

Agency like USAID in the “wood chipper,” in his words. Does this sound like a thoughtful approach to making government more efficient or does this sound like a meat-ax approach from a man who has no business being there, an unelected individual who somehow has been given authority by this President to lop off tens of thousands of jobs day in day out?

Yes, we have gone to court. Many of the Agencies in the government—the employees and their representatives—have gone to court to question this ham-handed approach to making this government work, and they have been successful in the overwhelming percentage to receive temporary restraining orders and the like because on its face, serious questions are raised as to the authority of this President.

We have time-honored traditions when it comes to things like impoundment of Federal funds. The President cannot make that decision unilaterally. The power of the purse happens to be with the article I agency of the government, the legislature, not with the article II agency, the executive. As a consequence, when the President decides to do this unilaterally, he is being challenged in court, and he should be challenged in court.

This is not just a political issue, as one Senator just described; it is more importantly a constitutional issue and a legal issue, and it is going to be resolved ultimately by the court. Perhaps the President will win some of his cases and lose others. But this is a legitimate exercise of the authority in the Constitution.

I might add that this notion that we are going to start lopping off air traffic controllers and people who are responsible for aviation safety—I would just say to those who are for that and believe that is draining the swamp: Pay attention to what is happening across America. These terrible aviation disasters like the one that happened here in Washington, DC, should be taken seriously by us every day, and putting people in charge of these Departments who don't have adequate staff to monitor the flights of our Nation is active irresponsibility, as far as I am concerned.

The same thing is true with avian flu. Yes, the price of eggs is terrible. One of the reasons is avian flu is killing off the flocks of laying hens. As a consequence, we have fewer eggs and higher prices.

It is a very real concern because the avian flu is going to jump from these birds and fowl into the human chain, and we will face another pandemic. Do we want that? For God's sake, no. But the notion that we are going to lop off employees that are responsible for public health one after the other and somehow make this a safer nation is irresponsible on its face. Should it be challenged in court? Of course it should be, and I stand by that.

I just want to say to the Senator and others who make these comments: Think about what you are inviting

here, to give the President the authority this Congress has, the authority under the Constitution—to just give it away. Are we going to give away our responsibility under the Constitution because of the popularity of this President with some Members? I pray that we won't.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 710 are printed in today's RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON DRISCOLL NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Driscoll nomination?

Mr. MULLIN. 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 North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 90 Ex.]

YEAS—66

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Banks | Grassley | Moran |
| Barrasso | Hagerty | Moreno |
| Bennet | Hassan | Mullin |
| Blackburn | Hawley | Murkowski |
| Boozman | Heinrich | Paul |
| Britt | Hickenlooper | Peters |
| Budd | Hoeven | Reed |
| Capito | Husted | Ricketts |
| Cassidy | Hyde-Smith | Risch |
| Collins | Johnson | Rosen |
| Cornyn | Justice | Rounds |
| Cortez Masto | Kaine | Schmitt |
| Cotton | Kelly | Scott (FL) |
| Crapo | Kennedy | Scott (SC) |
| Curtis | Klobuchar | Shaheen |
| Daines | Lankford | Sheehy |
| Durbin | Lee | Sullivan |
| Ernst | Lummis | Thune |
| Fetterman | Marshall | Tillis |
| Fischer | McConnell | Warner |
| Gallego | McCormick | Wicker |
| Graham | Moody | Young |

NAYS—28

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|------------|
| Baldwin | Booker | Duckworth |
| Blumenthal | Cantwell | Gillibrand |
| Blunt Rochester | Coons | Hirono |

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|---------|---------|------------|
| Kim | Ossoff | Warnock |
| King | Padilla | Warren |
| Lujan | Schatz | Welch |
| Markey | Schiff | Whitehouse |
| Merkley | Schumer | Wyden |
| Murphy | Slotkin | |
| Murray | Smith | |

NOT VOTING—6

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| Alsobrooks | Cruz | Tuberville |
| Cramer | Sanders | Van Hollen |

The nomination was confirmed.

(Mr. CURTIS assumed the Chair.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. 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 action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator KENNEDY be recognized for up to 15 minutes and, upon the use or yielding back of time, then make a motion to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11.

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

The Senator from Louisiana.

TRIBUTE TO JESS ANDREWS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I rise today for two reasons. No. 1, I am losing one of my best colleagues—she is sitting right here next to me—Ms. Jess Andrews. Jess has run my communications shop for—I don't know how many years—5 years.

I try to hire really good people, and, certainly, Jess is one of them. She is a very moral person. She is whip-smart. But when you hire good people, you know you are going to lose them because good people, capable people, like Jess, are ambitious people, and they want to move on to new positions.

Jess is becoming deputy chief of staff to our new Senator from Ohio. I wish her well, and I just wanted to thank her publicly.

Jess Andrews is the real deal, and she has just done an extraordinary job for the people in Louisiana and for the American people, and I am so, so grateful.

I congratulate our new Senator from Ohio. He is getting a good one.

So thank you, Jess.

S.J. RES. 11

Mr. President, the second reason I rise is to talk about a regulation that I am trying to get rid of, but I want to begin with this observation.

Nearly 5 years ago, when he was running for President—I remember it like it was yesterday—President Biden said:

I guarantee you, we are going to end fossil fuels.

“I guarantee you,” he said, in front of God, country, and the American people. “I guarantee you,” he said, “we are going to end fossil fuels.”

And he tried. For 4 years, he tried.

Here is why I point that out.

The first well drilled in the Gulf of America—I know some people call it the Gulf of Mexico. I don't want to get off into that discussion. But the first

well drilled offshore in the Gulf of America was drilled 87 years ago, in 1938. Since then, we have drilled, I think, 6,000 wells. There are 6,000 platforms in the Gulf of Mexico.

Now, before an oil company drills a well, on its own volition and at the suggestion of the Department of the Interior, the oil company surveys the seabed. It just makes sense for safety reasons but also for the sake of history because we want to look for shipwrecks.

We have found—I don't know how many—shipwrecks. I had it written down: 4,000 shipwrecks. We have surveyed the entire Gulf of America in the 87 years since we started drilling there. We have surveyed 311,652 square nautical miles, the surface area of Texas and California put together. That is how we found 4,000 shipwrecks. And it has cost hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars. So we know what is there. We know what is there.

Well, in September of 2024, the Department of the Interior, in a midnight regulation, in an effort to try to further hurt fossil fuels, passed a new rule, and they said: Look, we know we have surveyed the entire gulf, and we know we have found 4,000 shipwrecks. And we know that the area that we surveyed is the size of California and Texas put together. But every time you drill a new well, we want you to survey again.

Well, why? I mean, what is the benefit? We know what the cost is. It costs anywhere from \$10,000 to \$1 million to resurvey again. It just makes no sense.

And a third of the production in the gulf is from independent oil companies. Maybe the majors can support this, but if an independent oil company has to survey what has already been surveyed, it can add, as I said, \$10,000 to \$1 million to a well cost.

What is the point? I can tell you what the point is. Somebody over at BOEM, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Department of the Interior, hates fossil fuels—somebody or somebodies.

Now, I am not saying that the person who came up with this rule is the dumbest guy in the world, but that person better hope that the dumbest guy in the world doesn't die because this is just bone-deep, down-to-the-marrow dumb. This is the kind of “spending porn” that we all ought to abhor.

So I am going to try to kill the regulation today under what, as the Presiding Officer knows, is called the Congressional Review Act, and we will be voting on that shortly.

I realize that common sense, as I have said before, is illegal in Washington. This is not a normal place. But I hope folks who still have common sense will vote to get rid of this foolish rule.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO “PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES”—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to “Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources”.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 91 Leg.]

YEAS—54

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

NAYS—42

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Baldwin | Hirono | Reed |
| Bennet | Kaine | Sanders |
| Blumenthal | Kelly | Schatz |
| Blunt Rochester | Kim | Schiff |
| Booker | King | Schumer |
| Cantwell | Klobuchar | Shaheen |
| Coons | Lujan | Slotkin |
| Duckworth | Markey | Smith |
| Durbin | Merkley | Warner |
| Fetterman | Murphy | Warnock |
| Gallego | Murray | Warren |
| Gillibrand | Ossoff | Welch |
| Hassan | Padilla | Whitehouse |
| Heinrich | Peters | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—4

| | |
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| Alsobrooks | Tuberville |
| Cramer | Van Hollen |

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO “PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 11) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to “Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources”.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of 5 USC 802, there will now be up to 10 hours of debate equally divided.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:02 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO “PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES”—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

CHINA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it has been a little over a month since President Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States. One of his key promises on the campaign trail—and, really, throughout his service in the White House—has been to confront the threat of the Chinese Communist Party and to hold China accountable for failing to play by the rules. The American people voted resoundingly for that agenda this past November, delivering both the electoral vote and the popular vote to President Trump, as well as Republican majorities in both the House and the Senate. Now, the task at hand is to actually begin to implement those promises to hold China to account.

Xi Jinping has made clear his plans to “reincorporate” Taiwan in 2027, just 2 years away. We don't know exactly what that entails, but the threat is ominous.