

science that NASA has been collecting and needs to continue to collect.

Under President Trump, we know that fear is rampant across the Federal Government among scientists. It is no surprise that the environmental and scientific communities across the country are asking that we vote down Congressman BRIDENSTINE's nomination based on his voting record and his clear denial of accepted science. If Mr. BRIDENSTINE is confirmed as the Administrator of NASA, he will bring that fear to its scientists at a time when we need them more than ever.

It is not only his views on science that make him unsuitable to lead NASA. NASA's workforce is comprised of more than 18,000 workers who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer. NASA has officially stated that "diversity and inclusion are integral to mission success." In a 2013 speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman BRIDENSTINE declared: "Marriage exists to bring a man and a woman together as husband and wife, to be a father and mother to children." He has stated repeatedly that he would support a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

Congressman BRIDENSTINE's personal views and voting record against people who identify as LGBTQ should immediately disqualify him from consideration for leading this diverse agency. NASA is an agency of inspiration, an agency that showcases the very best of American ideals: scientific integrity, innovation, diversity, fearlessness, resolve, and hope. Mr. BRIDENSTINE puts these ideals at risk and is not qualified to lead this agency.

I urge my colleagues to oppose his nomination. I urge a "no" vote.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

COMMEMORATING VAISAKHI

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to recognize and celebrate with my Sikh friends, my constituents, and friends from the Sikh community of Pennsylvania and beyond.

I start with the acknowledgment that my pronunciation of certain words may be off, and I hope I will be forgiven.

I am delighted to have so many wonderful representatives of the Sikh community here with us in Washington. I thank them. I thank Raj Singh and all of the members of the Sikh community of Pennsylvania who made this trip down to Washington, DC, to participate in a celebration for an important holi-

day and to raise awareness about the Sikh community.

Sikhism has been around for nearly 600 years and originated in the Punjab region of India in the 15th century. Today, there are about 30 million Sikhs who live in countries all around the world, making it one of the world's largest religions. Sikhism is rooted in the belief that every single person—every individual—regardless of race, gender, sex, or creed, is equal before God. Sikhism was introduced in the United States in the 19th century. Today, there are about 700,000 Sikhs who live in the United States, and a large number of Sikhs reside in Pennsylvania. In fact, there are several Sikh places of worship, known as gurdwaras, and they are located throughout Pennsylvania—in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Allentown, and Erie.

In my many travels across Pennsylvania, I have had an opportunity to meet with and get to know hard-working Sikh constituents. I can tell you they are close-knit, vibrant communities, deeply committed to their families—fully American while, at the same time, preserving some wonderful and often very old traditions. The Sikhs constitute a part of the rich, cultural fabric of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and I am grateful to them for what they add to my State.

A few years back, I was proud to join the American Sikh Congressional Caucus. As a member of this caucus, we honor and recognize the Sikh holiday of Vaisakhi. The holiday itself is usually celebrated on the first day of the month of Vaisakhi, which just occurred last week on Saturday, April 14. Vaisakhi is a special occasion for Sikhs to remember the founding in 1699 of the Khalsa Panth. The Khalsa were a fellowship of devout "saint-soldier" Sikhs who played an important role in shaping the religion's history and its identity.

The holiday also recognizes the spring harvest. Sikhs recognize this important holiday with parades, with dancing, with singing, and with other festivities, as well as with volunteer service, especially volunteering meals to those in need and other forms of community service.

This year, the Sikh Coordination Committee East Coast, with the support of the U.S. Congressional Sikh Caucus, has organized a parade in Washington on May 19 to commemorate Vaisakhi as National Sikh Day. The theme of the parade is the Sikh identity, the Sikh culture, the Sikh way of life, and thousands of Sikhs from all over the United States will be participating.

I am proud of the Sikh communities of Pennsylvania, and I wish the Sikh community much luck in the parade and a very joyous Vaisakhi.

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

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

REMEMBERING BARBARA BUSH

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, yesterday, our country lost a bright, caring, independent lady, and my wife, Honey, and I lost a good friend. Barbara Bush set a wonderful example as mom, wife, First Lady, and advocate for adult literacy. We express to the Bush family our sympathy and great respect for the life of Barbara Bush.

Jon Meacham wrote the biography of George H.W. Bush, Barbara Bush's husband, to great acclaim. He had access to the diaries of President Bush and Barbara Bush that was almost unparalleled in any Presidential biographer's experience. So it was a plain and unvarnished biography that told us a lot about those two individuals. I thought a better name for Jon Meacham's book—it was named "Destiny and Power," and it must have been properly named because it sold a lot—would be "The Last Gentleman." If I were to make a really accurate suggestion about the title for the book, I would call it "The Last Gentleman and His Lady" or maybe "The Last Gentleman and His Very Independent Lady" because Barbara Bush was a very independent lady.

I remember it was 1991. It was a sunny day, and we were walking on the south lawn of the White House. I was the Education Secretary, and I was walking with the President and Mrs. Bush to the announcement of his GI Bill for Kids, which was a school choice program for low-income children. As we walked along, Barbara Bush turned to President Bush and said, "George, you've got on the wrong pants." He had a suit coat on from one suit, and he had pants on from another suit. So she said to the President "You go on back in and change clothes, and Lamar and I will wait here for you," which we did and he did.

On another occasion, President Bush invited my wife and me to join Barbara and the President at Ford's theater. Of course, the President traveled with great security in a big car. As the protocol goes, he got out first, and as she was about to get out, she said, "I'll get the door, George."

On still another occasion, I was sitting next to Barbara and George Bush, and the President was called on to make some remarks. He leaned over to his wife and said, "Barbara, what should I talk about?" And she whispered very loudly, "About five minutes, George."

Barbara Bush was quite a woman. She said what she thought. When the second one of her sons decided to run for President, she was reported to have said, "We've had enough Bushes."

When I ran for President in 1999 against her other son, I made what I thought—certainly by today's standards—some very mild comments disagreeing about something, and I heard

from Barbara Bush about what I had said about her son, George W. Bush.

Not many of us think how difficult it must be to be the spouse of a President of the United States with all that one goes through, but think how much harder it must also be to be the mother of a President of the United States and the mother of another distinguished son who was Governor of a large State and who ran for President of the United States. Barbara Bush was the anchor of her family, and a very successful and remarkable family it was.

I was Education Secretary for President Bush in 1991 when the National Literacy Act was enacted. Let's use Barbara's own words to define the event. She wrote in her memoir, "I must say I got more credit than I deserve."

I don't agree with that, but she continued:

I heard that George was going to give the pen to me, but before he could, Senator Simon spoke up and said, "That pen ought to go to Barbara." I donated it to the George Bush Presidential Library Center. In the end, however it's not pens and pictures that count; it's the National Literacy Act that really counts. It was the first piece of legislation—and to date, the only one—ever enacted specifically for literacy with the goal of ensuring that every American adult acquires the basic literacy skills necessary to achieve the greatest possible satisfaction professionally and personally. But even more than that, the act seeks to strengthen our nation by giving us more productive workers and informed citizens.

In his biography of President George H.W. Bush, John Meacham wrote of a "generational controversy," in his words, that Barbara Bush endured in May of 1990. She was invited to Wellesley College to speak at graduation and receive an honorary degree, but she was being criticized by Wellesley's young women, as President Bush put in his own diary—these are President Bush's words—"because she hasn't made it on her own—she's where she is because she's her husband's wife. What's wrong with the fact that she's a good mother," President Bush wrote in his diary, "a good wife, great volunteer, great leader for literacy and other fine causes? Nothing. But to listen to these elitist kids there is."

Meacham writes:

Mrs. Bush invited [Mrs.] Gorbachev along with her to Wellesley. There, [she] confronted the issues of work versus family and the role of women head-on, delivering a well-received commencement address.

She put the audience at ease early on by saying: One day, I am sure that someone in this audience will grow up to become a spouse of the President of the United States, and I wish him well.

Meacham continues:

"Maybe we should adjust faster, maybe we should adjust slower," she told the graduates. "But whatever the era, whatever the times, one thing will never change: Fathers and mothers, if you have children—they must come first. You must read to your children, and you must hug your children, and you must love your children. Your success as a family, our success as a society depends

not on what happens in the White House, but on what happens inside your house."

Barbara Bush said that to the Wellesley graduates in 1990.

The country is expressing to the Bush family, as I am trying to today, our great respect for Barbara Bush's life.

President Bush, George H.W. Bush, has sent a response to those of us who sent our condolences, and I would like to close with the President's own words about his wife Barbara. This is what George H.W. Bush said:

I always knew Barbara was the most beloved woman in the world, and in fact I used to tease her that I had a complex about that fact. But the truth is the outpouring of love and friendship being directed at The Enforcer is lifting us all up. We have faith she is in heaven, and we know life will go on—as she would have it. So cross the Bushes off your worry list.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays on the pending nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

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

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 Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 79 Ex.]

YEAS—55

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

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Klobuchar
Bennet	Durbin	Leahy
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Markey
Booker	Gillibrand	McCaskill
Brown	Harris	Menendez
Cantwell	Hassan	Merkley
Cardin	Heinrich	Murphy
Carper	Hirono	Murray
Casey	Kaine	Peters
Coons	King	Reed

Sanders	Stabenow	Warren
Schatz	Tester	Whitehouse
Schumer	Udall	Wyden
Shaheen	Van Hollen	
Smith	Warner	

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth

McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, over the past 24 hours we have learned of a high-level meeting between Director Pompeo—Mike Pompeo, the President's nominee to become Secretary of State—and Kim Jong Un, the leader—the tyrant leader—of North Korea, who has threatened to use nuclear weapons not only against our allies but against the United States and has a growing capability in his efforts to do just that.

We have also seen incredible partisan obstruction threatened on his nomination. The absurd levels of partisanship in this Chamber are a stain on our institution. We see it at every level of nominations, from ambassadorships to commissions to boards. Now we see it at the level of the Secretary of State, a position that will be instrumental in denuclearizing the North Korean regime.

Director Pompeo had his confirmation hearing last week before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We now know that his testimony at this committee hearing took place after he had visited Kim Jong Un, and in this committee hearing, he made it very clear that our goal remains the complete and verifiable irreversible denuclearization. That is the stated goal, confirmed by Director Pompeo: the complete and verifiable irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. Yet we now have people threatening to stop this nomination at a critical time when we face a nuclear threat that is the greatest this country has seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would decide to deny this country its top State Department diplomat.

Let me describe what some of our colleagues have said who have claimed now that they are going to vote against Mike Pompeo for Secretary of State but who, just a few months back, voted to confirm Mike Pompeo. One of my colleagues who is voting against Director Pompeo for Secretary of State has admitted that Director Pompeo has been a "solid manager" of the CIA, saying:

I voted for him to head the CIA and don't wish I had that vote back. I think he has a background in intel and has been a solid manager there.