

you something else: I believe we can actually enjoy doing it. I know that is not a trendy thing to say. I know we are supposed to come here and immediately start complaining about how broken everything is, how horrible the other side is, and how much we hate these jobs that we spend all this time and money campaigning for. I have to say, I don't get it. I think it is so amazing that we get to go out and talk to people about their lives and then bring their ideas and their concerns to the table here in Washington and try to figure out how to make progress for them.

I grew up out West, in New Mexico. In fact, Senator UDALL and Senator HEINRICH tell me I am the only Senator currently serving who was born in New Mexico. Our town was informally divided into two parts, and mine was one of the only White families in our neighborhood, which was mostly populated by Hispanic families who had been there for generations. Most of the kids I grew up around spoke Spanish at home. So from a very early age, I grew up with this sense that everyone around me had something different to offer.

My parents sent me to the public school in our neighborhood, and my school, frankly, lacked some of the resources that the schools where more of the White kids went had. So my parents got involved. My dad joined the school board, my mom volunteered, and they both devoted part of their lives to making things better. Do you know what? They loved it. They loved doing that work.

I was raised to believe that the world is full of people who share the same hopes and dreams but have very different experiences and perspectives and that part of being a good citizen is to go out and listen to those different experiences and perspectives and do your part to help and that it can even be fun.

Maybe that is why Minnesota was the right place for me to go into public service. Minnesotans really love doing the hard work of democracy. We vote in higher numbers than anyone else. We love talking about the issues of the day in the checkout line of the supermarket, along with the weather, which we really love talking about. We almost always elect people who enjoy working to protect people's lives, to improve people's lives, and there is no better example of that than my friend and senior Senator, AMY KLOBUCHAR. She is effective because she doesn't buy into the cynicism. She really believes that by listening to people and working hard to make a difference for them, progress is possible, and she proves it every single day. The same was true of my predecessor, Senator Franken, who brought not just wit but heart and passion to his work. It has been true for a long line of Minnesotans, from Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale to Paul Wellstone and Dave Durenberger.

The other thing you learn when you spend a lot of time listening to Min-

nesotans is just how hard they are willing to work to create opportunity for their families. They deserve a Senator who will work just as hard on their behalf, and I am not just ready to do that, I am excited to do that.

I know there will be some rough days here in the Senate, but what an honor to have the chance to do this work alongside all of you. With my mother and my grandmother beside me, I am so thrilled to be here, and I am full of hope about the progress we can all make together.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. 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. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all postcloture time on the Rodriguez nomination be considered expired at 2:15 p.m. and the Senate immediately vote on the nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:43 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

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

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, 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 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 Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 115 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Gillibrand	Nelson
Baldwin	Graham	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Perdue
Bennet	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Reed
Booker	Heitkamp	Risch
Boozman	Heller	Roberts
Brown	Hirono	Rounds
Burr	Hoeven	Rubio
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cardin	Isakson	Schatz
Carper	Johnson	Schumer
Casey	Jones	Scott
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Corker	King	Smith
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Leahy	Tester
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	Markey	Toomey
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall
Durbin	McConnell	Van Hollen
Enzi	Menendez	Warner
Ernst	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Moran	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murkowski	Wicker
Flake	Murphy	Wyden
Gardner	Murray	Young

#### NOT VOTING—4

Coons	Heinrich
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.

#### 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 assistant 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 Annemarie Carney Axon, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, John Kennedy, Richard Burr, Mike Lee, David Perdue, Steve Daines, James Lankford, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham, Patrick J. Toomey, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, James E. Risch.

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 Annemarie Carney Axon, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator

from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 116 Ex.]

#### YEAS—84

Alexander	Feinstein	Murray
Baldwin	Fischer	Nelson
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Reed
Booker	Hassan	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Brown	Heitkamp	Rounds
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Cantwell	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Cardin	Inhofe	Schumer
Carper	Johnson	Scott
Casey	Jones	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Smith
Corker	King	Sullivan
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Leahy	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	Manchin	Udall
Daines	McCaskey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Young

#### NAYS—11

Gillibrand	Menendez	Stabenow
Harris	Merkley	Warren
Hirono	Peters	Wyden
Markey	Sanders	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Coons	Heinrich	McCain
Duckworth	Isakson	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 11.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Annemarie Carney Axon, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is the Axon nomination postcloture.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I see nobody else seeking the floor. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

#### FORCED FAMILY SEPARATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for those of us who read history, we know that throughout history, including at times in our own country many years ago,

the forcible separation of families was used as an instrument of terror.

I struggle to imagine a more damaging and inhumane governmental policy than to forcibly and needlessly tear children away from their parents. For decades, the United States has rightly led the world in condemning such practices as flagrant abuses of government power and human rights.

Yet, today, in an extraordinary breach of our most basic values, the Trump administration is now regularly employing these very tactics. It is true that some children were separated from their parents during the previous administration. I vocally and forcefully opposed it then, because I believed and I am still convinced that there are alternatives that are far more humane and effective than the tearing apart of families.

But the family separation we are seeing today is so vastly different both in purpose and in scope than what occurred during the Obama administration. There is no comparison. Separation is no longer limited to narrow circumstances where it is arguably in the best interest of the child. Separating children, even infants, from their parents is now being carried out as a blanket policy. It is frightening. This disturbing policy is happening by design.

The Trump administration's decision to criminally prosecute every adult who arrives at our border without documentation establishes a de facto family separation policy that is going to rip thousands of innocent children away from their loved ones. The administration's claim that this policy is necessary to deter illegal border crossings rings hollow. The administration has also separated families who follow the rules and lawfully present themselves at ports of entry with claims of asylum. They are asking for asylum.

There is simply no way we can sanitize the cruelty of this policy. The anguish we are inflicting is evident in the story of each parent who is losing a child. Let me tell my colleagues a couple of those stories.

Here are the words of Maria, who was separated from her children, ages 7 and 2, just last month when she sought asylum at the San Ysidro Port of Entry.

She said:

[A]t about 8 a.m. they called just my two children and I went out and they said, "Miss, only they are going." . . . [T]he officer said, "They are here for them. Can the little one walk?"

"Yes," I told the officer.

"Let him down," they told me.

The older one took his hand and they started to walk. Then they turned around to look and when they saw that I was not going after them, they cried.

I will tell another story, the ordeal of another mother with two sons, age 4 and 10. She is seeking asylum from El Salvador.

I was only given five minutes to say goodbye before [my sons] were torn from me. My babies started crying when they found out we were going to be separated. It breaks my heart to remember my youngest wail, "Why

do I have to leave?" . . . My youngest cried and screamed in protest because he did not want to leave my side. My oldest son was also confused and did not understand what was happening. In tears myself, I asked my boys to be brave, and I promised we would be together again soon. I begged the woman who took my children to keep them together so they could at least have each other.

This is a description from a father seeking asylum at the San Ysidro Port of Entry:

I was told I was going to be separated from my son. I suffer from high blood pressure and felt as though I was having a heart attack. . . . I feel like I was in shock and do not remember what happened next or even how I got to the detention center after that. All I can remember is how much my son and I were both crying as they took him away.

The anguish inflicted on these parents and children at the moment they are separating is excruciating. For those of us who are parents, it is inconceivable, but it is just the beginning. Parents are given limited information—sometimes none at all—about where their children are being held, in whose care, or for how long. Some have begged the courts for information, frustrating judges who know little more than the parents. Some are deported while their children remain in unknown locations in the United States. Pediatricians describe the trauma that can be inflicted on these children as toxic stress. It results in lasting damage to a child's health.

Who here would tolerate such a thing if it were happening to American children? Who would defend such an abhorrent practice that was happening in another country—say, Russia or any other country? None of us would. We would condemn it.

But all of this lays bare the ugly truth about the true intent of this policy: to strike fear into the hearts of families who are seeking refuge from gang violence, chaos, murder, and rape in their home countries. The message could not be clearer: If you try to seek refuge in the United States, which is your right under international law, if you seek your right, if you seek refuge, if you seek the right you have under international law, we in America will punish you and punish your family because you are not welcome here.

This policy unquestionably flouts our domestic and international legal obligations. Worse, it flies in the face of who we are. In the past, we have shown the world that protecting our homeland is not incompatible with providing refuge to the vulnerable. We have proven that being a nation of laws is not antithetical to being a country of compassion. We have demonstrated that our unmatched power is derived in part from how we treat the most powerless among us. But President Trump's policy abandons our principles. Actually, it abandons our identity as a moral beacon for the world.

Republicans and Democrats must speak with one voice to condemn this cruelty. Family separation is no more a Republican policy than a Democratic