

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

*To be rear admiral (lower half)*

Capt. David A. Welch

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

*To be vice admiral*

Rear Adm. Scott A. Stearney

#### NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

##### IN THE AIR FORCE

PN1684 AIR FORCE nomination of Arthur W. Primas, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1685 AIR FORCE nomination of Gregory J. Payne, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1686 AIR FORCE nomination of Michael J. Patterson, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1687 AIR FORCE nomination of Brad R. Matherne, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1688 AIR FORCE nomination of Jonathan A. Morris, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

##### IN THE ARMY

PN1563 ARMY nominations (533) beginning RACHEL L. ADAIR, and ending D014124, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 5, 2018.

PN1564 ARMY nominations (35) beginning ROSE ABIDO, and ending JOSEPH P. WZOREK, II, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 5, 2018.

PN1575 ARMY nominations (2) beginning JOHN P. KILBRIDE, and ending JOHN J. NEAL, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 5, 2018.

PN1581 ARMY nominations (530) beginning GREGORY J. ABIDE, and ending G010452, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 5, 2018.

PN1582 ARMY nominations (993) beginning STEVEN ABADIA, and ending G010479, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 5, 2018.

PN1629 ARMY nomination of Steven M. Hemmann, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 13, 2018.

PN1691 ARMY nominations (35) beginning HAYLEY R. ASHBAUGH, and ending JORDAN N. YOLLES, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1692 ARMY nominations (62) beginning JEFFREY A. ANDERSON, and ending D012878, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1693 ARMY nominations (169) beginning AHMAD B. ALEXANDER, and ending STEVEN D. ZUMBRUN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1694 ARMY nominations (137) beginning ASHLEY K. AITON, and ending TRACY L. ZINN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1695 ARMY nomination of Wilson R. Ramos, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1696 ARMY nomination of Curtis D. Bowe, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1697 ARMY nomination of Carl E. Foster, III, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1698 ARMY nomination of Michael A. Fowles, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1699 ARMY nomination of Andrew K. Sinden, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1700 ARMY nominations (2) beginning D013264, and ending D013298, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1701 ARMY nomination of Christopher F. Ruder, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 6, 2018.

PN1736 ARMY nominations (2) beginning JOHN J. MORRIS, and ending MIN S. RO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 12, 2018.

PN1737 ARMY nominations (2) beginning CHRISTOPHER M. BELL, and ending ADRIANA B. DEJULIO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 12, 2018.

PN1738 ARMY nomination of Mikal L. Stoner, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 12, 2018.

##### IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN1432 MARINE CORPS nominations (7) beginning ERIC G. BURNS, and ending DAVID P. SHEEHAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2018.

PN1491 MARINE CORPS nominations (2) beginning THESOLINA D. HUBERT, and ending TIMOTHY W. WILLIAMS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 18, 2018.

PN1592 MARINE CORPS nominations (337) beginning BENJAMIN S. ADAMS, and ending CARL L. ZEPPEGNO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 5, 2018.

PN1611 MARINE CORPS nomination of Aaron J. King, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 8, 2018.

##### IN THE NAVY

PN1740 NAVY nomination of Jeffrey G. Benson, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 12, 2018.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

#### 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.

#### RECOGNIZING IRISH IMMIGRANTS AND IRISH-AMERICANS IN ILLINOIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this past Saturday was St. Patrick's Day. The city of Chicago celebrated, as it has every St. Patrick's Day since 1962, by dyeing the Chicago River a deep emerald green.

In the Windy City and in cities and towns throughout Illinois, across America, and around much of the world, people wore green and attended St. Patrick's Day parades and parties.

No nation—including Ireland herself—celebrates St. Patrick's Day with as much enthusiasm as Americans do. Whether your ancestors came to this country from Dublin or the Dominican Republic, from Galway or Greece, on March 17, as the saying goes, everyone is Irish.

But America didn't always love the Irish. From the middle of the 19th century and well into the 20th century, it was not uncommon for employment ads in America to carry the warning: "No Irish Need Apply." In 1857, Harpers Weekly asserted that "nearly 75 percent of our criminals and paupers are Irish . . . [and] 75 percent of the crimes of violence committed among us are the work of Irishmen."

Irish immigrants had been an integral part of America since our earliest days as a nation. Nine of the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence were Irish Americans. They included four men who were born in Ireland. And Irish Americans fought and died in the Revolutionary War to secure America's freedom from England.

The Irish who came to America beginning in the mid-1840s, however, were different than the earlier arrivals from Erin's shores. These were "the Famine Irish." They fled Ireland to escape one of the greatest catastrophes ever to befall that nation.

We know it today as "the potato famine." In Ireland, it was called "the Great Hunger" or, in Gaelic, the old Irish tongue, "An Gorta Mor."

In 1845, a fungus, carried to Ireland from America, destroyed all of Ireland's potato crops. All across Ireland, potato fields turned black and rotted from the blight.

Ireland was not an independent nation then, as it is now. It had been occupied and ruled for hundreds of years by England, and most of the land was owned by absentee English landlords.

The native Irish were mostly tenant farmers, what Americans would call "sharecroppers," allowed to farm only tiny plots of land. The calorie-rich potato became the subsistence crop for the Irish, the one crop they could grow on their small parcels of land that could feed a family.

When the potato crops failed, England refused to intervene. Some in England warned that providing emergency food relief to the starving Irish would disrupt with the workings of a free market. Others declared that famine



and death were God's way of punishing the Irish.

Starving Irish who could no longer pay their rent were driven off their land and into workhouses. Others died on the sides of roads, their mouths stained green from eating grass. Soon, typhus and cholera were claiming as many lives as starvation.

When the Great Hunger began, 3 million people lived in Ireland. Three years later, 1 million people had died, and another 1 million had fled Ireland, most of them to America. In the period between 1845 and 1860, approximately 20,000 Irish a month were flooding into America.

They called America "An t-Oilean Ur"—"The Fresh Land," but many of the old prejudices followed them. The Famine Irish, the first large group of non-Protestants immigrants to America, were derided as superstitious Papists incapable of adapting to America's Anglo-Saxon culture.

Irish Americans were denounced as "simian" or apelike.

An editorial published in the Chicago Tribune in 1855 captured the antipathy with which many native-born Americans regarded Irish immigrants. It asked, "Who does not know that the most depraved, debased, worthless and irredeemable drunkards and sots which curse the community are Irish Catholics?"

In the 1850s, a new political party emerged. The Native American Party, better known as the "Know Nothings," was virulently anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant.

Many politicians were cowed by the anger of the Know Nothings, but Abraham Lincoln was not. Lincoln employed Irish staff at his home in Springfield and, later, in the White House. He donated to Irish famine relief.

In a letter he wrote to a friend in 1855, he came out foursquare against Know Nothingness. "How can anyone who abhors the oppression of Negroes, be in favor or degrading classes of white people?" he asked. "Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid." As a nation, we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it 'all men are created equal, except Negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal, except Negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics.' When it comes to this," Lincoln continued, "I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy."

A decade later, Lincoln's brave refusal to embrace the bigotry of the Know Nothings helped save the Union. Although Irish Americans were mostly Democrats, they heeded the call of America's first Republican President to save the Union when slavery threatened to destroy it.

During the Civil War, more than 150,000 of the reviled Irish rallied to the

side of Lincoln and the Union. They included some of Lincoln's best generals.

Among them was Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher. A brilliant orator and the son of a wealthy Catholic family in Ireland, Meagher was a leader in a failed 1848 revolution in Ireland called the Young Ireland Rebellion. He was convicted of treason and sentenced to a life in exile in an Australian penal colony. Within 3 years, he had escaped to New York and became a prominent attorney.

Thomas Meagher's remarkable, improbable life is told in an excellent new biography, "The Immortal Irishman," by National Book Award winner Timothy Egan. I recommend it highly.

When the Civil War broke out, Tom Meagher wrote to President Lincoln seeking permission to form an ethnic Irish brigade. He recruited a full company of infantrymen to be attached to the U.S. 69th Infantry Regiment New York State Volunteers.

"The Fighting 69th" fought in some of the war's bloodiest conflicts, including the first battle of Bull Run and the battles of Antietam and Chancellorsville. After seeing Meagher's men at the Battle of Fredericksburg, General Robert E. Lee declared, "Never were men so brave."

The Fighting 69th was not the only Irish brigade fighting for the Union.

This year, Illinois is celebrating its 200th anniversary as a State. Among the countless chapters in our State's history in which we take pride is the story of the 23rd Regiment of the Illinois Infantry, Illinois' own "Irish Brigade."

The brigade's commander, James Mulligan, was born in New York and moved to Chicago as a boy. He became the first graduate of Chicago's first university, St. Mary's of the Lake. Later, he became a lawyer and a friend and confidant of Stephen Douglas.

When the Civil War broke out, Mulligan placed an ad in the Chicago Tribune on April 20, 1861, calling for a rally that evening. Thirty-two men enlisted at the rally; 3 days later, 1,000 men had joined the regiment.

Mulligan's Irish brigade spent most of the war in Virginia. They participated in Siege of Petersburg, and they were present for Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

James Mulligan did not live to see the Union victory. He was wounded on September 19, 1864, at the third battle on Winchester. As his Irish soldiers rushed to his side, Mulligan saw that the colors of the 23rd Illinois were about to be captured, and he gave his men an order, "Lay me down, and save the flag."

The colors were saved; Mulligan was captured and died of his wounds in Confederate captivity.

Private Albert Cashier was an Irish immigrant who fought for 3 years with the 95th Illinois Infantry, Company G. At just 5' 3", he was the smallest man in his company and, many said, the bravest.

He returned to Belvidere, IL, after the war, and in 1869, he moved to Saunemin, IL, where he made his living as a farmhand and church janitor.

In 1911, after he was hit by a car and was no longer able to work, Albert Cashier moved to the soldiers and sailors home in Quincy, Illinois.

His mental state deteriorated, and he was moved to Watertown State Hospital for the Insane. It was there that hospital staff discovered his secret and told it to newspapers: Albert Cashier was born Jennie Rodgers.

The reactions were disastrous for Private Cashier. The government charged him with defrauding the government in order to receive a pension. The case was dropped after Private Cashier's comrades from the 95th Illinois rallied to his defense.

The hospital staff forced Private Cashier to wear women's clothing. At 67 and frail, he tripped on his skirt, broke his hip, and spent the rest of his life despondent and bedridden.

He died on October 10, 1915, and was buried in the Army uniform he had kept intact all those years. His tombstone was inscribed "Albert D. J. Cashier, Co. G, 95 Ill. Inf."

Albert Cashier is one of the best known of the 400 women who fought in the Civil War.

Whether Private Cashier was transgender or simply a woman unwilling to accept the severe limits imposed on women in the 19th century will likely never be known.

This much is clear, however: The brave service of Irish Americans in the Civil War helped to diminish the hostility that greeted the Famine Irish. Within two or three generations, Americans would elect two Irish-American Presidents: John Fitzgerald Kennedy, still the only Catholic President, and Ronald Reagan.

Some of the voices we hear in today's immigration debate would sound right at home among the Know Nothings of Lincoln's time. Sadly, one of the loudest of those harsh voices belongs to the current President of the United States.

President Trump opened his campaign by vilifying Mexican immigrants. He tried to ban visitors from seven predominantly Muslim nations from entering the United States. He has cruelly placed Dreamers in legal jeopardy. He has recommended cutting legal immigration—legal immigration—to America by one-half, to its lowest levels since the 1920s.

President Trump's anti-immigrant, antirefugee proposals are an affront to America's history as a nation of immigrants, and they would deal a harsh blow to our economic future. If you doubt it, just ask yourself: Where would America's economy be today without the contributions of immigrants Sergey Brin and Elon Musk, or Steve Jobs, the son of a Syrian immigrant?

I believe that future generations of Americans will look back on today's anti-immigrant agitators with sadness



and bewilderment. They will applaud those Americans who worked to preserve America's values as a nation of immigrants.

I am proud to say that one of those champions is an Irish immigrant from Chicago. His name is Billy Lawless. He moved to America with his family nearly 20 years ago.

Billy, his wife, Anne, and their four grown children are all American citizens now. Together, they own some of the best, most popular restaurants and pubs in Chicago.

Billy Lawless is also a tireless and eloquent advocate for immigration reform. It is not just Irish immigrants that he cares about; it is all immigrants and refugees. He is chairman of a group called Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform and a founding member of the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition.

Two years ago, he gained another, extraordinary platform from which to advocate for just immigration policies. Lawless, who holds dual U.S.-Irish citizenship, was appointed to serve in the Irish Senate, representing the Irish Diaspora overseas.

"The America that I believe in," he says, "is a humane nation. It is the land of the free, the land of opportunity, and the land of immigrants."

Let us remember that this month, as we celebrate the contributions of Irish immigrants to America.

#### FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it has been nearly 4 years since the collapse of Corinthian Colleges and almost 2 years since the collapse of ITT Tech, two of the largest college collapses in U.S. history.

These infamous companies left tens of thousands of students in the lurch, interrupting their education and leaving them with worthless credits and tons of debt.

Rather than being anomalies, these companies embodied the for-profit college industry, an industry that enrolls only 9 percent of all postsecondary students but accounts for 33 percent of all Federal student loan defaults. The same predatory practices that took down Corinthian and ITT Tech are commonplace throughout the for-profit college industry, even today.

So this notion that some would have you believe—that, with Corinthian and ITT Tech gone, this industry is magically cleaned up and purged of bad actors—is nothing more than an attempt by the industry to justify rolling back important consumer protections like the Gainful Employment and Borrower Defense rules.

Case in point: Ashford University is owned by Bridgepoint Education. This is a company that, from its very inception, has shown a determination to work the system in order to profit.

It all began in 2005, when a group of investors bought a tiny Catholic college in Iowa, which at the time had an

enrollment of 312 students, but what came along with that small campus was the gold for Ashford: regional accreditation. That accreditation opened the company's coffers to millions in Federal student aid funds.

Since that time, Ashford has closed the Iowa campus and become an online giant, enrolling more than 40,000 students across the country and taking in almost \$390 million in Federal title IV funds.

Boy, have Ashford executives and owners gotten rich. From 2014 to 2016, Bridgepoint's CEO, Andrew Clark, made more than \$10 million in total compensation.

Meanwhile, its students have been left buried in debt with worthless diplomas that employers often don't recognize. According to a recent Brookings study, as of 2014, Ashford student cumulatively owed almost \$6 billion in Federal student loan debt, making it one of eight for-profit schools in the top 10 schools whose students owe the most cumulative debt. Of the Ashford students who left in 2009, nearly half had defaulted on their debt 5 years later.

Just like Corinthian and ITT Tech, Ashford has been the subject of numerous Federal and State investigations and lawsuits.

Ashford is currently being investigated by State attorneys general in Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, and North Carolina, as well as the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and U.S. Department of Justice. The California Attorney General is currently suing Ashford for "defrauding and deceiving students."

In addition, in 2014, Ashford was forced to pay \$7.25 million in a settlement with the Iowa Attorney General for consumer fraud. Once again, Ashford used false and misleading statements, as well as unfair and high-pressure sales tactics to lure students into enrolling and taking on debt.

Just last year, Ashford agreed to pay \$30 million to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for deceptive acts and practices, including misleading students about their student loan payments.

Also like Corinthian and ITT Tech, Ashford uses mandatory predispute arbitration clauses to hide its misconduct and prevent students from holding them accountable in court.

These clauses, often buried in stacks of enrollment documents that students must sign in order to take classes, force students to give up their right to sue the school of misconduct either as individuals or part of a class. The practice is almost unheard of at public and legitimate not-for-profit institutions, but is a hallmark of the for-profit college industry.

Not only does the practice steer disputes into arbitration proceeding where the deck is often stacked against the student, nondisclosure agreements often prevent the alleged misconduct or the outcome of the arbitration pro-

ceeding from becoming public. This hides misconduct from regulators and accreditors, often allowing for-profit colleges like Ashford to continue illegal practices for years without detection.

In addition to receiving millions of dollars in Department of Education title IV funds, Ashford also heavily recruits veterans and servicemembers who qualify for Department of Veterans Affairs G.I. bill funds.

You see, for-profit colleges see veterans and servicemembers as gold.

Federal law prohibits for-profit colleges from receiving more than 90 percent of their revenue from Federal sources, but rather than counting all taxpayer-funded education assistance programs, including VA G.I. bill and Department of Defense tuition assistance, current law only counts title IV funds as Federal revenue.

This means that by aggressively targeting and recruiting veterans and servicemembers, for-profit colleges like Ashford can receive an unlimited amount of their revenue straight from the Federal Treasury.

Marine veteran James Long found himself on the receiving end of that aggressive recruiting. A few years ago, Bloomberg told his story:

His Humvee was struck by artillery shells in Iraq. He suffered a severe brain injury. While recovering at Camp Lejeune, he was visited by an Ashford recruiter who signed him up for classes. But despite knowing he was enrolled, his brain injury was so severe that he couldn't remember what courses he was enrolled in.

The California Attorney General's complaint against Ashford includes the stories of two other veterans.

First, an Army Reserve veteran referred to as P.M. was encouraged by Ashford representatives to attend courses at a local community college while taking classes at Ashford.

P.M. was told that, by attending a ground-based campus rather than just Ashford's online classes, he would qualify for a higher monthly housing allowance under the G.I. bill, and he could transfer his community college credits toward his Ashford program. He was later "alarmed" to find that Ashford limited the number of credits he could transfer and refused to recognize some of the courses he had previously completed.

As a result, P.M. had to take additional courses at Ashford, receiving the lower housing allowance rate, to make up for the lost credits. He then "fell behind on his rent, had to take on another job to keep up with his bills, and his credit score suffered." In addition, he wasted part of his limited G.I. bill education benefits on courses that he could not put toward a degree.

Another veteran, "P.J.," was told that Ashford would accept most of the 140 credits he had earned at other institutions and could expect to graduate within 18 months. He was also assured that he would be able to transfer his Ashford credits to a community college.