

with those sanctions, we are going to fight for those sanctions, we are going to fight anybody who tries to get around those sanctions.”

We asked Mr. Lutnick about ways to address that fact that maybe some large amount, \$19 billion of Tether's funds, might be illegal, illicit transactions, he said he thought that in the future, a software AI solution would help stop that.

Well, I was hoping that Mr. Lutnick would be more aggressive than that. I would hope that he would help the United States in moving on something today that would help give more transparency in the cryptocurrency market. I support, as the Presiding Officer does, moving forward on cryptocurrencies. But I also believe that there should be some transparency and certainly should be a fight against people who use that for illicit activities.

I also asked Mr. Lutnick something about the U.S. sovereign debt futures, something that I know that he was involved in as it related to the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and putting up a competitive bid. It was a notion of, how do we settle futures? How do we in the United States—if Mr. Lutnick's future company was doing business with the London Exchange, settle any kind of—let's say we don't raise the debt ceiling and we had a crisis here, what would the United States do? Not unsimilar to what we did in 2009 after the 2008, basically, recession of our economy.

These similar questions came up in the Finance Committee, and I found that the Treasury nominee before the committee answered those questions correctly. But Mr. Lutnick said that he still thought that his idea of settling with a foreign country, which I think puts the United States second, above England, is not something I would be willing to do, but I think he was willing to continue to move forward.

So those things, an answer about how we will catch up with the money laundering in the future with an AI solution, and how the settling on the foreign exchange, also left me with some concerns. But when we come to NOAA, which is 60 percent of the Commerce budget, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, when asked for the record, “Should NOAA be dismantled, as called for in Project 2025?” Mr. Lutnick would only say he will figure it out once he is confirmed.

We needed a bigger commitment to NOAA. NOAA already supplies a big, important aspect of what we deal with, with weather forecasting, tracking extreme weather, hurricanes, wildfires, managing our fisheries, operating ships that conduct important charting for national security. Mr. Lutnick gave very tepid support for NOAA.

With 60 percent of the budget and so much now at stake, as the White House every day says they are going to cut staffing and cut programs, Congress wants to be assured that a nominee is going to fight for the Agency that he is

there to represent, that he is there to fight for their core mission that they provide in important services.

So I am urging my colleagues to not support this nominee and hope that we all can work together to continue to say how important NOAA's management of our fisheries are, how important it is to protect U.S. fishermen from Russian and Chinese illegal fishing and deception and trade practices that are hurting our consumers, and protect accurate weather forecasting for all Americans.

Now is our chance to stand up for these essential services; your constituents depend on it.

I thank the President and—oh, I would, just one more thing.

The aviation news that continues to roll out, I want to give my thoughts and prayers to those who have been affected by the Minneapolis to Canada flight for Delta Airlines.

We have now had the DCA incident and this incident and obviously one in Philadelphia. I would just say this: Now is not the time to cut FAA staffing. Now is the time to ask questions about what can we do to further enhance aviation safety. What can we all do, knowing that we have suffered from a door plug accident and from two MAX plane crashes.

And while we passed legislation to address those MAX crashes, we still have work to do. And we passed an FAA 5-year reauthorization that helped us get more air traffic controllers.

It is critically clear to me that we need these air traffic controllers, and so we have to make these investments. We should be working together, right now, on aviation. The most important thing? Let's work together for the benefit of the flying public to come up with the best solutions that we can implement in aviation safety.

Taking a broad brush and just cutting people out of the FAA, when oftentimes they are the people that are helping you get that safety, is not what we should be doing right now.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today, we are going to take a procedural vote on Kash Patel's nomination to be Director of the FBI. I want to take a few minutes to express my support for his nomination and to urge my Democratic colleagues to consider voting for this nomination.

Mr. Patel's resume doesn't look like a normal one for an FBI Director, but

everybody knows in this Congress and maybe in the United States that we are not living in normal times. As I have exposed through my oversight work, the FBI has been infected by politicalization, and this storied Agency has been weaponized against political opponents.

Mr. Patel is the right man at the right time. His career has been a study in fighting for unpopular but righteous causes, exposing corruption, and putting America first. Mr. Patel has served as a public defender, a counterterrorism prosecutor under President Obama, and a House staffer.

In the House, he worked to expose Crossfire Hurricane as a political hit job that was based on discredited information paid for—would you believe it?—by the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign.

After exposing the Russiagate scandal in Congress, Mr. Patel then went on to serve as Senior Director of Counterterrorism at the National Security Council, Deputy Director of National Intelligence, and Chief of Staff to the Acting Secretary of Defense.

He has fought for transparency and accountability in government. I have fought for this in Congress for decades. That is the right approach because everybody knows that more transparency in government brings accountability by those of us serving in the government. In other words, the public business should be public.

Because of his efforts in exposing corruption, Mr. Patel has been relentlessly attacked, as we have seen over the last 2 months. These smears began long before his confirmation hearing. I understand why he has been targeted in this way. He exposed a threat to the existing system—a system that has retaliated against whistleblowers, engaged in unprecedented lawfare against the President and the American people, and obstructed congressional oversight. Mr. Patel will end these abuses. He will restore the FBI to its essential mission of keeping Americans safe.

Mr. Patel's vision for a new FBI is why he has been endorsed by organizations representing more than 680,000 law enforcement officers and by dozens of former and current FBI agents, State attorneys general, and U.S. attorneys. They trust Mr. Patel, and we should as well.

I urge all of my colleagues to support Mr. Patel's nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. 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 SESSION—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 23.

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

## VOTE ON MOTION

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 56 Leg.]

## YEAS—48

Banks	Fischer	Moreno
Barrasso	Graham	Mullin
Blackburn	Grassley	Murkowski
Boozman	Hagerty	Paul
Britt	Hawley	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Johnson	Rounds
Cassidy	Justice	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sheehy
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young

## NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Coons	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Luján	Smith
Duckworth	Markey	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Fetterman	Murphy	Warnock
Gallago	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Reed	Wyden

## NOT VOTING—7

Booker	Hyde-Smith	Sullivan
Cramer	Moran	
Hoeven	Peters	

The motion was agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kashyap Patel, of Nevada, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a term of ten years.

## CLOTURE MOTION

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

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. 23, Kashyap Patel, of Nevada, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a term of ten years.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Steve Daines, Tim Sheehy, Marsha Blackburn, Eric Schmitt, John Boozman, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Tommy Tuberville, Mike Rounds, Roger F. Wicker, Jim Justice, Markwayne Mullin, John Barrasso, Cindy Hyde-Smith, James Lankford.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask that the Senate execute the order of February 13 in relation to the Lutnick nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce.

## VOTE ON LUTNICK NOMINATION

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

Ms. SMITH. 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. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Ex.]

## YEAS—51

Banks	Fischer	Moody
Barrasso	Graham	Moreno
Blackburn	Grassley	Mullin
Boozman	Hagerty	Murkowski
Britt	Hawley	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sheehy
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Tillis
Curtis	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	McCormick	Young

## NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Duckworth	Hirono
Baldwin	Durbin	Kaine
Bennet	Fetterman	Kelly
Blumenthal	Gallago	Kim
Blunt Rochester	Gillibrand	King
Cantwell	Hassan	Klobuchar
Coons	Heinrich	Luján
Cortez Masto	Hickenlooper	Markey

Merkley  
Murphy  
Murray  
Ossoff  
Padilla  
Reed  
Rosen

Sanders  
Schatz  
Schiff  
Schumer  
Shaheen  
Slotkin  
Smith

Van Hollen  
Warner  
Warnock  
Warren  
Welch  
Whitehouse  
Wyden

## NOT VOTING—4

Booker	Peters
Moran	Sullivan

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Lutnick nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2034—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 13, S. Con Res. 7.

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

Mr. DURBIN. 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. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 58 Leg.]

## YEAS—50

Banks	Cruz	Justice
Barrasso	Curtis	Kennedy
Blackburn	Daines	Lankford
Boozman	Ernst	Lee
Britt	Fischer	Lummis
Budd	Graham	Marshall
Capito	Grassley	McConnell
Cassidy	Hagerty	McCormick
Collins	Hawley	Moody
Cornyn	Hoeven	Moreno
Cotton	Husted	Mullin
Cramer	Hyde-Smith	Murkowski
Crapo	Johnson	Ricketts