

## 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 Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Deb Fischer, Steve Daines, Luther Strange, Bob Corker, Thom Tillis, Tom Cotton, Tim Scott, Johnny Isakson, Richard C. Shelby, Michael B. Enzi, Richard Burr, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Roy Blunt, Todd Young.

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 Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 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. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 59, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 155 Ex.]

## YEAS—59

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Nelson
Blunt	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Perdue
Burr	Hatch	Portman
Capito	Heitkamp	Risch
Carper	Heller	Roberts
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rounds
Cochran	Inhofe	Rubio
Collins	Isakson	Sasse
Corker	Johnson	Scott
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	King	Strange
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Donnelly	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McCaskill	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fischer	Moran	

## NAYS—36

Baldwin	Feinstein	Merkley
Bennet	Franken	Murphy
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Murray
Booker	Harris	Peters
Brown	Hassan	Reed
Cantwell	Heinrich	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Casey	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Leahy	
Cortez Masto	Markey	
Duckworth	Menendez	

Stabenow	Van Hollen	Whitehouse
Tester	Warren	Wyden

## NOT VOTING—5

Durbin	Sanders	Warner
Hirono	Udall	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 59, the nays are 36.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Alaska.

## TRIBUTE TO SOLOMON "SOL" ATKINSON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, every week I have been coming down to the floor of the Senate to talk about a special Alaskan, someone in my State who, through their hard work and community service, whether to their neighbors or to their country, makes Alaska a better place for all of us. We call these people the Alaskans of the Week. Learning about these individuals and sharing their stories with my Senate colleagues, Alaskans, and Americans who watch what we do here or who are in the gallery, is probably one of the best parts of my week every week.

Like most of my colleagues, I will soon be going home for the Fourth of July. We will celebrate this very special holiday with our families and our communities. Some of us will go to barbecues or march in parades or attend other community gatherings. Some of us will gather in spots across our State and watch fireworks. Personally, I will be with my family catching king salmon at my family's ancestral fish camp up on the Yukon River, one of my favorite places in the entire world.

Regardless of where we are, all of us will certainly feel a swell of pride for our country. We will remember the hard-fought battles that brought us independence, and we will remember those who have served and sacrificed to keep our country the land of the free and the home of the brave. They are the heroes among us, and Alaska is chock-full of these heroes.

Today I want to recognize one of them, a very special hero who is our Alaskan of the Week—Solomon Atkinson, who spent nearly his entire adult life serving our country with honor and dignity and now serves his community in Alaska tirelessly.

Let me tell you a little bit about Sol and his illustrious career in the military. Sol was born in 1930 to Harris and Elizabeth Atkinson in Metlakatla, AK.

Metlakatla is on Annette Island on the Inside Passage, where so many Americans take cruises to see the glaciers and the whales. It is home to the only federally recognized Indian reservation in our State.

Sol could have continued to live in Metlakatla, where he was a commercial fisherman as a young man, but, like so many patriotic Alaskans, he chose to leave his home and join the military. Sol joined the U.S. Navy, and for 22 years—from 1951 to 1973—he had by anybody's standards a remarkable patriotic military career.

In 1953, Sol volunteered for the Navy's legendary Underwater Demolition Team and was deployed to the Pa-

cific, including Korea. Some history buffs will know and recall that the Underwater Demolition Team, the UDT, was the precursor to the present-day Navy SEALs—frogmen, as they liked to call themselves. In fact, Sol was on the very first Navy SEAL team created by President Kennedy in 1962, and I have a copy of the SEAL Team One plank owners certificate, commissioned on January 1, 1962, with Sol's name proudly displayed.

So Sol became a Navy SEAL—the first Navy SEAL, literally. He became a SEAL team training instructor, training new Navy SEAL recruits. He was affectionately referred to as "the Mean Machine" by the Navy SEALs. He also had the honor of training 48 astronauts, including Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Jim Lovell, just to name a few, in underwater weightlessness simulations. His prized possession is a framed plaque bearing the signature of all those astronauts, all those American heroes whom he trained.

Sol completed three combat tours in Vietnam. By the time he retired from the military, he had earned numerous awards and medals for personal valor, including the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. But what is truly remarkable about Sol is that after he retired from the Navy, he moved back home to Metlakatla and continued to serve his country and serve his community. He served on the Indian Community Council, on the school board, and as mayor of Metlakatla. He has also been very involved in veterans affairs and was the president of the first veterans organization on the island and was instrumental in starting that organization. He has spent years reaching out to his fellow veterans to make sure they receive the benefits, honor, and dignity they earned.

Jeff Moran, the superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Metlakatla, said this about Sol:

I could go on and on regarding the wonderful things that Sol has done for his community. We would not be here today without his leadership and knowledge [and commitment].

I, too, can go on about Sol. Many Alaskans can go on about Sol and all the things he has done. But I also want to mention, particularly on the eve of the Fourth of July, that he is part of a long tradition in my State of Alaskan Natives who have served in the military, who have served our country even during darker times in our history when many Alaskan Natives were discriminated against and denied basic rights.

On the eve of the Fourth of July, we celebrate America's independence but also in particular those who have fought for that independence over the last 200 years. As I mentioned, one proud element of my great State is that we have more veterans per capita than any State in the country, and Alaska Native veterans serve at higher rates in the U.S. military than any

other ethnic group in the country—something I like to refer to as a special kind of patriotism because they have been doing this for decades, like Sol—even at times, as I mentioned, when the country hasn't always treated that group of patriotic Americans with the respect and dignity they deserve. Sol personifies this special patriotism.

The SEALs who served with him wrote this about him in a tribute:

Sol's story will continue to be told by the men he trained, by the officers who relied on him, by the Frogmen who all respect him. An officer, a gentleman, an athlete, a friend, Sol Atkinson is all of these, but of all of these traits, he is first a Frogman.

We can see the pride the Navy SEALs have for Sol, a plank owner for the entire organization.

In conclusion, I will add that he is a patriotic Alaskan through and through, and I thank him for all he has done for Alaska, for our veterans, and for America.

Sol, congratulations on being our Alaskan of the Week. Happy Fourth of July to you, to Alaska, and to all the men and women in our military and the citizens of our great Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, from all indications, our Republican friends continue to negotiate amongst themselves, behind closed doors, to revive the healthcare bill they had to pull from the floor on Tuesday.

I would suggest to my friends on the other side that there is no tweak or change or modification that will fix what is wrong with this Republican healthcare bill. The core of the bill is the problem. The American people are opposed to tax cuts for the wealthy and the reduction of the social safety net of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

The Republican TrumpCare bill is built on a crumbling, decrepit foundation, and that is because it is based on the premise that special interests and a very small number of wealthy Americans deserve a tax break while millions of Americans—middle class families, older Americans in nursing homes, folks with a preexisting condition—ought to receive less healthcare at a higher cost.

That idea is so backward, so out of step with what America wants and what actually works, it can never succeed, no matter how it is tweaked.

The one thing my Republican friends are latching on to—that their bill will

bring down average premiums several years down the line—is really a bait and switch. The bait is lower premiums, but the switch is higher deductibles and copays so that, in the end, the average American pays more than they would have otherwise. They are luring people in with a lower premium, but then they have to pay such a high percentage of their medical costs, the insurance policy is virtually worthless.

The Republican TrumpCare bill tells insurers they can offer much less generous healthcare plans than under the current system, even allowing States to opt out of covering essential benefits like treatment for opioids, mental health coverage, prescription drug coverage, and maternity care.

The result of these changes is that insurers may charge smaller premiums on some plans, but they will cover way less and, in fact, the deductibles and copays will go up—way up—in order to make the difference. So this isn't: Oh, you are not paying for some esoteric item; your insurance policy will pay for virtually nothing at the beginning if you have a high deductible.

The CBO report estimates that for an average 40-year-old with an income of \$26,500 a year, looking at insurance on the marketplace, deductibles would increase by thousands. If that 40-year-old decided on a "bronze" plan, for instance, their deductible would be \$6,000 a year, the CBO estimates. That is \$5,200 more than under current law. So we know what that means: They have to pay the first \$6,000 of healthcare, no matter what your insurance policy is. What good is that? Not much. Good for the insurance industry, maybe; not good for the average citizen. Some of my colleagues on the other side are claiming they want lower premiums, but if those lower premiums come with higher deductibles and higher copays, nobody benefits. It is a bait and switch.

What the Republican bill gives with one hand in this area, it more than takes away with the other because the lower premiums are made up for by higher deductibles and copays, so the average person pays more, not less, even when their premium goes down.

Who in America believes that folks should have higher out-of-pocket costs than before? Who in America believes that folks making over \$1 million a year—God bless them; they are doing well—deserve another \$57,000 tax break? Who in America believes that we should be making it harder to afford nursing home care or maternity care or opioid abuse treatment? Who in America believes a child born with a preexisting condition should hit their lifetime insurance limit before they even leave the hospital for the first time? Who believes in that in this America?

It turns out, almost no one. A poll yesterday showed that only 12 percent of Americans support the Republican bill. No amendment or compromise or tweak or adjustment in formula can solve that.

So I repeat the offer I made to President Trump and my Republican friends yesterday: Let's start over. Drop this fundamentally flawed approach—abandon cuts to Medicaid, abandon tax breaks for the wealthy—and we can discuss the problems that Americans are actually concerned about: the cost, quality, and availability of healthcare.

I suggested that President Trump invite all Senators to Blair House to begin anew on a bipartisan approach to healthcare. Unfortunately, the President said I wasn't serious. Mr. President: Try me. The minute you make the invitation, we will take it in a very serious way. It is not that audacious of an idea. President Obama did the same thing early in his Presidency to discuss healthcare with Members of both parties in front of the American people. Our only condition: Drop the wrong-headed idea of slashing Medicaid to give tax breaks to the wealthy. It is perfectly reasonable, and a vast majority of Americans agree with us.

Nonpartisan institutions like the American Medical Association, the National Association of Medicaid Directors, AARP, and America's largest nursing home groups are all against the Republican approach. The Congressional Budget Office and other expert analyses say that it will not actually fix the problems in our healthcare system—high deductibles, high premiums, counties with too few insurance options—and the American people are as roundly against it as any piece of major legislation I have ever seen.

So I don't believe it is unserious to ask my Republican friends to drop this particular bill and talk to us about actually fixing the problems in our healthcare system.

I don't believe it is unserious to say to President Trump: You campaigned on bringing costs down and providing care for everyone. You campaigned on not cutting Medicaid and controlling the outrageous costs of prescription drugs. These are all your words in the campaign. Well, we Democrats agree with all of that. So let's talk about it.

Fundamentally, I don't believe that seeking a bipartisan solution on the great issues of our time should ever be considered unserious.

President Trump, you have complained about a lack of bipartisanship—unfairly, in our opinion. We are offering a way to implement bipartisanship, and right now it is you, not we, who are stopping it.

I hope my Republican friends, President Trump, and the majority leader think long and hard before dismissing our offer out of hand. I challenge them again: Invite all of us to Blair House the first day we get back from recess. If you think we are not serious, try us. Democrats are ready to turn the page on healthcare. When will my Republican friends realize it is time for them to do the same?

#### RUSSIA SANCTIONS

Finally, Mr. President, as to Russia sanctions, on June 15, nearly 2 weeks