration levy more sanctions against Putin's regime last week, including against the warden of the prison, whom Putin promoted to the rank of colonel general 3 days after Navalny's death.

We must hold those responsible accountable, including using Global Magnitsky Sanctions. At the same time, the House of Representatives must pass the supplemental funding request to help support the Ukrainians fighting against Putin's repression.

The fight against Putin in Ukraine is also the fight against Putin in Russia. This is something Navalny clearly understood when he said:

Russia must leave Ukraine alone and allow it to develop the way its people want.

I realize there is a painful sadness for so many across the Russian community in the wake of Navalny's death. It is a terrible loss. But remember what he told us:

If they decide to kill me, it means that we are incredibly strong.

Navalny personified what Havel long ago described as "the power of the powerless." So to the friends and family of Alexei Navalny and all those in Putin's prisons, to the Ukrainian people fighting against the Russian war machine, to the Russian diaspora who still dream of returning home, don't give up hope. Have faith that we will one day see a peaceful and prosperous and democratic Russia where freedom and justice reign.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to finish my remarks before the scheduled vote.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO ROBERT WEISS

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, my colleagues, I come to the floor today to celebrate a remarkable man, a really important friend of mine, an irreplaceable member of a community that is very important to me. Monsignor Robert Weiss—more affectionately known as Father Bob—retired last month from his post at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newton, CT.

A Florida native, Father Bob was just a teenager when he heard his calling to join the priesthood. In 1968, he entered St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, NY. He was ordained 5 years later.

His first assignment led him to St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport, CT, and 26 years later, he was assigned to St. Rose in Newton, CT, what became his last job in the church. Father Bob gave his final sermon just weeks ago.

I am going to tell you the story in a moment of why Father Bob is a household name in Connecticut. He is a hero to many of us, forged by fire and tragedy. But that is not the sum of Robert Weiss because during his 50 years in the priesthood, he has brought such great joy to the people and the families he has served. He is such an easy person to talk to. You just meet him for the first time, and you see why it is no wonder that over his years of leadership, thousands and thousands of pa-

rishioners have sought out his counsel and advice, confided in him, relied upon him. He has this wonderful smile, a buoyancy to him. He will admit that a little bit of that has been robbed from him in the last 10 years, but it does just make you feel better just by being around him. He is also wise. He has a gravitas about him that he carries with him. It just makes you feel safer. It makes you feel cared for when you are around him.

He cares about his church community. He helped grow St. Rose, but he cares about the community beyond the church just as heartily. He reaches out and builds bridges between religious institutions, between church and state, between believers and nonbelievers. He isn't judgmental. He is a consensus- and community-builder. He is an exceptional leader. That is who he was before December 14, 2012. That is who he has been after December 14, 2012. But that is the day, whether he likes it or not, that defines his career.

It started out like any other day for Father Bob. He went to his favorite diner in Sandy Hook. He ordered his usual: French toast. He was going to spend the morning wrapping Christmas presents. He didn't have a mass that day. Then he got a call from the Newton Police Department: A gunman had opened fire at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

He told the administrators at St. Rose School, the school affiliated with his church, to put the students in lockdown, and then he drove to Sandy Hook. He stopped at the firehouse, where parents and teachers and kids were waiting. He went to the parking lot of the school. The State police officer on the scene asked him if he would bless the children—the 20 bodies that lay on the floor of that school—and the 6 educators who lay on the floor as well, all waiting to be identified. So he stood at the front door of that building, knowing that those children and those educators were no longer living on this Earth, and he prayed for them.

Then he went back to the firehouse, where he stayed for the rest of the day and held the hands of these parents as they waited to find out whether their child was in that school dead or somewhere alive. He had officiated the weddings of these parents. He had baptized these children. These parents had confessed their regrets and their fears to him.

By 3 p.m., Governor Malloy had alerted the families who remained at that firehouse about the fate of their children. But Father Bob's day wasn't done. He led an impromptu service at St. Rose that evening. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I were there. It was maybe the most emotional night of my life when Father Bob, with no time to prepare, stood up in front of thousands who had come to grieve that tragedy at his church—because that is where so many of the families belonged—and he told the crowd: Evil visited us today, but we have to get through it, and we have to find some good.

Even after the service, Father Bob didn't stop. From there, he joined the State police until 1 or 2 a.m. in the morning so that he could be there when the final body identifications were made and he could be there with the parents when they were given that final, awful, tragic news.

The following week, Father Bob officiated 8 of the 26 funerals. They were all students at St. Rose's religious education program. He wrote eight homilies. He picked three lessons from each of their short lives that the community could learn from.

It is hard for me to explain to you what Father Bob meant to that community in those days, in those weeks and months after. In many ways, he was the emotional sponge for that entire community, not just for his parishioners. He was so unbelievably generous with himself, with his time, and with his heart—in one-on-one time with those who were grieving; in big groups who needed to hear some spiritual guidance, who needed one of the preeminent religious leaders in the community to make sense of what happened; and on television, where Father Bob would speak for the community, relieving that burden from so many others who weren't yet ready to process and talk about what all of this meant.

He did it all: the one-on-one hand holding, the group counseling, the spokesman for the community.

The Catholic Church requires bishops retire upon their 75th birthday. But when Father Bob's 75th birthday was around the corner in September of 2021, he realized he wasn't ready to be done.

In his resignation letter, he requested a very rare extension to stay on at St. Rose of Lima for 2 more years because he wanted to mark the 10th anniversary of Sandy Hook. He wanted to see through that journey the first decade after this tragedy that had ripped a hole in the heart of the community that he loved so much.

I remember talking to Father Bob at that moment when he decided to stay on. He acknowledged what he had gone through, how much pain he had experienced, how different he was from the man that took that job. But he still knew that he had to see that finish line, at least the first decade after the tragedy.

Father Bob may have celebrated his final mass as pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church, but he will remain a pillar of this community. We will never, ever forget how in the days, weeks, and years after that tragedy in Sandy Hook, he led with his heart on his sleeve. He helped heal a broken community. More than anyone else, he bore the burden, separate and aside from the families who bore the majority of that burden.

Father Bob's career would have been remarkable even if December 14, 2012, never happened. But what he did that day, what he did in the days and the weeks and years that followed, that makes him a legend.

NOMINATION OF JULIE SIMONE SNEED

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Julie Sneed to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Born in Fort Lauderdale, FL, Judge Sneed received her B.S. from the University of Florida and her J.D. from Florida State University. After completing law school, Judge Sneed clerked for Judge Chris W. Altenbernd of the Second District Court of Appeal of Florida before beginning her legal career as a litigation associate at Trenam, Kemker, Scharf, Barkin, Frye, O'Neill & Mullis, P.A. After clerking for Judge James D. Whittemore on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, she continued her litigation career at Fowler White Boggs Banker, P.A. and Akerman LLP, where she represented large corporations in civil business and commercial litigation in State and Federal courts. In 2015, Judge Sneed was appointed to serve as a U.S. magistrate judge for the same district to which she is nominated, where she has since issued more than 1,000 orders and opinions.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Sneed "well qualified" to serve on the district court, and she has the strong support of Senators Rubio and Scott.

Judge Sneed's deep ties to the Florida legal community, combined with her courtroom experience on and off the bench, will make her ready to serve the Middle District of Florida with distinction.

I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

Mr. MURPHY. I yield the floor.

VOTE ON SNEED NOMINATION

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 56 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Collins	Hickenlooper
Bennet	Coons	Hirono
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Kaine
Booker	Duckworth	Kelly
Brown	Durbin	King
Butler	Fetterman	Lujan
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Manchin
Cardin	Graham	Markey
Carper	Hassan	Menendez
Casey	Heinrich	Merkley

Murkowski	Rubio	Tester
Murphy	Sanders	Van Hollen
Murray	Schatz	Warner
Ossoff	Schumer	Warnock
Padilla	Scott (FL)	Warren
Peters	Shaheen	Welch
Reed	Sinema	Whitehouse
Rosen	Stabenow	Wyden

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—2

Klobuchar

Smith

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 469, Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.

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 Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 77, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Baldwin	Boozman	Cantwell
Barrasso	Brown	Capito
Bennet	Budd	Cardin
Blumenthal	Butler	Carper

Casey	Kelly	Rounds
Cassidy	Kennedy	Rubio
Collins	King	Sanders
Coons	Lee	Schatz
Cornyn	Lujan	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Lummis	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Manchin	Shaheen
Cramer	Markey	Sinema
Cruz	McConnell	Stabenow
Duckworth	Menendez	Tester
Durbin	Merkley	Tillis
Ernst	Moran	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Murkowski	Vance
Gillibrand	Murphy	Warner
Graham	Murray	Warnock
Grassley	Ossoff	Warren
Hassan	Padilla	Welch
Heinrich	Peters	Whitehouse
Hickenlooper	Reed	Wicker
Hirono	Ricketts	Wyden
Hyde-Smith	Romney	Young
Kaine	Rosen	

NAYS—20

Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Braun	Hoeben	Schmitt
Britt	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Daines	Marshall	Thune
Fischer	Mullin	Tuberville
Hagerty	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Booker Klobuchar Smith

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). On this vote, the yeas are 77, the nays are 20.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CRUZ. On Saturday, March 2, the great State of Texas will celebrate 188 years since we declared our independence from Mexico and fought for liberty. In the fight for our independence, many brave Texans laid down their lives at the Alamo, including William Barret Travis, James Bowie, and Davy Crockett. They risked everything to make liberty a reality for generations of Texans to come.

It is a tradition on Texas Independence Day to read the words of Colonel Travis, leader of the besieged forces at the Alamo. His call for reinforcements resounded across Texas, across America, and across the world, and it reminds us of the bravery of those who fought there and died for liberty.

I have had the blessing to read this letter aloud many, many times, and every time, it stirs the spirit and speaks to the heart.

COMMANDANCY OF THE ALAMO,

Bejar, Feby 24th. 1836.

TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS & ALL AMERICANS IN THE WORLD—

Fellow Citizens & compatriots— I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man— The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, &

our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

[SIGNED] WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS.

*[Lieutenant colonel commandant].*

P.S. The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

TRAVIS.

At the battle of Santa Jacinto on April 21, 1836, the Texans finally secured a decisive victory. We won our independence and formed the Republic of Texas, a new nation. Texas was an independent nation for 9 years before we officially became part of the United States of America in February of 1846.

Sam Houston, the founding father, the George Washington of the Lone Star State, was also born 231 years ago on March 2, on Texas Independence Day. Sam Houston was an extraordinary American. He was born in Virginia. He spent many years in Tennessee, where he served in the U.S. House of Representatives and then became Governor of Tennessee. In Texas, he led the Texans to victory in the Battle of San Jacinto.

When Texas became an independent nation, Sam Houston served as President twice before Texas finally became part of the United States. Later, he served in the U.S. Senate and finally as Governor of Texas. He is the only man in American history to serve as Governor of two separate States.

Sam Houston was a tireless, talented leader and a great statesman who believed in liberty. His words, “Govern wisely and as little as possible,” still ring true today, and the Lone Star State still follows that adage.

To every Texan, I wish you a gloriously happy Texas Independence Day.

May God continue to bless the great State of Texas and the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

ACCESS TO FAMILY BUILDING ACT

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I have been called a lot of names in my life: “Tammy,” “Lieutenant Colonel,” “Senator,” and a couple others I shouldn’t mention in polite company.

“Mommy,” though, is, without a doubt, my favorite name. It is the one my 5-year-old uses when she runs into the house after dance class and pulls on my sleeve, eager to show me what she learned during her lesson.

It is the one my 9-year-old says when she announces her latest life plan. When she was little, she wanted to grow up to be a garbage collector; now, she is leaning towards being an Army cyber warrior.

My girls are my everything. But they, likely, would have never been born if I hadn’t had access to the basic reproductive rights that Americans—up until recently—had been depending on for nearly a half century, because after a decade struggling with infertility after my service in Iraq, I was only able to get pregnant through the miracle of IVF.

IVF is the reason I get to experience the chaos and the beauty, the stress and the joy that is motherhood. IVF is the reason that my husband and I aren’t just Tammy and Bryan but we are “Mom” and “Dad.” IVF made our family. It made my heart whole. It made my life full.

But for countless women in Alabama, that desperately sought-after dream of becoming a mom just became so much harder. Last week, that State’s supreme court ruled that frozen embryos created through IVF should be considered children under State law—a ruling that paints women like me and our doctors as criminals and one that throws IVF access into chaos as countless women and doctors try to figure out whether they might be criminalized for simply trying to create a family.

If you are thinking that this makes no sense, you are right. You are not misunderstanding anything; you are not missing something. It is the nightmarish blend of hypocrisy and misogyny that you think it is.

The very people who claim to be defending family values are the ones trying to enact dystopian policies that would prevent Americans from starting their own families.

This is no longer a hypothetical worst-case scenario. IVF providers around the State have already paused treatments out of fear that their doctors and patients could be punished.

Organizations that transport embryos to and from medical facilities in Alabama have already announced that they will stop doing so, meaning that would-be parents there won’t even be able to start their families in any other States either.

And now that the first domino has fallen, it seems like it could only be a matter of time before more hospitals and more organizations make the same call, before more State courts issue similar rulings, before more extremist politicians succeed in enacting even more draconian laws nationwide.

Think about that. Think about what is at stake if State courts simply can strip away access to IVF. Think about how many would-be moms might never be able to hear their child’s first little gurgle of a laugh. Think about how many hopeful dads might never be able to play tooth fairy when his would-be daughter loses her first tooth.

You know, I lived in Alabama for a bit when I was in the Army, stationed at what is now called Fort Novosel. And I didn’t know it at the time, but infertility would become one of the most heartbreaking struggles of my

life, my miscarriage more painful than any wound I ever earned on the battlefield.

I also almost lost the opportunity to even try IVF because a doctor in a well-known Catholic hospital that my VA hospital referred me to told me I was simply too old for treatment; that at 42, I should just “go home and enjoy my husband,” instead, and if it was meant to be, I would get pregnant.

It was pure luck that I found out that that doctor was lying to me, that she wasn’t basing her advice on medical science but rather on her personal religious beliefs, nearly costing me my chance to have my two little girls.

So it is a little personal when a majority male State supreme court suggests that people like me who became parents with the help of modern medicine should be in jail cells and not nurseries. And I know I am not the only one who struggles to understand how elected representatives who back these kinds of policies can call themselves members of the so-called “party of life.”

No, rulings like this one and the bills with the same intent that are being pushed forward in State legislatures around the country are not about being pro-life. They are about catering to an extremist base by exerting even more control over women’s bodies, inserting politicians into some of the most intimate, personal decisions anyone could ever make.

Look, back when I was going through IVF, three of my five fertilized eggs were deemed nonviable. If a version of this ruling had been in place then, I might have been forced to implant each of those three nonviable embryos. I might have been forced to suffer through three more miscarriages or else risk me or my doctor being convicted of manslaughter for discarding nonviable fertilized eggs.

That is the kind of extremism that we are talking about here. That is the level of cruelty that we are facing. That is the kind of future we are fighting to prevent, where frozen embryos have more rights than the women who would carry them.

Let’s be clear about what led to this moment, the overturning of Roe is what made last week’s ruling even possible, as it stripped women of a constitutional right, transferring the power to decide whether or when to start families from us to politicians in State houses across the country.

Donald Trump is the one who brags about taking down Roe v. Wade. Donald Trump is the one who acts as if that is something to be proud of. So while it may now be convenient for him to claim that he had nothing to do with what happened in Alabama, we know the truth. IVF is at risk because of him. He is to blame. Him and every other GOP official who shamelessly kisses his ring, proving with every word they say that they care more about protecting his poll numbers than protecting Americans’ freedoms.



After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned—actually, even before then, when the Senate was deciding whether to confirm Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court—I warned that red States would come for IVF. And now they have. But they aren't going to stop in Alabama. Mark my words, if we do not act now, it will only get worse.

There are a lot of nuanced tough calls we must make as Senators. This, simply, isn't one of them. We know what is right, even if extremist courts would like to rob millions of us of our rights. We shouldn't need to wait until women and doctors are thrown in jail before we act to protect them.

That is why today I am begging my colleagues to help me pass my Access to Family Building Act. A bill that would ensure that every American's right to become a parent via treatments like IVF is fully protected, regardless of what State they live in, helping guarantee that no hopeful parent or doctor in this country can be held criminally liable for starting or growing a family through IVF.

The reality is, one in four married women have difficulty getting pregnant or carrying a pregnancy to term. That number doesn't even include partnerless Americans or other families also trying to have kids. That is one in four in red States and in blue States, in big cities and rural towns, in the wealthiest neighborhoods and in the poorest of ZIP Codes, because infertility doesn't discriminate between party lines. It doesn't recognize State borders.

No one should feel that someone else's religious beliefs or partisan slants could rob them of their chance to get pregnant, and no doctor should have to risk a criminal record just to provide women basic healthcare.

So to my Republican colleagues, please, think about how many that one in four equates to in your State. Women willing to go through expensive, painful medical treatments just for a chance to experience the smallest, most banal moments of parenthood. Just to have a newborn to swaddle, a baby whose diaper needs to be changed, a toddler who needs their shoes to be tied. And if you believe that they have the right to be called "Mom" without also being called a criminal, then all you have to do to prove it is to let us pass this should-be-obvious legislation, because in this nightmarish moment, it is nowhere near enough to send out a vaguely worded tweet claiming you care about women's rights, despite a voting record to the contrary.

No, this is where the rubber meets the road. If you truly care about the sanctity of families, if you are genuinely, actually, honestly interested in protecting IVF, then you need to show it by not blocking this bill today. It is that simple.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3612

Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that

the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 3612 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, I support the ability for mothers and fathers to have total access to IVF in bringing new life into the world. I also believe human life should be protected. These are not mutually exclusive.

Let's be clear about what the Alabama case is about. This was a case brought by families whose human embryos were killed when an unauthorized individual walked into the fertility clinic through an unsecured door, removed several human embryos, and dropped them, causing their deaths.

The court's holding in favor of the parents found that these frozen human embryos are children under Alabama law. It did not ban IVF, nor has any State banned IVF.

The bill before us today is a vast overreach that is full of poison pills that go way too far—far beyond ensuring legal access to IVF. The act explicitly waives the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and would subject religious and pro-life organizations to crippling lawsuits.

Religious and pro-life organizations could be forced to facilitate procedures that violate their core beliefs, including their health insurance plans. This would be the first time the bipartisan Religious Freedom Restoration Act introduced by then-Representative CHUCK SCHUMER was explicitly waived.

The bill's expansion definition of "artificial reproductive technology" sweeps in much more than IVF and has far-reaching implications. It would legalize human cloning. It would legalize commercial surrogacy, including for young girls without parental involvement. It would legalize gene-edited designer babies and lift the Federal ban on the creation of three-parent embryos. It would legalize the creation of human-animal chimeras. Other developed countries like Germany, New Zealand, and Australia, as well as States like Louisiana, have policies that allow for IVF coupled with commonsense protections to respect human life.

Creating rights to human cloning, the genetic engineering of human embryos, and surrogacy is too extreme and goes far beyond IVF. This bill misses the mark.

We should strive to do both, and this bill does not do that. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I have the greatest respect and admiration for my friend from Mississippi, but I have to say that I disagree with her interpretation of my piece of legislation.

This bill does three things and three things only: It protects the right of individuals to seek assistive reproductive technology without fear of being prosecuted for seeking that technology. It preserves the right of physicians to provide that assistive reproductive technology without fear of being prosecuted, and it also allows insurance companies to cover assistive reproductive technology.

That is all that it does. It does not force anyone to seek reproductive technology; it does not force anyone to offer it; it does not force anyone to cover it. It simply says you have a statutory right, should you choose to pursue assistive reproductive technology that you will be able to do so.

I also want to note that in Louisiana there is already State law that prohibits the "discardation" of frozen embryos or of frozen fertilized eggs.

This has already started. In Florida, there is a bill pending before the State legislature that would deem that a fertilized egg is a human being and provide the opportunity for penalties to be put into judgments for those who would discard those fertilized eggs. So this is a real threat today.

With that, I would like to yield to my colleague from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, first of all, I want to start off by thanking my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH for not only sharing her story of her wonderful family and beautiful two daughters—I have seen myself what an incredible mother they have, and they are fantastic girls. I also have to thank her for bringing forward this important legislation.

Women across the country use IVF to start their own families. You are hearing that not only from Senator DUCKWORTH. I have heard it from so many people in Nevada and really across the country. They make that choice in consultation with their partners, their families, and their doctors, not a government official—not a government official.

There is no logical reason to deny women that right, and yet, after *Roe v. Wade* fell, we could see from a mile away that IVF was in danger. Senator DUCKWORTH was one of the first to come forward in recognizing that, and that is why her legislation is so important. Why? Because attacking IVF was yet another chance for anti-choice Republicans to erode women's rights in this country.

They have introduced a Federal abortion ban that would supersede State laws. They have stacked the courts with anti-choice judges. They have limited funding to women's healthcare,



and they have repeatedly ignored the very science behind reproductive healthcare in order to push their agenda.

We knew this was coming. In fact, we tried to do something about it a year ago. After Roe was overturned, not only did Senator DUCKWORTH come to the floor with her legislation, but we have introduced numerous legislation on this floor to protect women's rights. And every single time, unfortunately, one of our Republican colleagues comes forward to object, without any explanation, but continuing to really erode women's rights in this country.

And I have to say, these extreme GOP colleagues of ours claim to be pro-life. They claim to champion family planning. But, really, when it comes down to it, they don't support it. You just have to be in our communities and listen to the women and their families, and you understand that.

The difference this time around is that the Alabama Supreme Court is actually calling their bluff. The threat to IVF is no longer this hypothetical. In response to the ruling—and I believe it is an extreme ruling from this judge. But in response to this ruling, clinics—some clinics in Alabama—have halted IVF procedures. They have halted them.

I have seen heartbreaking stories of Alabama families who are being forced to put their dreams of starting a family on hold, and I am here to tell you: It will not stop with Alabama. The consequences of this ruling are that not only will it close some of those clinics in Alabama that we have heard about, but it will have a chilling impact nationally.

It is one thing to have the legislation that bans it outright, but the chilling impact is another barrier. And you don't have to be from a State like Nevada. It is a pro-choice State. Listen, if you are threatening women, if you are threatening their families, if you are threatening doctors who want to help these women, that has a chilling effect even in Nevada—even in Nevada.

These extreme GOP politicians are seeing this, quite frankly, and I am watching them, and they are suddenly stuck. They have to decide whether to agree with this judge's anti-choice decision or to concede that women should be allowed this basic right to choose if, when, and how to become a parent. Suddenly, they have to decide just how far they are willing to go in their crusade to control women.

Having a child through IVF is a wonderful thing. It is not a crime, and it should not be punished. Our anti-choice Republican colleagues, they know this. Yet they have once again refused to do the right thing for American families by supporting protections for accessing IVF.

And let me just finally say that their hypocrisy is on full display, and America is watching. You don't have to believe me. Just listen to the American public. Across this country, a major-

ity—a majority—and I don't care if it is women I hear from. It is their loved ones. It is men. I don't care what party you are. I don't care if you are Democrat, Republican, nonpartisan. A majority of Americans want women to have this right to choose. They want them to have this ability. They believe in having families. They believe in IVF. They believe in women's reproductive rights.

And, most importantly, what some of our Republican colleagues are doing is inhibiting and limiting women's access to 21st century healthcare. That is what this is about. Why should we deny women the right to access 21st century healthcare if it is going to save their lives, if it is going to help them have families? What is wrong with that at the end of the day?

So I have to thank Senator DUCKWORTH. And it is unfortunate that we had an objection to her legislation that is so needed, unfortunately, in this day and age, but it is. That is where we are today: fighting for women's rights, fighting across this country.

And, finally, my only other question to my colleagues is: I trust women to make this decision. Why don't they?

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, thank you to my colleagues from Illinois, from Nevada, and other Senators who are out here to fight for the right for women to have basic healthcare services in this country.

You know, I have said before that Republican attacks on reproductive freedom would never stop with Roe. They would never stop with abortion. I have said before that IVF was at risk, and now it has been so heartbreaking to see that warning become a gut-wrenching reality for women in Alabama.

And it is absolutely infuriating to see some of the same Republicans who support so-called fetal personhood bills, who want to codify the very ideology in the Alabama Supreme Court decision that ripped away access to IVF care, suddenly acting surprised, suddenly acting like they had no idea this would happen, suddenly acting like this was totally unforeseen, when it is exactly what we have been warning about and exactly what the far right has been working toward for decades. This isn't some surprise. The Alabama Supreme Court decision is Republican ideology in action.

So spare me the empty statements, especially after the objection that we just saw here. Unless you are actually going to work with us to protect IVF, save your breath. There are women in Alabama who desperately want to start a family, women who have tried for years to get pregnant, women who have gone through the heartbreak of miscarriage, women who are battling cancer and other devastating diagnoses for whom IVF is the only way they will be able to have children. And now, after

everything they have been through—the hope, the disappointment, the thousands—the even tens of thousands of dollars it can cost to pursue IVF—after all that, these women have had their dreams shattered because Republicans believe a frozen embryo kept in storage at an IVF clinic is the same and should have the exact same rights as a living, breathing human person.

That is not hyperbole. That is not hypothetical. That is what is happening. You don't have to imagine how painful this is. You just have to listen to the women in Alabama who have had their worlds turned upside down now by this decision.

Meghan Cole has a rare blood disease that prevents her from carrying children. Her hopes of starting a family through IVF and a surrogate were dashed last week when her doctor called to cancel her Friday appointment. She asked about transferring the embryos out of the State. Even that door has been slammed shut to her.

Jasmine York turned to IVF after previous ectopic pregnancies left her with no other options to have a baby. Now Alabama has left her with no options at all. As she said, "It's completely just derailed a lot of hope."

Kayla Lee spent 9 years and \$80,000 trying to have a child. She has gone through several miscarriages, and she was days away—days away—from getting a viable embryo transferred. But instead of getting that embryo transplanted, she got the same heartbreaking phone call. Her hopes of a family were being put on hold. Years of trying, tens of thousands of dollars, and, at the last moment, Republicans pulled the rug out from under her.

Even families who already have gone through IVF are facing the fallout. Can they afford to pay and store unused embryos indefinitely? Can they be prosecuted if they don't? They don't know. Right now, no one knows.

The anger, the anguish, the stories of these women are heartbreaking.

As IVF patient Kelly Belmont put it, "We've already invested so much time and money and just physical and emotional anguish into this process, and to think that it could have all been for nothing and that we could be ending our journey to be able to have children—it's absolutely terrifying. I am just trying to hold myself together emotionally."

So powerful. I don't know how anyone can listen to these stories and still think politicians should be making women's healthcare decisions for them. I really don't.

Now, I said earlier that Republicans are acting surprised now by the result of the very policies they have pushed for. They can save their breath. That is because actions speak louder than words, and many of the same Republicans saying they care now about IVF are literally right now cosponsors of legislation that would enshrine fetal personhood into law and make IVF unavailable nationwide.

You cannot support IVF and support fetal personhood laws. They are fundamentally incompatible.

Instead of empty words, Democrats want to see action, and that is why we just tried to pass the Access to Family Building Act. It doesn't get any more straightforward than that, and yet, just now, Republicans blocked the bill and showed their true colors when it comes to IVF.

I am frustrated, but I am not done fighting because I know Americans are watching, and they will not forget who is standing with families in Alabama and across the country and who is standing in their way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, as part of what we are doing here today, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each prior to the scheduled votes: myself, Senator KAINE, Senator WARREN, and Senator WYDEN.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I have been really awed and humbled by the eloquence of the women Senators who have preceded me, and I hesitate to add to what they have stated so powerfully already. But, of course, I am a man, and this bill is about women's reproductive care and women's rights, but it is also about the rights of all of us. The name of the act is the Access to Family Building Act. It is about families. It is about men, like myself, whose most awesome moment in life was the time they held their newly born child.

Men have an equal stake in the issue that brings us here today. Men should be as scared and angry as women are about this trend, which is so destructive to basic rights and liberties. Women's rights are human rights. The rights at stake here are rights that are American. What could be more American than wanting to bring a child into the world?

And what could be more heart-breaking? We have all been through it, through friends, neighbors, maybe our own family. A man and woman in love, wanting to have a child, miscarriages, other obstacles that prevent it, and there is a hole in their hearts, a hole in their homes and their families, as they struggle with issues of fertility and childbirth. This measure very simply guarantees the right for women and families everywhere—in Alabama, in Connecticut, in every State in this country—to access the fertility care they need to bring children into the world.

You know, over 3 years ago, before Dobbs was decided—and we never could have imagined that *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned—and the Republican Party eviscerated access to abortion care, I posed what I thought was a really easy question to a Supreme Court

nominee, Amy Coney Barrett. I asked: Is it constitutional to criminalize IVF treatment? She dodged. She dodged. She refused to answer. I thought it was self-evident. It is not constitutional to criminalize IVF treatment. That was before Dobbs. That was before the legal landscape was volcanically uprooted by this Supreme Court, which has been captured by a far-right fringe.

Some may have wondered why at that time I asked what seemed like a very far-fetched, obtuse, arcane question. A lot of people probably didn't even know what it meant, and they may have also wondered why Justice Barrett refused to answer such an obvious question with such a self-evident answer. Wasn't it settled that IVF treatment is not only legally protected but also a scientific miracle? Think of it for a moment, the science here that is now accessible to every American, everyone in the world. Wasn't IVF pro-family, having children, parents who wanted a child? And they may have wondered as well, wasn't IVF the last, best hope for so many people struggling with infertility, desperately seeking to experience the miracle of childbirth for themselves? Who could possibly object to that miracle in the lives of a family who would not only relish but raise a child to contribute to our great country?

What has become devastatingly and tragically clear is that the Republican Party's animosity toward women's health and women's rights doesn't stop at abortion. It is why I asked that IVF question in 2020, and it is why I didn't get a clear answer from a Republican nominee for the Supreme Court. The war on women and on reproductive choices by women and the war on families hasn't stopped at abortion or even IVF.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Senator, your time is up.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. So I conclude by thanking my colleagues who have brought this measure to the floor, particularly Senator DUCKWORTH, and I regret that Republicans have blocked this measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, the first child born in vitro in the United States was Elizabeth Carr, and she was born in Norfolk, VA, in 1981. Elizabeth's parents were Massachusetts residents. They struggled with infertility, and their dream was to have a child. Yet it was not to be—until they heard about a husband-and-wife team, Howard and Georgeanna Jones, who had been reproductive physicians at Johns Hopkins and then went to England to train with the early pioneer of in vitro fertilization, and they came back to the United States wanting to open a clinic to help couples deal with fertility issues. It must have been a hard road for them to find a place that said yes because this seemed like science fiction at the time, but the Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk said: Open a fertility clinic here.

I was 23 years old then, and in my memory, there was something about it on the cover of Newsweek. I have gone back and realized, no, it was Life magazine. Because it seemed like science fiction. The science is so hard to even wrap your head around, and yet the Carrs read about this, and they started to travel—they were not people with much money—they started to travel to Norfolk and became patients of the two doctors, and their daughter Elizabeth was born in Virginia in 1981. She is 42 years old today. She is raising her own family today.

Elizabeth has been followed—wrap your head around this: What seemed like unimaginable science fiction in 1981, there are now, by best estimates, 12 million people walking this planet who were born by IVF, living their lives, being happy, raising families, contributing to their communities—12 million people. What could be more pro-life than in vitro fertilization? Twelve million people.

Elizabeth was interviewed 2 days ago by WBUR, a public radio and television station in Boston. Here is what she said. She talked about her life and what she is doing, and then she said this, very chillingly: "For the first time in my life, I feel like an endangered species."

"I feel like an endangered species."

I think many of us believed that the Dobbs decision—and we made predictions about it—was not fundamentally about pro-life; it was about control. It was about control of women's decisions with respect to abortion, with respect to contraception, and now with respect to deciding: If there is a path out of infertility, I can have a child. They want to control that too. That is what the Alabama Supreme Court has done, and that is what Dobbs was about, and that is why I am proud to sign on to the bill led by Senator DUCKWORTH, the Access to Family Building Act. It is as simple a bill as can be. Healthcare providers have a right to provide fertility treatment, including in vitro services. Patients have a right to access fertility treatment, including in vitro fertilization services.

This is not a mandate. The enforcement provisions are provisions that allow a person or a healthcare provider to bring action against the State or governmental entity that tries to interfere with the right that they have. No State should interfere with this right—none.

This is a very simple bill that would enable the Elizabeth Carrs of the world to continue to be born and to continue to live happy and productive lives. I am so glad to be a cosponsor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, just now, my friend and colleague Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a longtime champion for IVF and a longtime champion for families, put forward an important bill that would ensure that families

have access to the services they need to have a baby, including IVF.

Since then, Republicans have blocked this bill to protect IVF. Now, remember that for all their talk about supporting IVF, when it came down to it right here in this Chamber, Republicans blocked IVF protection.

Republican opposition to IVF is terrifying. It makes me furious. But it should not surprise anyone. Donald Trump set the stage for the attacks on reproductive rights when he stacked the Supreme Court with ultraconservative Justices and overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Since then, Republicans have banned or severely restricted abortion in 24 States. They are trying to ban medication abortion nationwide. Now in Alabama, these extremists have virtually outlawed IVF, fertility care that gives people a chance to start a family.

This has always been about conservative politicians controlling women's bodies. This has been Donald Trump and the Republicans' plan all along. And the opposition to Senator DUCKWORTH's proposal today shows that Republicans are doubling down against reproductive freedom. They are coming for medication abortion, they are coming for birth control, and they are even coming for prenatal care. Make no mistake—we will fight them every step of the way.

I want to talk for just a minute about the people who are affected by these extremist policies: families in Alabama who have been wanting and praying that IVF can help them have a baby; women who have injected themselves with medication for weeks or months or even years; people who have spent their entire life savings trying to start a family, only now to see their hopes go down the drain; LGBTQ families who have spent years taking on every obstacle just for the chance to have a baby of their own, and for some, this was the last chance.

Now Republicans like Donald Trump and those in this Chamber might try to backtrack, might try to say that they are working to protect IVF, but it is all talk. Senate Republicans' actions today speak louder than any empty promises they make. Americans can tell when Republican politicians try to talk out of both sides of their mouths.

The American people want reproductive freedom. The American people support parents and those desperately trying to become parents.

So here is what comes next. Democrats have made clear that we stand with President Biden, with Vice President HARRIS, and with the millions of families affected by these heartless policies. We stand to protect reproductive rights for people all across this country. Together, we will fight for every person to have access to a safe abortion. We will fight for every family to have access to the services needed to have a baby. And we won't stop fighting until we secure the Congress that we need to protect reproductive freedom for everyone in this country.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of Senator DUCKWORTH's bill, and together we are going to get this done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I want to say to my colleague from Illinois that I am so proud to be a supporter of your legislation that is going to provide the necessary protections for women in America to become mothers.

I think I mentioned this to my colleague at lunch a couple of days ago. Thirty years ago, Madame President, I wrote the Fertility Clinic Success Rate and Certification Act into law, and I would just say to my colleague, back then, we never thought—never thought—we would have to be standing today on the floor of the United States Senate debating this, as we are today. But we are here because a few days ago, Alabama's far-right Supreme Court handed down a first-of-its-kind ruling effectively making IVF impossible in Alabama.

We are seeing heartbreaking headlines about couples in that State being forced to rethink their plans to start a family through the IVF process that was just in effect 30 years ago. Some of these families have already spent tens of thousands of dollars and have undergone extensive medical treatment. Alabama's largest hospital system, the University of Alabama, has already paused its IVF services out of fear of prosecution.

The decision to conceive a child through IVF is rarely ever a parent's first choice. It is physically and emotionally painful, taxing and tedious, and it is expensive. But for countless couples dreaming of just one thing—just one thing—the chance to start a family, the legislation that my colleagues have been working on is absolutely essential.

The IVF journey, as we started talking about years ago, for so many parents is grueling, filled with countless doctor's appointments, agonizing waits for test results, and too often—too often—disappointment. The process is very delicate. Embryos can expire at any time during the process entirely by accident.

Under Alabama's new ruling, a doctor or a woman undergoing treatment could be charged with wrongful death if an embryo expires during the IVF transfer or implementation process. That means women who are already undergoing this incredibly painful process could also be handed a wrongful death lawsuit on top of everything else. That, in my view, Madame President and colleagues, is nothing short of criminalizing people who try to become parents.

Unfortunately, while this ruling is a shocking one, it is not all that surprising if you have been paying attention to the ongoing war that the far right is waging on women and families in America. For years, Republicans

laughed off the concerns about the vulnerability of abortion protections under *Roe*. Then they gutted it at the first opportunity.

Since the Dobbs decision, these same Republicans have tried again to convince the American people that there is no threat of a national abortion law and no threat to any other facet of reproductive freedom, like contraception—in short, no domino effect. Instead, the repeal of *Roe* has laid the groundwork for an onslaught of court rulings just like this one in Alabama, which explicitly references the Dobbs case. The gaslighting would be laughable if it weren't so terrifying. We have all become familiar with the adage: When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.

At every opportunity, Republicans have moved mountains in order to restrict the constitutional rights and freedoms of women, making it impossible for them to live their lives free from government intrusion. It is pretty clear to me they are not going to rest until there is a politician in every bedroom and exam room in America.

In the wake of last week's ruling, I saw a lot of my Republican colleagues attempt to distance themselves from the decision, claiming that they unequivocally support IVF, but that is what they put in motion when they overturned *Roe v. Wade*. In fact, a year ago, Senate Democrats tried to pass Senator DUCKWORTH's bill. Senate Republicans blocked it. So now it is clear. If colleagues really do support IVF, as so many were spending the whole weekend claiming, then they are in luck. They are in luck because Senator DUCKWORTH is going to give them an opportunity to prove it by going on the record this evening and supporting this legislation.

As I say to my friend from Illinois, I was thinking of you when coming over here today because back 30 years ago, nobody ever thought we would have to be out here just trying to get started in making sure families had information. But what you are doing is so incredibly important, Senator DUCKWORTH, because with your legislation, in America, we will have the necessary protections for women to become mothers using IVF.

I urge my colleagues to strongly support the Duckworth legislation.

NOMINATION OF MELISSA DAMIAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm U.S. Magistrate Judge Melissa Damian to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

Judge Damian's deep ties to the Southern District of Florida and her experience in the courtroom, as a litigator and on the bench, have prepared her to serve as a U.S. District Judge.

A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Miami School of Law, Judge Damian clerked for the Hon. Ursula Ungaro on the Southern District before working in private practice. From 1999 to 2010, Judge Damian

was an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District, serving in the criminal division, civil division, and appellate division. In 2010, Judge Damian returned to private practice, representing plaintiffs in asbestos and tobacco product liability cases and later focusing on litigating complex business and commercial matters in State and Federal court, at both the trial and appellate levels. Over the course of her legal career, Judge Damian tried more than 30 cases to verdict. Since 2022, Judge Damian has served as a U.S. magistrate judge on the Southern District. She has presided over two trials that went to verdict or final judgment and has issued approximately 170 written opinions and substantive orders.

Judge Damian has the strong support from her home State Senators, Mr. RUBIO and Mr. SCOTT. In addition, she was unanimously rated "well qualified" by the American Bar Association. I urge my colleagues to support Judge Damian's nomination.

VOTE ON DAMIAN NOMINATION

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 77, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 58 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Barrasso	Graham	Reed
Bennet	Grassley	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Romney
Booker	Heinrich	Rosen
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Brown	Hirono	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Butler	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Carper	Lee	Stabenow
Casey	Lujan	Tester
Cassidy	Lummis	Tillis
Collins	Manchin	Van Hollen
Coons	Markey	Vance
Cornyn	McConnell	Warner
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warnock
Cotton	Merkley	Warren
Cramer	Moran	Welch
Cruz	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Murphy	Wicker
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Ernst	Ossoff	Young
Fetterman	Padilla	

NAYS—20

Blackburn	Fischer	Lankford
Braun	Hagerty	Marshall
Britt	Hawley	Mullin
Crapo	Hoeben	Paul
Daines	Johnson	

Risch	Scott (SC)	Thune
Schmitt	Sullivan	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—3

Klobuchar	Sinema	Smith
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The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 514, Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

Charles E. Schumer, Ron Wyden, Alex Padilla, John W. Hickenlooper, Christopher A. Coons, Tim Kaine, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher Murphy, Jack Reed, Margaret Wood Hassan, Thomas R. Carper, Michael F. Bennet, Maria Cantwell, Richard Blumenthal, Peter Welch, Sheldon Whitehouse, Chris Van Hollen.

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 Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Cantwell	Coons
Bennet	Cardin	Cortez Masto
Blumenthal	Carper	Duckworth
Booker	Casey	Durbin
Brown	Cassidy	Fetterman
Butler	Collins	Gillibrand

Hassan	Murray	Stabenow
Heinrich	Ossoff	Tester
Hickenlooper	Padilla	Tillis
Hirono	Peters	Van Hollen
Kaine	Reed	Warner
Kelly	Romney	Warnock
King	Rosen	Warren
Lujan	Rounds	Welch
Markey	Schatz	Whitehouse
Menendez	Schumer	Wyden
Merkley	Shaheen	
Murphy	Sinema	

NAYS—42

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

NOT VOTING—6

Klobuchar	Marshall	Smith
Manchin	Sanders	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The yeas are 52, the nays are 42. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

TRIBUTE TO MARTINA MCLENNAN

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, Ann Bancroft, the first woman to reach both the North and South Poles, said:

It looks like I do these journeys alone, but it takes great support from people in the wings pushing you along these journeys and helping you.

The same can be said of us here in the U.S. Senate. It might look like Senators here in this Chamber lead and legislate alone; but, in fact, we are only able to do our work with support of the people in the wings—our dedicated and our tireless staff.

Tonight, I am here to bid farewell to one of the Senate's most dedicated staffers and one of the longest serving members of Team Merkley, my communications director Martina McLennan.

Martina, like Ann Bancroft, is a daughter of Minnesota. Martina, like Ann Bancroft, then connected with Oregon—Ann by attending the University of Oregon, and Martina, by serving the people of Oregon for the last 13 years.

She joined our communications team in 2011. Back then, President Obama and I were still in our first terms. Social media was still pretty new. Our world and our media landscape have, in fact, changed a lot since then.

Along the way, Martina has done every possible role in communications: writing speeches, drafting press releases, creating social media content,

crafting op-eds, jotting talking points, compiling newsletters, pitching reporters on both coasts, and reading and translating my handwriting, which may have been the most difficult task of all because I can't read it 5 minutes after the ink dries—all the while thoughtfully advising and gently guiding me.

She has been by my side through some of the biggest and most challenging moments of the time that I have been here in the Senate: helping secure more funding for the U.S. Forest Service to fight wildfires in 2012; supporting Janet Yellen, the first woman to chair the Federal Reserve; ensuring that regulators actually implemented our stronger Volcker rule in 2013; mourning with the citizens of Roseburg, OR, after the Umpqua Community College shooting in 2015; ensuring that we led the resistance at rallies and protests following President Trump's election in 2016; preparing and staffing me through the night during my 15-hour-and-27-minute marathon speech against Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination in 2017; traveling to the southern border with me in 2018 to show the world how the Trump administration was ripping immigrant children out of their parents' arms; writing, editing, and annotating our office's comprehensive 80-page report on the Trump administration's attacks on immigration and asylum in 2019; reorienting our entire communications operation to a virtual operation when the pandemic hit; supporting Oregon communities after the Labor Day wildfires in 2020; cleaning up my hideaway after it was ransacked by insurrectionists on January 6, 2021; and, through it all, finally, for filling in for long stretches when we were down a digital director or speechwriter or a deputy press secretary.

As one of our team members put it, "She's unstoppable."

And my staff talk about how Martina, in addition to her communication talents, is always the first to welcome and support a new member of our team, whether that member is in Washington, DC, or in Oregon.

In 2017, the first year of the Trump administration, the turnout of our townhalls was extraordinary, including one townhall where more than 3,000 people showed up. So Martina flew out from DC to support our new Oregon team with her years of experience, wisdom, and lightning-quick wit.

And every year, when Senate staff dress up their dogs in Halloween costumes for Senator TILLIS's annual "Bipawtisan" puppy parade through the atrium of the Hart Office Building, Martina goes down to take the pictures and share the joy with our team on both coasts.

As one of our former Oregon team members put it:

I looked forward to each Halloween because Martina would send [those] pictures, keeping stateside staff informed about the best day of the year in [Washington], DC.

I am not sure what it says about our work here when the best day is when there is a puppy parade.

She is also a brilliant writer. One of our team conservatively estimates that she has written millions of words for our office, putting dry policy language into punchy, plain English with stunning speed and navigating thorny political issues with eloquence and grace.

One of her longtime colleagues said:

I always liken her to a piano virtuoso taking their seat in a concert hall and banging out Mozart or Rachmaninoff and making it look effortless while I struggled just to keep up.

Her colleagues will line up to tell you that, working every day in the chaos of the Senate, Martina is "refreshingly calm," "thoughtful," "kind," and an "encyclopedic fountain of knowledge," who is "rarely seen without a smile or funny remark, even in the most stressful of times."

When she speaks in a meeting, people listen. I listen. She was one of the very first in our office to speak about the need for what has become our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee.

Generations of our staff have stories about her quiet gestures of kindness and support that have meant so much to so many over so many years. That is especially true of her communications team, past and present, some of whom have been able to join us tonight.

Even in the toughest moments, she is always there to laugh and commiserate while still delivering the most professional and effective communications operation in the Senate. Whether it has been struggling through late-night shutdown shenanigans while she and another colleague were battling the flu, to encouraging new staff members to offer creative ideas even if the office had never tried anything like that action before, she has always been there for her team.

As one said:

I'm still in major denial. I have never felt like I was more a part of a team than here, and a huge part of that is Martina.

Another said:

It's hard for me to put into words the difference Martina has made in my life as she has continued to mentor and guide me—always a text message or email away with invaluable insights.

Yet another colleague summed it up by saying:

I . . . feel constantly lucky to have worked with, for, and alongside Martina. I always admired and respected the way she approached her work—with humility, grace, and humor—and more than a little bit of sarcasm.

And I consider myself extraordinarily fortunate to have not only been able to call her a colleague but to be able to continue to call her a very dear friend.

I couldn't have said that better myself.

Next week, for the first time in 13 years, I will attend the State of the Union Address without Martina by my side. For more than a decade, we have elbowed our way through the television

cameras in crowded Statuary Hall, rushing from interview to interview late into the night. I am going to miss her next week.

Then there are those thousands of floor charts and hundreds of interviews that have occurred over more than two terms in the Senate.

Tonight, Martina is here, staffing me on the Senate floor for the last time.

At the beginning of my remarks, I quoted Ann Bancroft, who went on to say the following:

Stay curious, keep learning, and keep experiencing. Life is wild and wonderful, and it's good to challenge yourself now and then.

Ann went on to say:

I always say that my best advice is to "get lost"—because . . . that's when the good life stories are created, and you will always find your way back.

Well, soon, Martina will be following Ann Bancroft's advice as she sets off for Southern California and the start of the Pacific Crest Trail, which she will follow north, all the way to Canada, with Ann Bancroft's words in her ears, saying:

It's good to challenge yourself now and then.

And her best advice is to "get lost" as "that's when good life stories are created, and you will . . . find your way back."

Well, I look forward to her stopping on the Pacific Crest Trail in Oregon and saying hello.

For now, though, I will simply say it is with deep gratitude that Team Merkley and I thank Martina McLennan for her many years of service to the U.S. Senate and to the people of Oregon. We toast her tonight with an appropriate saying: "Happy trails."

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.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 516, Aprille Joy Ericsson, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Aprille Joy Ericsson, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. (New Position)

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

The nomination was confirmed.

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, with the exception of Col. Ralph J. Rizzo, Jr., and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Calendar Nos. 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, with the exception of Col. Ralph J. Rizzo, Jr., and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc, as follows:

#### NOMINATIONS [NOW REPORTS] IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

#### *To be admiral*

Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, Jr.

#### IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

#### *To be major general*

Brig. Gen. Frank L. Bradfield, III  
Brig. Gen. Howard T. Clark, III  
Brig. Gen. Robert W. Claude  
Brig. Gen. Melissa A. Coburn  
Brig. Gen. William D. Murphy  
Brig. Gen. Dana N. Nelson  
Brig. Gen. David A. Piffarero  
Brig. Gen. Regina A. Sabric  
Brig. Gen. Mark V. Slominski

#### IN THE ARMY

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

#### *To be brigadier general*

Col. James D. Burk  
Col. Andrew L. Landers  
Col. Bill A. Soliz  
Col. Yolonda R. Summons

The following named Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

#### *To be brigadier general*

Col. Craig M. Hunter

The following named Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

#### *To be brigadier general*

Col. Michael K. Moreni

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

#### *To be brigadier general*

Col. Vivek Kshetrapal

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

#### *To be brigadier general*

Col. Carlos E. Gorbea

#### IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Marine Corps under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

#### *To be brigadier general*

Col. Nick I. Brown  
Col. Shannon M. Brown  
Col. Tamara L. Campbell  
Col. James W. Lively  
Col. Samuel L. Meyer  
Col. Michael R. Nakonieczny  
Col. Douglas C. Sanders  
Col. Matthew W. Tracy

#### NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

#### IN THE AIR FORCE

PN1077 AIR FORCE nominations (56) beginning SHELLEY L. ALDRICH, and ending HEATH D. WRIGHT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 19, 2023.

PN1079 AIR FORCE nominations (15) beginning CARL P. BHEND, and ending CHRISTOPHER M. WOLBERT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 19, 2023.

PN1139 AIR FORCE nomination of Mauricio De Castro Pretelt, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 6, 2023.

PN1271 AIR FORCE nominations (43) beginning JULIA M. BELL, and ending RYAN K. ZARNOWSKI, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1273 AIR FORCE nominations (303) beginning CHERYLENE S. ABALOS, and ending CHENG ZENG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1276 AIR FORCE nominations (30) beginning DAVID Y. AHN, and ending JOHN M. VANN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1277 AIR FORCE nominations (143) beginning ADAM H. ALTMAN, and ending JASON M. ZHAO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1385 AIR FORCE nomination of Heidi L. Clark, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1386 AIR FORCE nomination of Christopher C. Lazidis, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1418 AIR FORCE nomination of Agatha C. Graves, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1419 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning MARK D. JOHNSON, and ending JOHN PAUL F. MINTZ, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

#### IN THE ARMY

PN1387 ARMY nomination of Sara V. Turinsky, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 25, 2024.

PN1390 ARMY nominations (106) beginning ALAN L. ADKISSON, and ending 002668953, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1420 ARMY nomination Brandon D. Howard, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1421 ARMY nomination of Thomas P. Gallagher, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1422 ARMY nomination of Jeffrey A. Banks, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1423 ARMY nomination of Jonathan C. Young, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

#### IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN1280 MARINE CORPS nominations (7) beginning SEAN P. DILLON, and ending JOSHUA B. SIMPSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

#### IN THE NAVY

PN1303 MARINE CORPS nomination of Kenneth J. Schneider, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 10, 2024.

#### IN THE NAVY

PN1393 NAVY nomination of Rockford D. Burton, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1424 NAVY nomination of Donny L. James, II, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

## 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.

### TRIBUTE TO TOM SKILLING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there are many things that Chicagoans disagree on: deep-dish or tavern style, Cubs or Sox, gardiniera or sweet peppers. But one thing that Chicagoans have in common? They get their weather from Tom Skilling. For 45 years, Tom has been the authoritative source on all things weather in Chicago. And after nearly five decades of forecasting snow, sleet, sun, and storms, today was his last day on air.

A native of Aurora, Tom began his career at the almost unbelievable age of 14. He held a series of radio and television jobs throughout Illinois and then studied meteorology and journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In August 1978, Tom joined WGN, and it is not hyperbole to say Chicago's weather forecasts have never been the same since.

As a meteorologist, Tom gave weather forecasts to his viewers. But he was



so much more than just a “weather-man.” Tom was a storm chaser—having famously chased and been chased by a tornado. He was an awestruck weather observer—being overcome by emotion while watching a total solar eclipse in Carbondale in August 2017. He was a comedian—bringing viewers belly laughs with his viral “Tom Freakin’ Skilling” skit. And perhaps most importantly, he was an educator—explaining to viewers the “why” behind the weather.

In fact, Tom’s focus on the science of climate change and weather patterns only grew as his career did. In addition to broadcasting his weather forecasts on WGN News, Tom also hosted nearly 40 years of severe weather seminars at Fermilab and penned a Chicago Tribune column answering weather-related questions. In both, Tom used his platform to educate his audience in a down to earth and understandable manner.

Tom’s legendary career has earned him a reputation for setting the gold standard in television weather, garnered him a cult-like following, and afforded him a permanent place in Chicagoans’ living rooms. Unsurprisingly, he has been showered with countless accolades for his work, winning multiple Emmy Awards from the Chicago/Midwest chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and receiving several honorary degrees. He deserves each and every one.

I had the privilege of sharing the stage with Tom in the summer of 2019 at a forum to discuss climate change with U.S. Representatives BILL FOSTER and SEAN CASTEN. I can tell you, not a single Member of Congress on that stage was under the illusion that they were the main attraction. People were there for Tom.

Tom, congratulations on a truly remarkable career. From choosing how many layers to wear in the morning to knowing when the break in the snow is coming so we can shovel our parking spots, I don’t quite know how we will weather the storm of life without your valuable insights. You are nothing short of a Chicago institution. And it is only fitting that you will live on in the weather world, in the form of a Chicago snowplow named “Skilling It” in your honor. Short of having you on air to warn us of snow, having a Tom Skilling snowplow keeping the streets safe is a close second.

But, luckily, even in your absence, we will not have to predict the weather for ourselves. Congratulations to your successor, Demetrius Ivory, on being named as WGN’s new chief meteorologist. Though Demetrius certainly has large shoes to fill, there are no better footsteps to follow in than yours. I wish him luck in his new role.

Tom, thank you for all the warmth you brought into our homes during even the coldest of Chicago winters. Wishing you sunny days during this next, well-deserved chapter of your life.

#### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee’s intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY  
COOPERATION AGENCY,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,  
*Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-22, concerning the Army’s proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Germany for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$281 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCHE,  
*Director.*

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-22

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Germany.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:  
Major Defense Equipment\* \$0.  
Other \$281 million.  
Total \$281 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):  
None.

Non-MDE: Included are AN/PRC-117 radios; AN/PRC-160 radios; spare and repair parts; support equipment; tools and test equipment; diagnostic equipment; technical data and publications; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance; technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (GY-B-XBU, GY-B-XBV, GY-B-XBW, GY-B-XBX).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: February 27, 2024.

\* As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

#### POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Germany—High-Frequency, Very-High Frequency, and Ultra-High Frequency Radios

The Government of Germany has requested to buy AN/PRC-117 radios; AN/PRC-160 radios; spare and repair parts; support equipment; tools and test equipment; diagnostic equipment; technical data and publications; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance; technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$281 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by improving the security of a NATO Ally that is an important force for political and economic stability in Europe.

The proposed sale will improve interoperability between Germany and other NATO military forces and will increase secure communications effectiveness to help combat current and future threats. Germany will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor will be L3Harris Global Communications, Inc., Rochester, NY. There are no known offset agreements in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Germany.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-22

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:  
1. The AN/PRC-117 and AN/PRC-160 radios and their accessories are used to transmit and receive voice and data information using Type-1 encryption.

2. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

3. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures or equivalent systems which might reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

4. A determination has been made that Germany can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Germany.

SFRC MEETING MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Cardin.

From: Charlotte Oldham-Moore, Molly Barlow, Stephanie Oviedo.

Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2024.

Re: Meeting with ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger.

Meeting Purpose: On Thursday, February 29 at 11:30AM in SH-509, YOU will have a meeting with Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Charlotte will staff. Ms. Spoljaric would like to discuss the ICRC’s operations in Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, and



Sudan as well as the prospects for passage of U.S. supplemental funding.

#### BLC OBJECTIVES

Express your commitment to upholding international humanitarian law and addressing global humanitarian crises, including by passing the supplemental funding.

[Israel/Gaza point to be provided by Team MENA]

#### BLC MESSAGE & SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Israel and Gaza:  
[questions and talking points to follow from Team MENA]

**Kidnapped Ukrainian Children:** I know that the ICRC has a unique perspective as one of the few interlocutors that talks to both sides and with the ability to operate in occupied territories in Ukraine as well as within the Russian Federation.

How do you engage with the Russian government on questions of kidnapped children? Have you found more success engaging with certain Russian agencies than others?

How does the ICC arrest warrant for Putin and his Commissioner for Children's Rights influence the Russian response to engagement on kidnapped children? Is there additional leverage that the international community could bring to bear to help you succeed in your mission of reuniting families?

**War Crimes and Atrocities in Ukraine:**

Can you discuss the nature of war crimes and atrocities being committed in occupied territories now? Is there additional engagement or resources from the international community necessary to help support victims and prevent future such atrocities and war crimes?

**Sudan:** There has been bipartisan and bicameral support for increasing U.S. leadership to resolve the horrific crisis in Sudan. I was pleased to see the Administration name a Special Envoy for Sudan, which I expect to put us in a much better position to exert diplomatic pressure to bring about a ceasefire. In addition to increasing our diplomatic efforts, we need greater resources to address the humanitarian catastrophe.

Where can the U.S. do more to support the work of the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations in Sudan?

What is your impression of the effectiveness of U.S. mediation efforts?

**Armenia:** USAID has committed more than \$4 million in additional humanitarian assistance to people displaced by Azerbaijan's military operation in Nagorno Karabakh. But with over 74,000 refugees, I know that the needs are great.

Has the international response been sufficient to support the vulnerable population from Karabakh forced to leave their entire lives behind?

**Humanitarian Funding:** As you know, the Senate's bill for supplemental funding, which includes more than \$9 billion for humanitarian assistance, is still under consideration in the House. This funding is critical to addressing the massive shortfall between available assistance and growing needs.

Given the growing humanitarian needs, how can Congress more effectively assist the ICRC and push other countries—including partners that have traditionally not provided substantial foreign assistance—to step up to the plate?

#### BACKGROUND

Gaza: In response to the, October 7 attacks, the ICRC scaled up its humanitarian response in Israel and Gaza. As part of this effort, the ICRC has actively advocated for the release of all hostages immediately and unconditionally. Concurrently, the ICRC has asked to visit the hostages, to check on their conditions, to deliver medical care, and to facilitate communication with their fami-

lies. When political agreements allowed hostages to be released, the ICRC played the role of neutral intermediary to facilitate the release, transfer, and return of 109 hostages from Gaza to their families. ICRC also facilitated the release, transfer and return of 154 Palestinian detainees from Israeli places of detention to their families. The ICRC works closely with its partners in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and continues to work closely with local service-providers, communities and other partners on the ground.

**Ukraine:** With over 800 staff working in eight locations, Ukraine is the ICRC's largest operation in 2024. Working alongside partners from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ICRC has provided humanitarian assistance to over 11.6 million people since February 2022. ICRC staff have visited almost 2,400 prisoners of war on both sides, sharing news and updates directly with thousands of families. The ICRC continues to push for access to all prisoners of war through bilateral dialogue and to advocate for the reunification of kidnapped Ukrainian children with their families.

**Sudan:** The ICRC's work in Sudan, in cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), includes promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), supporting hospitals and health facilities with equipment and supplies, working with local water authorities on improving people's access to clean water and supporting the authorities in providing rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. The ICRC is helping families separated by conflict or displacement to keep in touch with their loved ones, and has facilitated the release of detainees upon request of the parties. Since the beginning of the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023, the ICRC has acted as a neutral intermediary between parties to the conflict and conducted various activities to protect and assist those affected by the consequences of the crisis.

**ICRC Funding:** The ICRC is appealing for \$2.34 billion in 2024, a 13% cut from the previous year's appeal. One quarter of the ICRC's total funding comes from the United States. The Senate-passed supplemental included \$3.5 billion in the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account, which includes funding for the ICRC.

**Biography:** Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger has been ICRC President since October 2022. From 2018 to 2022, she served as the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator of the UN Development Program (UNDP), and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS. Prior to joining the UN, Ms. Spoljaric had many years of distinguished service with the Swiss Diplomatic Corps, where she served as Ambassador and Head of the United Nations and International Organizations Division, and as Counsellor and Head of the Political Team at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN. From 2010–2012, Ms. Spoljaric was seconded to the Office of the Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as Senior Advisor covering organizational development, management reforms, and external relations. Ms. Spoljaric studied Philosophy, Economics and International Law at the Universities of Basel and Geneva and holds a master's degree.

#### REMEMBERING PATSY MINK

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, next month, the U.S. Mint will launch a

quarter featuring the late-Congresswoman Patsy Takemoto Mink as part of its American Women Quarters Program, which celebrates women who have made significant contributions to our country.

Congresswoman Mink, who represented Hawaii from 1965 to 1977 and 1990 to 2002, was a tireless advocate for gender and racial equality, and I am proud to have sent the letter recommending her inclusion in this program. Mrs. Mink's quarter will soon be in circulation alongside Edith Kanakaole's, another noteworthy woman from Hawaii who was honored by the American Women Quarters Program last year.

Mrs. Mink can be defined by her incredible resiliency and drive in the face of injustice. Born on December 6, 1927, in Paia, Maui, she attended Maui High School and received a bachelor's degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. After being denied admission to medical school because of her gender, Mrs. Mink chose to pursue a law degree and devoted her life to fighting for civil rights.

Over the following decades, her life was marked by an impressive series of firsts: She was the first Japanese American woman to practice law in Hawaii; the first woman elected to Hawaii's territorial legislature; and the first woman of color and first Asian American woman to serve in Congress.

At each stage in her career, Mrs. Mink fought against prejudice and advocated for greater opportunities for woman. While in Congress, she coauthored the Title IX amendment of the Higher Education Act of 1972 (Title IX). This landmark law, comprised of only 37 words, ensured that no person would be denied access to any federally funded education program on the basis of sex. Title IX, coupled with Mrs. Mink's Women's Educational Equity Act of 1974, gave women and girls unprecedented access to educational and athletic opportunities.

Mrs. Mink also advocated for early childhood education, pushed for greater government transparency, and cocreated the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus—CAPAC—to promote the well-being of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community.

After Mrs. Mink's passing on August 30, 2002, Mrs. Mink was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame and awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our Nation's highest civilian award. Today, Mrs. Mink's legacy continues on through the Patsy Takemoto Mink Foundation, led by Mrs. Mink's daughter Dr. Gwendolyn Mink, which supports educational access for low-income women and children. In 2022, 50 years after the passage of Title IX, we also honored Mrs. Mink's work by hanging her portrait in the U.S. Capitol, where it is now displayed directly across from the portrait of Shirley Chisholm, another trailblazer in her own right.

Congress has also renamed the Title IX amendment of the Higher Education

Act as the “Pasty T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act.” This is a fitting tribute to Mrs. Mink, whose work continues to benefit women, girls, and LGBTQ students today. I, like many other women, stand on the shoulders of Mrs. Mink, and I am lucky to have considered her a dear friend.

Thank you, Congresswoman Mink, for all your contributions to our State and this Nation.

#### TRIBUTE TO ADDISON HATLEY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Addison for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican conference. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Addison is a native of Virginia. She is currently a junior at the Madeira School in McLean, VA. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Addison for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT EXPANDS THE SCOPE OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13873 OF MAY 15, 2019 (SECURING THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES SUPPLY CHAIN), AND FURTHER ADDRESSED WITH ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 14034 OF JUNE 9, 2021 (PROTECTING AMERICANS' SENSITIVE DATA FROM FOREIGN ADVERSARIES) M—39

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message

from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order that expands the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873 of May 15, 2019 (Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), and further addressed with additional measures in Executive Order 14034 of June 9, 2021 (Protecting Americans' Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries).

The continuing effort of certain countries of concern to access Americans' sensitive personal data and United States Government-related data constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States, to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Access to Americans' bulk sensitive personal data or United States Government-related data increases the ability of countries of concern to engage in a wide range of malicious activities, including espionage, influence, kinetic, or cyber operations, or to identify other potential strategic advantages over the United States.

To address this threat and to take further steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873, the order authorizes the Attorney General, in coordination with the Secretary of Homeland Security and in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to issue, subject to public notice and comment, regulations to prohibit or otherwise restrict the large-scale transfer of Americans' personal data to countries of concern and to provide safeguards around other activities that can give those countries access to sensitive data. Section 2(b) of the order authorizes the Attorney General, in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all other powers granted to the President by IEEPA, as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of the order.

In addition, section 2(d) of the order authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, in coordination with the Attorney General and in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to propose, seek public comment on, and publish security requirements that address the unacceptable risk posed by restricted transactions, as identified by the Attorney General. Section 2(e) of the order authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General,

to take such actions, including promulgating rules, regulations, standards, and requirements; issuing interpretive guidance; and employing all other powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes described in section 2(d) of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.  
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 28, 2024.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC-3613. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “National Bank Community Development Investments” (RIN1557-AF19) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3614. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans Exemption Threshold” (RIN1557-AF23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3615. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Rules of Practice and Procedure” (RIN1557-AE33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3616. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Inflation Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties” received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 2, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3617. A communication from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Removals from the Unverified List” (RIN0694-AJ52) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3618. A communication from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Additions of Entities to the Entity List” (RIN0694-AJ51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3619. A communication from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Implementation of Additional Sanctions Against Russia and Belarus Under the Export Administration Regulations and Refinements to Existing Controls” (RIN0694-AJ48) received in the

Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3620. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Community Reinvestment Act” (RIN1557-AF15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3621. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval and Operating Permit Program Approval; Connecticut; Revision to Definitions” (FRL No. 11161-02-R1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3622. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “New Source Performance Standards Review for Steel Plants: Electric Arc Furnaces and Argon-Oxygen Decarburization Vessels: Corrections” (FRL No. 8150.1-03-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3623. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fees for the Administration of the Toxic Substances Control Act” (FRL No. 7911-05-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3624. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; California; California Air Resources Board; Volatile Organic Compounds” (FRL No. 11425-03-R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3625. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter” (FRL No. 8635-02-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3626. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Fiscal Year 2020 Report to Congress on Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Activities—Community Economic Development and Rural Community Development Programs”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3627. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Grant Program”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3628. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2020”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3629. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records” (RIN0945-AA16) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 8, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3630. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing Benefits” received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3631. A communication from the Director, Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, Secretary of Labor’s response to the Office of the Ombudsman’s 2022 Annual Report; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3632. A communication from the Regulatory Policy Analyst, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Food Additives Permitted in Feed and Drinking Water of Animals; Chromium Propionate” (Docket No. FDA-2023-F-5500) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3633. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Older Americans Act: Grants to State and Community Programs on Aging; Grants to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Grantees for Supportive, Nutrition, and Caregiver Services; Grants for Supportive and Nutritional Services to Older Hawaiian Natives; and Alotments for Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection Activities” (RIN0985-AA17) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3634. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-380, “Reverse Mortgage Insurance and Tax Payment Program Second Extension Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3635. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-381, “Fairness in Renting Notice Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3636. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-382, “Home Purchase Assistance Program Protection Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3637. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-395, “Certificate of Assurance Moratorium Second Extension Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3638. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Colum-

bia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-396, “Medical Cannabis Program Enforcement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3639. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-397, “School Improvement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3640. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-398, “Protecting Adjacent and Adjoining Property Owners from Construction Damage Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3641. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-399, “Housing in Downtown Tax Abatement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3642. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-400, “Protecting Consumers from Unjust Debt Collection Practices Technical Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3643. A communication from the Comptroller General of the United States, Government Accountability Office, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Office’s audit of the United States government’s fiscal years 2023 and 2022 consolidated financial statements; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3644. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Statistical Programs of the United States Government: Fiscal Years 2021/2022”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3645. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “2020-2021-2022 Report to Congress on the Benefits and Costs of Federal Regulations and Agency Compliance with the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 3819. A bill to direct the Federal Trade Commission to issue regulations to establish shrinkflation as an unfair or deceptive act or practice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 3820. A bill to modernize diplomatic security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. WARNER, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 3821. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the payment method for oxygen and oxygen related equipment, supplies, and services, to increase beneficiary access to oxygen and oxygen related equipment, supplies, and services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 3822. A bill to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in West Palm Beach, Florida, as the "Thomas H. Corey VA Medical Center"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

S. 3823. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat spaceports like airports for purposes of exempt facility bond rules; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FETTERMAN (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 3824. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to establish online and delivery standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. ROMNEY:

S. 3825. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to establish a State innovation demonstration authority; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 3826. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to revise the treatment of certain resilience actions and natural disasters, to limit the issuance of new standards for criteria pollutants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 3827. A bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to require the Assistant Secretary for Aging to award grants to States, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to create or implement Multisector Plans for Aging and Aging with a Disability, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KING, and Mr. REED):

S. 3828. A bill to prohibit the export of liquefied natural gas and petroleum products to certain countries; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. 3829. A bill to address actions for applications to export liquefied natural gas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. 3830. A bill to authorize the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 3831. A bill to increase duties imposed with respect to autos imported into the United States that originate in the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

#### SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. REED, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KING, Mr.

WARNER, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KELLY):

S. Res. 567. A resolution recognizing the seriousness of widespread health care worker burnout in the United States and the need to strengthen health workforce well-being, and expressing support for the designation of March 18, 2024, as the inaugural "Health Workforce Well-Being Day of Awareness"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. REED, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KING, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. Res. 568. A resolution designating the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, as "Public Schools Week"; considered and agreed to.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 448

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 448, a bill to codify the existing Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 547

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 547, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 683

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 683, a bill to modify the boundary of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument to include certain Federal land in Lake County, California, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 928, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prepare an annual report on suicide prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 1172

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1172, a bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished to veterans in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1442

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1442, a bill to amend the Community Development Banking and

Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to adjust for inflation the maximum amount of assistance provided by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 1462

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1462, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 and provisions relating to the carrying of concealed weapons by law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 1558

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

S. 1925

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1925, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to improve the detection, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues among public safety officers, and for other purposes.

S. 2079

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2079, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require the label of a drug intended for human use to identify each ingredient in such drug that is, or is derived directly or indirectly from, a major food allergen or a gluten-containing grain, and for other purposes.

S. 2242

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2242, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to make available for sale renewable fuel credits, and for other purposes.

S. 2307

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2307, a bill to support and strengthen the fighter aircraft capabilities of the Air Force, and for other purposes.

S. 2462

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 2462, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the 7-year recovery period for motorsports entertainment complexes.

S. 2477

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2477, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide pharmacy payment of certain services.

S. 2581

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2581, a bill to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

S. 2786

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2786, a bill to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to include the provision of tree nuts under the seniors farmers' market nutrition program, and for other purposes.

S. 2801

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2801, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S. 2860

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2860, a bill to create protections for financial institutions that provide financial services to State-sanctioned marijuana businesses and service providers for such businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 2861

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2861, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, an American icon, in recognition of a remarkable life devoted to championing equal rights for all, in sports and in society.

S. 3047

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3047, a bill to award payments to employees of Air America who provided support to the United States from 1950 to 1976, and for other purposes.

S. 3068

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) were added as cosponsors of S. 3068, a bill to require each enterprise to include on the Uniform Residential Loan Application a disclaimer to increase

awareness of the direct and guaranteed home loan programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3331

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3331, a bill to establish an intermodal transportation infrastructure pilot program, and for other purposes.

S. 3488

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3488, a bill to amend title 51, United States Code, to provide for a NASA public-private talent program, and for other purposes.

S. 3606

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3606, a bill to reauthorize the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977, and for other purposes.

S. 3612

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 3612, a bill to prohibit the limitation of access to assisted reproductive technology, and all medical care surrounding such technology.

S. 3627

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 3627, a bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to require a certain efficiency level for certain distribution transformers, and for other purposes.

S. 3636

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3636, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish a pilot program to identify and refer veterans for potential employment with Federal land management agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 3679

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 3679, a bill to reauthorize the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3694

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3694, a bill to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit the taking, importation, exportation, and breeding of certain cetaceans for public display, and for other purposes.

S. 3775

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr.

MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3775, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3801

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3801, a bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to prohibit the Federal Reserve banks from offering certain products or services directly to an individual, to prohibit the use of central bank digital currency for monetary policy, and for other purposes.

S. 3804

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3804, a bill to designate the area of Sumner Row between 16th Street Northwest and L Street Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as "Alexi Navalny Way".

S. 3812

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3812, a bill to provide firearm licenses an opportunity to correct statutory and regulatory violations, and for other purposes.

S. 3816

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3816, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for lifelong learning accounts, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 566

At the request of Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 566, a resolution designating September 2024 as "National Cholesterol Education Month" and September 30, 2024, as "LDL-C Awareness Day".

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. 3830. A bill to authorize the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Establishment Act or LIHWAP Establishment Act. This legislation would establish the first-ever permanent, national water assistance program to help low-income households pay their water bills.

In 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress provided \$1.1 billion of critical assistance through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and American Rescue Plan of 2021 to low-income households struggling to pay water and sewer bills. Since then,

LIHWAP has helped 1.4 million households across the country maintain or restore access to water service. However, LIHWAP was created as an emergency program and expired at the end of fiscal year 2023.

Recognizing the importance of Federal water assistance, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act, which directed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, to create a Rural and Low-Income Water Assistance Pilot Program and report to Congress on the results of the pilot.

The LIHWAP Establishment Act would provide the necessary congressional authorization for a permanent LIHWAP beyond the COVID-19 emergency.

The LIHWAP Establishment Act would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Administrator of the EPA, to establish a permanent low-income water assistance program. Just as the program did during the pandemic, LIHWAP would award grants to States, territories, and Tribes to assist low-income households in paying for drinking water or wastewater services.

The bill would also empower nonprofit organizations to assist small, rural, underserved, and Tribal water systems apply for and access LIHWAP funding, as well as direct HHS to provide technical assistance to help agencies and water systems set up data sharing agreements to streamline eligibility requirements for low-income households.

In addition, the bill would transfer authority for the program from HHS to the EPA upon completion of the EPA's Rural and Low-Income Water Assistance Pilot Program.

Safeguarding water affordability for all Americans remains critical as household water and sewer bills rise faster than electric bills and inflation. Families continue to struggle to pay their water bills on time, and low-income communities suffer from disproportionate vulnerabilities affecting their access to clean, affordable water services.

Like heat and nutrition, which already have established Federal assistance programs, water is a vital and fundamental resource for public health and economic prosperity in all communities across the country. A permanent LIHWAP ensures we can continue to provide the necessary water assistance to low-income households at risk of losing access.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the LIHWAP Establishment Act as quickly as possible.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 567—RECOGNIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF WIDESPREAD HEALTH CARE WORKER BURNOUT IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH WORKFORCE WELL-BEING, AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 18, 2024, AS THE INAUGURAL ‘HEALTH WORKFORCE WELL-BEING DAY OF AWARENESS’

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. REED, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KING, Mr. WARNER, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KELLY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 567

Whereas the capacity and well-being of the United States health workforce has been burdened for decades by an epidemic of burnout, and this trend has been exacerbated in recent years;

Whereas burnout can have wide-ranging consequences for individual health care workers, including occupational injury, risk of depression and suicide, lower morale and productivity, absenteeism, and possible deleterious impact on patient care;

Whereas 50 percent of health care workers reported burnout in 2020;

Whereas, in 2020, 44 percent of nurses experienced physical violence and 68 percent experienced verbal abuse;

Whereas, in 2020, 69 percent of physicians experienced colloquial depression, 20 percent experienced clinical depression, and 13 percent had thoughts of suicide;

Whereas physicians, particularly female physicians, are more likely than the general population to die by suicide, and United States physicians are more likely to die by suicide than physicians in other nations;

Whereas rates of burnout have serious consequences for the capacity of the United States health system, particularly in regard to employee retention and recruitment;

Whereas, in 2023, job quitting among health care and social assistance workers was 9.2 percent higher than in February 2020;

Whereas approximately 40 percent of United States health care workers plan to leave their current role within the next 5 years;

Whereas the average operating margin for hospitals in the United States was reduced by 130 percent between 2019 and 2020, driven in part by persistent labor shortages;

Whereas staffing shortages and impacts of burnout on the mental health and productivity of health care workers raise serious concerns about quality of care and patient safety;

Whereas the decreased capacity of the United States health system constitutes both a serious public health concern and a challenge to economic security;

Whereas, in 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health launched the Health Worker Mental Health Initiative, which aims to raise awareness of health workers' mental health issues and improve trainings and resources to address the mental health of health workers;

Whereas, in 2022, Congress enacted the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (42 U.S.C. 294s et seq.), which estab-

lished grants and required other activities to improve mental and behavioral health among health care providers;

Whereas, in 2022, the Office of the Surgeon General published an Advisory on Addressing Health Worker Burnout to call attention to the health worker burnout crisis and to the urgent need to support the well-being of the health workforce of the United States;

Whereas, in 2022, the National Academy of Medicine released the National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being, delineating necessary actions to safeguard the United States health workforce; and

Whereas a more robust national focus on protecting the well-being and mental health of health care workers will improve outcomes for workers and patients, strengthen the United States health system, and support population health: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) expresses support for the designation of March 18, 2024, as the inaugural ‘Health Workforce Well-Being Day of Awareness’;

(2) recognizes the seriousness of widespread health care worker burnout in the United States and the need to strengthen health workforce well-being; and

(3) supports the goals and ideals of the Health Workforce Well-Being Day of Awareness, which include—

(A) raising public awareness about the importance of protecting the well-being of physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals to sustain the capacity of the United States health system and ensure the quality of patient care;

(B) mobilizing action to support the well-being of physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals across multiple sectors, including Federal, State, and local governments, health systems, insurers and payers, health information technology companies, educational, training, and accreditation organizations, private and nonprofit organizations, media and communications companies, and organizations that employ health care workers;

(C) creating and sustaining positive work and learning environments and culture;

(D) investing in measurement, assessment, strategies, and research;

(E) supporting mental and behavioral health, including removing barriers to accessing care and treatment, and reducing stigma;

(F) engaging effective tools and technology that reduce administrative burdens on physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals;

(G) establishing well-being as a long-term value in health organizations; and

(H) recruiting and retaining a diverse and inclusive health workforce.

SENATE RESOLUTION 568—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 26 THROUGH MARCH 1, 2024, AS ‘PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK’

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. REED, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KING, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. BRAUN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 568

Whereas public education is a significant institution in a 21st-century democracy;



Whereas public schools in the United States educate students about the values and beliefs that hold the individuals of the United States together as a nation;

Whereas public schools prepare young individuals of the United States to contribute to the society, economy, and citizenry of the country;

Whereas 90 percent of children in the United States attend public schools;

Whereas Federal, State, and local lawmakers should—

(1) prioritize support for strengthening the public schools of the United States;

(2) empower superintendents, principals, and other school leaders to implement, manage, and lead school districts and schools in partnership with educators, parents, and other local education stakeholders; and

(3) support services and programs that are critical to helping students engage in learning, including counseling, extracurricular activities, and mental health support;

Whereas public schools should foster inclusive, safe, and high-quality environments in which children can learn to think critically, problem solve, and build relationships;

Whereas public schools should provide environments in which all students have the opportunity to succeed beginning in their earliest years, regardless of who a student is or where a student lives;

Whereas Congress should support—

(1) efforts to advance equal opportunity and excellence in public education;

(2) efforts to implement evidence-based practices in public education; and

(3) continuous improvements to public education;

Whereas every child should—

(1) receive an education that helps the child reach the full potential of the child; and

(2) attend a school that offers a high-quality educational experience;

Whereas Federal funding, in addition to State and local funds, supports the access of students to inviting classrooms, well-prepared educators, and services to support healthy students, including nutrition and afterschool programs;

Whereas teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals should provide students with a well-rounded education and strive to create joy in learning;

Whereas superintendents, principals, other school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents make public schools vital components of communities and are working hard to improve educational outcomes for children across the country; and

Whereas the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, is an appropriate period to designate as “Public Schools Week”: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate designates the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, as “Public Schools Week”.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have 12 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 Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 2:30 p.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 Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a 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 Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

#### SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

The Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 3:00 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Jacob Walker, an intern in my office, be granted floor privileges until March 1, 2024.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to the following interns on Senator KELLY’s staff for today: Maya Rezende-Tsao, Gabe Levine, Gannon Tulumello, and Leila Pearson.

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

#### PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 568, which is at the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 568) designating the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, as “Public Schools Week”.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, 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. 568) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 29; 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 the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Rollinson nomination postcloture; that all time be considered expired at 11:30 a.m.; and that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action; further, that following disposition of the Rollinson nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and execute the order of January 31, 2024, with respect to the veto message on S.J.



Res. 38 and the Senate immediately vote on passage of the joint resolution, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding; further, that following disposition of the veto message, the Senate resume executive session to proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 518, Ronald Keohane to be Assistant Secretary of Defense.

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

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator RAPH-AEL WARNOCK, the Senator from Georgia.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

#### PEACE

Mr. WARNOCK. Madam President, I rise tonight in anguish and in sorrow over the heinous and horrific attack by Hamas on the people of Israel on October 7 and also in response to the catastrophic humanitarian nightmare unfolding on the ground in Gaza right now, leaving over 100 Israeli hostages and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians suffering and tens of thousands—including many women and children—already dead, with no end in sight.

While much can be said about the geopolitics, perhaps because I am a pastor, I see first and foremost the people. On all sides of this awful and ugly, deadly conflict, I see the children of God. All of us are children of God. I especially see the children.

The haunting and penetrating witness of that ancient woman of the Jewish Scripture speaks to me in this moment. A voice is heard in Ramah, the sound of mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, and she refuses to be comforted, for they are no more.

I hear Jewish mothers and fathers and Palestinian mothers and fathers weeping for their children, and the question is, What would we do if we truly believed that all of the children are truly our children? What would each side do if they could look into the eyes of the children on the other side and see in those children's eyes what they see when they look into the eyes of their own?

When we come to see that the safety of other people's children is inextricably connected to the safety of our own, we will do so much more to ensure that all children are safe. When we come to see that the health of other people's children is inexorably related to the health of our own, we will do so much more to ensure that every child can eat. When we come to see that the

future of all children is tied to our children's future, we will ensure that every child can learn, play, imagine, and grow. We will hasten toward that path that leads to peace.

In that spirit, I rise tonight to explain why I think we have reached an inflection point in this conflict, one that demands all involved redouble our efforts to get a cease-fire and ultimately a just and sustainable peace.

I do not mean to suggest that any of this is simple. Indeed, if it were simple, it would have been resolved a long time ago. The issues of the Middle East are complicated. They are age-old and seemingly intractable. We live in a dangerous world, rife with conflict and replete with enemies who do not want to see peace.

October 7 was a tragic reminder. Hamas, a brutal terrorist organization that has the total destruction of Israel etched in its charter documents and enconced in its mission, perpetrated the most devastating attack we have seen on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Some 787 civilians were killed, more than 1,100 if you count security personnel. Unbridled brutality and cruelty were visited upon seniors and women and children. Among those taken as hostages were young people simply enjoying a concert. Rape and sexual assaults were used as a weapon of war. Such depraved and immoral acts are rightly condemned by all who believe in human dignity and freedom.

Our ally Israel lives in a dangerous neighborhood, and it has a right to defend itself. That is why I was proud to support the national security supplemental in the Senate. It needs to pass in the House. It provides \$5.2 billion for missile defenses like the Iron Dome, but it also provides \$9 billion in humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza and in other places.

Moreover, it supplies urgently needed aid to Ukraine—a sovereign, democratic state viciously attacked by Putin's Russia. We stand with Ukraine. Their vital national security interests are tied to our own.

Putin, the old KGB agent with fond memories of the old Soviet Union, will not stop his murderous march with Ukraine. He will threaten other NATO allies. Because of NATO's article 5 protection, which states that an attack on one is an attack on all, that could well draw us in.

Last week, I participated in the Munich Security Conference. While we rightly urged our allies to put more skin in the game, as they should, to increase their own commitment to their own security—and to be sure, some of them are stepping up—the truth is, there is no replacement for American leadership in the world.

We, alongside our allies, must stand with Ukraine. In a broken and dangerous world like ours, evil has to be constrained, tyranny rejected sometimes by force. I would rather send military support to Ukrainian soldiers in their valiant defense of their home-

land and of Europe today than send American soldiers to that fight tomorrow. It is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do for our own national security interest.

If we are speaking of Ukraine or Israel, ultimately the aim must always be peace—a sustainable peace, a just peace, the kind of peace that must be rigorously pursued with both a tough mind and a tender heart.

I pray for peace for the people of Ukraine, for the suffering people of Sudan, for Israeli children and Palestinian children. They are all children of God.

I think of the story of 13-year-old Ariel Zohar, an Israeli teenager who lost both of his parents and his two older sisters when Hamas attacked Kibbutz Nahal Oz just 2 months before his bar mitzvah. Ariel just happened to be out for a run, and he sought shelter with a kibbutz security guard. That is the only reason—the only reason— young Ariel survived. May God bless the memory of Ariel's family and the security guard, who also died at the hands of Hamas. He survived, but a 13-year-old child must now live with this trauma. It is a trauma that I know Jewish people in Georgia and around the world are living with every day.

The tragic irony is that in the wake of October 7, anti-Semitism has actually gone up. In this country, anti-Semitism has gone up. All of this is now witnessed through the prism of a people who have never truly felt safe in the world, people who carry the burden of history—centuries of it—in their bones.

I got a sense of it in recent weeks as I sat with the families of hostages being held by Hamas. I sat with those families, who were stunned by the nightmare of their reality, people who have no idea when or how their family members might return.

I recall meeting with one father who was lamenting what had happened on October 7 to his daughter and his son-in-law when they were attacked by Hamas. Beyond his grief, here is what he wanted to know. He wanted to know: Does anybody other than us understand? Do they get it? Can they see what we see, hear what we hear, feel what we feel?

And as he said that with such pain and pathos in his voice, he was speaking about his own family, but he just as well could have been speaking for the family of 13-year-old Donia Abu Mohsen, a Palestinian girl who lost her parents and two brothers in an Israeli missile strike in south Gaza and had to have her leg amputated. And while she was recovering in the hospital, she was tragically killed by another Israeli airstrike while in the hospital.

May God bless the memory of Donia and her family. Donia is one of more than 12,000 children and tens of thousands of defenseless Palestinians who reportedly have been killed since Israel has been prosecuting its war against Hamas.

There is an acronym used in Gaza: WCNSF, wounded child with no surviving family. According to media reports, an estimated 17,000 Palestinian children fall under that category: wounded child with no surviving family. And another 2 million Palestinians have been displaced by the effort to rid the world of Hamas.

When I meet with my Palestinian and Muslim constituents in Georgia, members of our human family, I also hear them wonder: Does anybody other than us understand? Do they see what we see? Do they hear what we hear? Can they feel what we feel? Does anybody care?

The staggering loss of Palestinian lives should deeply trouble all of us, but equally concerning is the serious humanitarian catastrophe that is unfolding in Gaza before our very eyes. Earlier this week, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said during a briefing that about one quarter of the population in Gaza—576,000 people—are “one step away from famine” and facing a “grave situation.” Diseases like hepatitis A and digestive illnesses are spreading rapidly in overcrowded, makeshift camps, and this is made worse by a lack of access to clean water or sanitation systems.

Families right now are huddled in makeshift tents and other shelters, exposed to the winter elements, with everything they can carry on their backs. The medical system in Gaza has collapsed, with only a handful of hospitals still partially functioning.

On average, reportedly, more than 10 children have lost one or both of their legs every day since October 7, with many of those amputations performed without anesthesia. Pregnant women in Gaza have experienced a 300-percent increase in miscarriages.

And, most recently, the Netanyahu administration has once again ordered displaced Palestinians—women, children, seniors, regular civilians already pushed out of their homes by war—to evacuate territory they were told would be safe after fleeing previous offensives by the IDF in northern Gaza.

If Mr. Netanyahu advances military operations into Rafah, the question is: Where are these people supposed to go? What will be the human consequences?

World-class epidemiologists tell us that with an escalation of the war into Rafah, as many as 85,000 Palestinians could die from injuries and disease over the next 6 months—85,000 on top of the already mounting death toll. I submit that such a move would be unconscionable and morally indefensible.

But what do we do about Hamas, a terrorist organization bent on Israel's destruction? Let me be clear: Israel would be better off, the Palestinian people would be better off, the world would be better off without Hamas. But Hamas is more than a terrorist organization. It is an ideology. It is a mindset. It is a way of thinking that sits in a place deeper than the tunnels beneath Gaza. And if the legacy of

Hamas's violence on October 7 becomes continuing and escalating indiscriminate violence in turn, then the destructive ideology of Hamas will have won the day.

We must not let them win. We must be careful not to create, through indiscriminate killing, that which we seek to destroy. We must find a more excellent way. With a tough mind and a tender heart, we must find that way that leads to peace.

We are at an inflection point, a place where two ways meet, and time is running out. I call upon Israel and Hamas to come to a negotiated cease-fire, with the immediate release of hostages and opening of humanitarian corridors so that food, medicine, water, and other supplies can be delivered to the people of Gaza with the fierce urgency that the situation demands. I am heartened by the quiet, steady work of the Biden administration and our regional partners in this effort, and I urge that it continue in earnest.

Furthermore, we must reaffirm our unwavering commitment to a two-state solution. The people of Israel deserve to live in peace and security alongside their neighbors. I agree with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said that “Israel's right to exist as a state in security is incontestable. The whole world,” he said, “must see that Israel must exist and has the right to exist.”

The dignity of self-determination is among the values he was seeking to uphold. Israelis deserve it. So do Palestinians. Two peoples, two states, living alongside one another in freedom and in peace—that must remain our North Star.

And if we would be true to our values, we must call to task any politician who would reject that right to self-determination, especially if that rejection comes while, at the same time, one is engaged in massive and indiscriminate bombing of the very same people.

From the ugly and dangerous specter of it all, the world cannot and must not turn away. With the Muslim holy days of Ramadan around the corner and the Jewish Passover shortly thereafter, we are at an inflection point, a place where two traumatized peoples meet. As a Black man who stands in Dr. King's pulpit, I know a little something about trauma. I know that while our trauma informs us, it must never define us. We are more than what has happened to us. We have within our capacity the strength to write a new story.

We must pursue peace, seek justice, embrace mercy, and struggle for human dignity with all of our might. The children on each side and all of our children are counting on us to do no less. I would wonder what we would actually do if we truly believed that all of the children are our children. As a parent with small children, I wonder what would each side do if they could look into the eyes of the children on the other side and see in those chil-

dren's eyes what they see when they look into the eyes of their own.

Perhaps this is what the prophet Isaiah was getting at when he put forth his extraordinary vision, and I lift it up.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

Honestly, I never quite understood what Isaiah meant. It seems too idyllic and other-worldly even for the preacher. But perhaps the prophet is saying something much more practical than we think.

To be sure, peacemaking is not easy work at all, by any stretch of the imagination. But perhaps when we allow our children and our love for our children, our concern for their future, and our children's inextricable connection to all other children to lead us—when we allow the children to lead us—we will find ourselves on the path that leads to peace.

So, tonight, I pray for a world where Israeli mothers and fathers and Palestinian mothers and fathers can put their children to bed in peace, say their bedtime prayers, and awaken to a world where they are finally safe.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:08 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. TODD D. MILLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. DAVID W. KELLEY

##### IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. RONNIE D. ANDERSON, JR.

COL. BRYAN L. BABICH

COL. JEREMY A. BARTEL

COL. JAMES T. BLEJSKI, JR.

COL. W. M. BOCHAT

COL. ROBERT G. BORN

COL. KIRK E. BRINKER

COL. ROBERT S. BROWN

COL. KEVIN S. CHANEY

COL. KENNETH C. COLE

COL. KEVIN L. GOTTMAN

COL. JOHNATON L. DAWBER

COL. DAVID P. ELSÉN

COL. JOSEPH M. EWERS

COL. EUGENE J. FERRIS

COL. RONALD L. FRANKLIN, JR.

COL. ROGELIO J. GARCIA

COL. PETER C. GLASS

COL. JOSEPH C. GOETZ II

COL. PHILLIP J. KINIERY III

COL. PAUL T. KRATTIGER  
 COL. JOHN P. KUNSTBECK  
 COL. MATTHEW J. LENNOX  
 COL. ROBERT J. MIKESH, JR.  
 COL. ZACHARY L. MILLER  
 COL. JIN H. PAK  
 COL. WILLIAM M. PARKER  
 COL. ALLEN J. PEPPER  
 COL. BRENDAN C. RAYMOND  
 COL. ADAM D. SMITH  
 COL. TERRY R. TILLIS  
 COL. GEORGE C. TURNER, JR.  
 COL. SHANE M. UPTON  
 COL. ERIC J. VENDENBOSCH  
 COL. JASON T. WILLIAMS  
 COL. KEVIN J. WILLIAMS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. CHARLES M. CAUSEY  
 COL. RODERICK F. LAUGHMAN  
 COL. URBI N. LEWIS

**CONFIRMATIONS**

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 28, 2024:

THE JUDICIARY

MELISSA DAMIAN, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.

JULIE SIMONE SNEED, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

APRILLE JOY ERICSSON, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

*To be admiral*

ADM. SAMUEL J. PAPARO, JR.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

*To be major general*

BRIG. GEN. FRANK L. BRADFIELD III  
 BRIG. GEN. HOWARD T. CLARK III  
 BRIG. GEN. ROBERT W. CLAUDE  
 BRIG. GEN. MELISSA A. COBURN  
 BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM D. MURPHY  
 BRIG. GEN. DANA N. NELSON

BRIG. GEN. DAVID A. PIFFARERIO  
 BRIG. GEN. REGINA A. SABRIC  
 BRIG. GEN. MARK V. SLOMINSKI

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. JAMES D. BURK  
 COL. ANDREW L. LANDERS  
 COL. BILL A. SOLIZ  
 COL. YOLONDA R. SUMMONS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. CRAIG M. HUNTER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. MICHAEL K. MORENI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. VIVEK KSHETRAPAL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. CARLOS E. GORBEA

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

*To be brigadier general*

COL. NICK I. BROWN  
 COL. SHANNON M. BROWN  
 COL. TAMARA L. CAMPBELL  
 COL. JAMES W. LIVELY  
 COL. SAMUEL L. MEYER  
 COL. MICHAEL R. NAKONIECZNY  
 COL. DOUGLAS C. SANDERS  
 COL. MATTHEW W. TRACY

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SHELLEY L. ALDRICH AND ENDING WITH HEATH D. WRIGHT, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON OCTOBER 19, 2023.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CARL P. BHEND AND ENDING WITH CHRISTOPHER M. WOLBERT,

WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON OCTOBER 19, 2023.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF MAURICIO DE CASTRO PRETEL, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JULIA M. BELL AND ENDING WITH RYAN K. ZARNOWSKI, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHERYLENE S. ABALOS AND ENDING WITH CHENG ZENG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID Y. AHN AND ENDING WITH JOHN M. VANN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ADAM H. ALTMAN AND ENDING WITH JASON M. ZHAO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF HEIDI L. CLARK, TO BE COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER C. LAZIDIS, TO BE COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF AGATHA C. GRAVES, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MARK D. JOHNSON AND ENDING WITH JOHN PAUL F. MINTZ, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2024.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF SARA V. TURINSKY, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ALAN L. ADKISSON AND ENDING WITH 002668953, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 25, 2024.

ARMY NOMINATION OF BRANDON D. HOWARD, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF THOMAS P. GALLAGHER, JR., TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JEFFREY A. BANKS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JONATHAN C. YOUNG, TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SEAN P. DILLON AND ENDING WITH JOSHUA B. SIMPSON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF KENNETH J. SCHNEIDER, JR., TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF ROCKFORD D. BURTON, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF DONNY L. JAMES II, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.