

is fair. He is persistent, but he is respectful. He is a likeable guy, a principled colleague, and an honest partner. And while we are really going to miss him, we also couldn't be prouder of him.

So let us thank Senator SESSIONS for his many years of service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

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

Mr. CORNYN. 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. SESSIONS (when his name was called). Present.

The yeas was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—47

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Nelson |
| Bennet | Harris | Peters |
| Blumenthal | Hassan | Reed |
| Booker | Heinrich | Sanders |
| Brown | Heitkamp | Schatz |
| Cantwell | Hirono | Schumer |
| Cardin | Kaine | Shaheen |
| Carper | King | Stabenow |
| Casey | Klobuchar | Tester |
| Coons | Leahy | Udall |
| Cortez Masto | Markey | Van Hollen |
| Donnelly | McCaskill | Warner |
| Duckworth | Menendez | Warren |
| Durbin | Merkley | Whitehouse |
| Feinstein | Murphy | Wyden |
| Franken | Murray | |

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Sessions

The nomination was confirmed.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote on the nomination.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I move to table the motion to reconsider.

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

The motion was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The bill 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 Thomas Price, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, Johnny Isakson, Tom Cotton, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Lamar Alexander, John Barrasso, Orrin G. Hatch, Jeff Flake, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, John Thune, Richard Burr.

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 THOMAS PRICE, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services 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. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: The Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 60 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—48

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Murray |
| Bennet | Harris | Nelson |
| Blumenthal | Hassan | Peters |
| Booker | Heinrich | Reed |
| Brown | Heitkamp | Sanders |
| Cantwell | Hirono | Schatz |
| Cardin | Kaine | Schumer |
| Carper | King | Shaheen |
| Casey | Klobuchar | Stabenow |
| Coons | Leahy | Tester |
| Cortez Masto | Manchin | Udall |
| Donnelly | Markey | Van Hollen |
| Duckworth | McCaskill | Warner |
| Durbin | Menendez | Warren |
| Feinstein | Merkley | Whitehouse |
| Franken | Murphy | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—1

Sessions

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 48.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Alabama.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues in the Senate. Serving in this body for 20 years has been one of the great honors of my life. I remember coming up when I was running for the Senate and going to the Republican luncheon. They said: Well, you have a few minutes. You can say something, but don't talk very long because people don't want to hear a lot from you, frankly.

So I told them that I could think of no greater honor than to represent the people of Alabama in the greatest deliberative body in the history of the world. That is what I feel about this body. I want to say, I appreciate the full debate we have had. I want to thank those who, after it all, found sufficient confidence in me to cast their vote to confirm me as the next Attorney General of the United States of America.

I have to tell you, I fully understand the august responsibilities of that office. I served as United States attorney for 12 years and assistant United States attorney for a little over 2 years. During that time, the very idea of those great leaders in Washington leading those departments I served under make it almost impossible for me to conceive, I am that person and will have that opportunity and that responsibility.

So I understand the seriousness of it. I have an interest in law enforcement. I have an interest in the rule of law. So I want to thank those of you who supported me and had confidence in me. I want to thank President Donald Trump. He believes in the rule of law. He believes in protecting the American people from crime and violence. He believes in a lawful system of immigration that serves the national interest, within bounds, and those are things that may from time to time come before the Office of Attorney General.

I look forward to lawfully and properly advancing those items and others that we as a body support, and the American people believe in.

The Attorney General—this is a law enforcement office first and foremost. People expect the Department defend us, defend us from terrorists, defend us from criminals, defend the country from fraudsters who raid the U.S. Treasury time and time again and too often are not being caught or held to account for it.

I believe that is a big responsibility of the U.S. Attorney General and the whole Department of Justice. As a former Federal prosecutor, I worked regularly, nights, weekends, and became personal friends with fabulous Federal investigative agents. They give their lives, place their lives on the line

for us to promote public safety, to try to do the right thing for America.

Sometimes people think of them in terms of taking away our freedoms. That is not so. They are out there every day putting their lives on the line to advance our freedoms, to protect our liberties, to protect public safety, to stop terrorism that threatens our government.

So I feel strongly about that. I had the honor to lead some of the finest assistant United States attorneys in America. Our goal—well, before I became an assistant, I was told that Mobile had the best U.S. attorney's office in America.

So when I came back as U.S. attorney some 6 years later, I told them that was our goal. We were going to have the best United States attorney's office in America. What a great time we had. We had wonderful people. They worked nights and weekends to prepare their cases. We went before great Federal judges. It was a glorious time. It was really a special time.

I will never ever forget that. I was before the Judiciary committee in 1986, and Senator Kennedy—later my friend—spoke harshly about me. It was on the TV. They would show his statement. He said I should resign my office. So a few minutes later I had a chance to say something. I said: Senator Kennedy, what you said breaks my heart. Nothing I have ever done have I been more proud of than serving as United States Attorney. I still believe that. Nothing I have ever done am I more proud of than the work we did in that little office in Mobile, AL, representing the United States of America.

You go into court, you stand before the judge, and you say: The United States is ready. I represent the United States of America in a litigation. So this is a big deal. So I would say to you, friends and colleagues, that this is a special honor. I feel it in my bones. I hope and pray I can be worthy of the trust you have given me. I will do my best to do that.

Let me comment a minute on the heated debate we have had here in the Senate on my nomination and others. It was an intense election. There is no doubt about that. There have been strong feelings expressed during the election and throughout this confirmation process. Sometimes we have philosophical disagreements, just sincere disagreements about policy, what is right and what is wrong, what the law says, what it does not say.

I believe words ought to be given their fair and plain meaning. Words are not tools that can be manipulated to make it say what you want it to say. I believe words have objective meanings. So sometimes we have differences about that, but that is what elections are about. I have always liked the debate. I have always enjoyed participating in this great body, where we are free to speak and be able to advocate for the values that we have.

But I don't think we have such a classical disagreement that we can't

get together. I have always tried to keep my disagreements from being personal. I have always tried to be courteous to my colleagues. Still, tension is built in the system. It is there. The plain fact is that our Nation does have room for Republicans and Democrats. That is what freedom is all about. I am fairly firm, I have to say, in my convictions, but that does not mean that all of us have to agree on the same thing.

We need latitude in our relationships. So let's agree on what we can agree on, and I suggest that to my colleagues as I leave here, and take action where we can agree on things, but denigrating people whom you disagree with I think is not a healthy trend for our body.

After I had been here for a number of years, I had gotten along pretty well with Senator Kennedy on the Judiciary Committee. He asked me to be the lead sponsor with him on the significant, pretty controversial bill to eliminate prison rape. There were a number of honorable people who opposed it, some friends of mine. He said: I want to do this with you. People asked me: Did you ever have a reconciliation? Did he apologize?

He said: I want to do this bill with you. And I knew what that meant. I appreciated that. I said: I want to do this bill with you. And so we were able to pass that bill together. It was a moment of reconciliation that meant a lot to me. I think he appreciated it too. We later got involved in another major piece of legislation, just the two of us, that would have established a portable savings plan for young workers like the Federal thrift plan.

About that time, the financial crisis hit, and then he became ill and it never came to fruition. But reconciliation is important. We ought to do that in this body. We ought to try to fight for our values and not give an inch. You don't have to back down if you believe you are right, and you should not back down.

But there are ways that we can get along personally. I would say that would be my prayer for this body; that in the future maybe the intensity of the last few weeks would die down and maybe somehow we would get along better.

So, colleagues, I can't express how appreciative I am for those of you who stood by me during this difficult time. I could start calling all their names, but it would not be appropriate. I want to say again, I appreciate the President and his confidence in me, and by your vote tonight, I have been given a real challenge. I will do my best to be worthy of it. I look forward to working with each of you during that time and maybe make sure that we have a good open door at the Department of Justice.

My wife has picked up pretty quickly that we have a chef, and we can actually invite people for lunch or breakfast there. Maybe we can do that.

Finally, let me thank my family because without their support, I could

not be here. It is great. My children have been so engaged in this. They were young when my 1986 adventure occurred. Now they are grown. Your support and affirmation have meant much to me.

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I present to the body my letter of resignation, which I ask unanimous consent be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, February 8, 2017.

The Hon. ROBERT BENTLEY,
Governor of the State of Alabama,
Montgomery, AL.

DEAR GOVERNOR BENTLEY: I hereby give notice that I will retire from the Office of United States Senator for the State of Alabama. Therefore, I tender my resignation at 11:55 pm Eastern Standard Time on February 8, 2017.

Very truly yours,

JEFF SESSIONS,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you all.
(Applause, Senators rising.)

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of THOMAS PRICE, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Texas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. 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.

REFUGEE FAMILIES IN VERMONT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, since 1989, Vermont has accepted more than 8,000 refugees from around the world. Most recently, two families from war-torn Syria were placed in Rutland.

Vermonters understand the meaning of community, of supporting one another through tough times and celebrating together in seasons of joy. Over the last three decades, the meaning of community has expanded to include numerous nationalities as Vermonters have welcomed new neighbors from countries including Somalia, Sudan, and Bhutan, among others. Over the last 25 years, Vermont's growing diversity has infused vitality and a diversity of culture into our rural State as locals open their arms—and their hearts—to new cultures and ways of life. New Vermonters hail from the world over