

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the conference report?

Hearing none, the question occurs on agreeing to the conference report.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 75, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 22 Leg.]

YEAS—75

Ayotte	Ernst	Moran
Baldwin	Feinstein	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Murphy
Bennet	Flake	Murray
Blumenthal	Gardner	Nelson
Blunt	Grassley	Paul
Booker	Hatch	Perdue
Boozman	Heitkamp	Peters
Burr	Heller	Portman
Cantwell	Hoeven	Risch
Capito	Inhofe	Roberts
Cardin	Isakson	Sasse
Carper	Johnson	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Cassidy	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Lee	Tillis
Cornyn	Manchin	Toomey
Cotton	McCain	Vitter
Crapo	McCaskey	Warner
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Donnelly	Merkley	Wyden

NAYS—20

Alexander	Heinrich	Rounds
Boxer	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Markey	Schumer
Durbin	Menendez	Udall
Enzi	Mikulski	Warren
Franken	Reed	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Reid	

NOT VOTING—5

Cruz	Rubio	Sullivan
Graham	Sanders	

The conference report was agreed to.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, February 11—that is today—at 1:30

p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 361; that there be 15 minutes for debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that, if confirmed, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

(The remarks of Mr. LEAHY and Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2544 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

CONGRATULATING THE DENVER BRONCOS ON THEIR SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, after the very weighty and serious discussion that just preceded me, I come maybe with a little bit more lighthearted message for the Presiding Officer and my colleague, the senior Senator from Colorado, Mr. BENNET.

I think everybody knows here—the folks up in the gallery may know—that Denver is home of the Super Bowl 50 winners, the Denver Broncos. The Presiding Officer and I attended the Super Bowl on Sunday, and I am sure he agrees it was quite a treat.

God blessed us with beautiful weather, and the people of Santa Clara really made us feel welcome and at home. They did an amazing job. The Super Bowl organizers are to be commended for their attention to detail and the superb work they did to make us feel welcome. It was a fantastic experience for me. So I can only imagine, with the Presiding Officer having the winning team, how much fun it was for him.

I think it is safe to say that there are thousands in Colorado on a Rocky Mountain high this week, and I will bet there are even more who are really happy that the Broncos won the Super Bowl.

The Denver Broncos played a great game, and they defeated my Carolina Panthers. Both defenses played extraordinarily well, and the Broncos' offense did just enough to get the job done.

So to the Presiding Officer and Senator BENNET, I come to the Senate Chamber today to fulfill my wager to humbly offer my congratulations to the Super Bowl champion, the Denver

Broncos, and to all their fans in your great State and, I would argue, across the Nation.

But before I talk about the beloved Panthers, I want to thank you for not accepting some of my maybe exuberant or overexuberant offers that I made as a possible friendly wager. And for C-SPAN viewers at home, you may want to avert your eyes.

I really don't think I would have looked very good in an orange beard with Broncos earrings. With all due respect to the Presiding Officer, you looked a lot like Papa Smurf with a blue beard. So a simple speech of congratulations is what I have to offer.

The truth is, I am deeply disappointed about the Panthers' loss. But it is also true that, unless the Broncos are playing my Panthers or my childhood team, the Miami Dolphins, I am usually pulling for the Broncos. The Broncos' organization, starting with the Bowlen family and Coach Kubiak, are topnotch and well respected in the NFL. Former greats such as John Elway, Terrell Davis, Shannon Sharpe, Ed—how could he wear so few pads and still survive—McCaffrey, and so many other members have made this team so much fun to watch over the years.

But then there is this guy, Peyton Manning, or "The Sheriff," as Coach Gruden nicknamed him back in 2009. I have been watching Peyton Manning since he was recruited to the University of Tennessee many years ago—a five-time NFL MVP and two-time Super Bowl winner on two different franchises. Next month, on March 24, he is going to be 40 years old, and he is playing at the top of his game. Peyton is an amazing athlete, but what really makes Peyton extraordinary is his character and his behavior on and off the field. He is a true gentleman, a great sport, and he is a scholar of the game.

I opted not to put up a graphic on the New England Patriots because anybody who knows me knows that I am not much of a fan of the New England Patriots, dating back to a December 1982 snowplow game.

But, in addition to all the other things Peyton Manning has done, he also led the Broncos to a victory over the Patriots in the AFC Championship, completely deflating Tom Brady's shot at another Super Bowl ring. That alone makes Peyton Manning a great American, in my book.

The Broncos and I do have something in common. We were both born in 1960. We are both 56 years old. They built a franchise that most fans expect to be in contention every year.

The Panthers, on the other hand, are young. They were born in 1995. They are 20 years old. They have already gone to the playoffs seven times. They have won two NFC Championships and been in the big game twice, and I believe that next year they have a good shot to be in contention.

So before I close, I thank owner Jerry Richardson, Coach Ron Rivera, and the Carolina Panthers. Mr. Richardson is a pillar of our community, and Coach Rivera has developed a Super Bowl-caliber team: Cam Newton, the league MVP; Luke Kuechly, our defensive standout; a total of 10 Pro Bowlers this year; and a 17-to-2 season. It was fun to watch. The Super Bowl was fun to watch.

You know, I did grow a playoff beard. After we ended the playoff season, I proudly displayed it for weeks on the Senate floor, back in North Carolina, and at Levi Stadium on Super Bowl night.

But on Monday morning I got misty-eyed as I shaved it off in San Francisco. So with all apologies to Tony Bennett, I penned a poem based on one of his songs about that same city. I called it "I left my hair in San Francisco."

I left my hair in San Francisco
After the game, it haunted me
I'm cleanly shaven, quite sad and bare
While Broncos fans dance like Fred Astaire
The loveliness of Santa Clara seems somehow sad today
The glory of my Panthers' season is of another day
But I'm looking forward to next year's season
Because I expect a Super Bowl repeat for many good reasons

To Senator BENNET and to the Presiding Officer, congratulations on a great Super Bowl win for the Denver Broncos, and I look forward to many more games that our two teams may play in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I have a longer set of remarks that I want to give next week celebrating the Broncos' victory, and I know our colleague from Wyoming is here.

But since the Presiding Officer is shackled to the desk and can't make remarks, I would say on his behalf how grateful the two of us are to the Senator from North Carolina for the graciousness of his remarks. I know how hard it must have been.

But to have the Senator not only make the remarks but provide original poetry at the end, is more than anybody could have expected. So through the Chair I thank the Senator for that.

I also want to say how proud we are of the Broncos and the Broncos organization, the Bowlen family, and the entire team for what they were able to pull off. I was able to watch it in my living room with my wife and daughters.

I congratulate, in particular, Von Miller, who is the MVP, and our defense, who played a game like no other defense I have ever seen.

Finally, I would simply say thank you to Peyton Manning for the example he has set for my children and for children all over our State—that what matters is not how good you are or how

skilled you are or how you act in the minute, but what matters is the patient decades of hard work a person is willing to put in to perfect their craft. That is what Peyton Manning has demonstrated. That is what he has shown. That is the value he has lived. I think he has made a huge difference, as I say, to the next generation of Coloradans.

We learned last week, as well, that this game, just like any game, is not about any one individual; it is about a team. We saw a team—the weaknesses and strengths—come together and win a game over a very, very tough organization in the Carolina Panthers.

(Mr. BARRASSO assumed the Chair.)

With that, I see my colleague from Colorado is now on the floor.

I yield the floor by saying: Go Broncos.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Wyoming for providing relief and the Presiding Officer for allowing me to make remarks.

I thank my freshman colleague from the great State of North Carolina for those kind words. I can only imagine if the Senator from Colorado, Mr. BENNET, and I had to give the same remarks had the outcome been different, that we could only be so gracious. So thank you very much for the congratulations to the Denver Broncos and, obviously, the Carolina Panthers. It was an exciting game that they were able to be a part of, and there will be many more years of success to both franchises, undoubtedly.

For those of you in Colorado who were able to watch the game, what an exciting time it was. We can remember the great teams led by John Elway—whether they played the Packers or the Falcons for the two Super Bowl victories—and now this exciting victory at Santa Clara as well. Also, a million people showed up in downtown Denver, CO, just a few short days ago to express their outpouring of support for the Denver Broncos. This has truly been an exciting time for the people of Colorado.

I am very pleased that Senator BENNET and I didn't have to grow a beard. Thank you, Senator TILLIS, from the great State of North Carolina.

I yield the floor.

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, on Tuesday, President Obama released his budget for the next fiscal year. As usual, there was a lot of new spending the American people don't want and a lot of new taxes the American people can't afford.

It is interesting. Politico had a headline about the budget in Tuesday's paper. It says "Obama launches liberal offensive in his final budget." A liberal offensive in his final budget. It called the budget "aggressively liberal."

Well, one of the big, "aggressively liberal" things the President put in his budget is an enormous tax increase on gasoline. This tax would add over \$10 to the price of a barrel of oil. That equates to about 24 cents to a gallon of gasoline at the pump. This increase in tax would raise about \$319 billion over 10 years.

President Obama knows his budget has zero chance of becoming law, not just because Republicans won't vote for it; Democrats won't vote for it. Last year his budget was defeated by a vote of 98 to 1. Only one Member of his own party voted for his budget last year, and now Democrats in Congress are running away from this gas tax as fast as they can.

The problem is, this tax is about more than just the budget; this is a sign that the Obama administration is still committed to continuing its assault on energy production in this country—red, white, and blue energy.

The American people understand there are enormous national security implications to what the President is proposing in his budget. Right now there is fierce competition in the global energy markets. The OPEC cartel has a strategy to win that competition in the oil market. It has been pumping out oil at a pace that is intended to drive U.S. shale oil producers out of business. Then once the competition is gone, they will raise prices.

The best way for us to protect American interests is to make it easier and cheaper for energy producers to operate here in America. The worst thing we could do is to add to the cost of American oil by imposing this new tax of \$10 per barrel, 24 cents per gallon, but that is exactly what President Obama wants to do. He wants to raise taxes, and he wants to make it harder to produce American energy. President Obama's plan would actually help OPEC get what it wants. It would also put American energy producers at a competitive disadvantage with our adversaries in Iran and in Russia.

Just a few weeks ago, the Obama administration lifted economic sanctions on Iran's energy exports. This means that Iran can now export oil again. So how much oil are they going to export? According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Iran right now has between 30 and 50 million barrels of oil sitting offshore in tankers today. Iran is planning to boost its oil exports to Europe and Asia by half a million barrels a day in the next few months. And it is not just oil; Iran is also the world's second largest producer of natural gas in terms of its resources. Right now, they are building a new export plant for liquefied natural gas that is about 40 percent complete, and they are ready to start shipping natural gas to Europe within 2 years.

Russia is also a huge exporter of natural gas. That is one of the reasons Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine. It was to get control of the gas pipelines there. Now it appears that Gazprom is