

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The closure motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 483, H.R. 2, an act to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Deb Fischer, Mike Rounds, John Barrasso, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines, John Boozman, Orrin G. Hatch, Thom Tillis, David Perdue, Mike Crapo, Richard Burr, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pat Roberts.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nomination: PN1641.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Jean Carol Hovland, of South Dakota, to be Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans, Department of Health and Human Services.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements related to this nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

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

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for 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.

TRIBUTE TO WENDELL LAWRENCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize Wendell Lawrence, of Elizabethtown, KY, who will be retiring from his role as the executive director of the Lincoln Trail Area Development District, LTADD, on August 1. After 35 years of service, including more than two decades as the executive director, Wendell leaves a lasting impact on his community and has helped the organization fulfill its mission.

Comprised of eight counties—Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, Larue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, and Washington—the LTADD was formed in 1968 to foster regional strategies and partnerships to benefit the citizens of the Commonwealth. Kentucky was the first in the Nation to establish a statewide system of regional development organizations.

This region is an important part of Kentucky's economy and culture. It is the home of both the Abraham Lincoln National Historical Park and Fort Knox, a vital U.S. Army installation and the site of the U.S. Bullion Depository. Comprised of small businesses, heritage sites, and agricultural centers, the Lincoln Trail is a rich part of both our Commonwealth's history and its future. Under Wendell's leadership, the LTADD has helped communities and organizations secure grants and resources to help the area continue to thrive.

During his time leading the district, Wendell has helped establish a number of partnerships to increase the region's competitiveness and benefit its workers. With organizations like OneKnox and WIRED65, the region has leveraged unique geographical and commercial resources to help it flourish. Wendell also worked closely with Fort Knox to expand the installation's potential and to assist Fort Knox area military personnel transitioning out of service into the workforce through his role as the former advisory board chairman of Where Opportunity Knox. Although the region has changed and developed during his tenure, Wendell's diligent leadership of the LTADD has set the area and many of its award-winning municipalities on a pathway to a bright future.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the LTADD. At a recent event to commemorate its half century of excellence, the members showed their gratitude to Wendell by surprising him with their Lifetime Achievement Award. Wendell's dedicated service to the district throughout his impressive career has endeared him to so many in this area.

In addition to his passionate work in the Lincoln Trail area, Wendell also used his talents for the good of Kentucky and other causes close to his heart. As a previous chairman of the Kentucky Association of District Di-

rectors, he helped encourage economic growth throughout the Commonwealth. A retired captain in the U.S. Army Reserve with 23 years of Active and Reserve service, he is also passionate about our Nation's military and is a life member of the Reserve Officers Association and former member of the board of directors of the George S. Patton Museum and Center of Leadership at Fort Knox.

On a personal note, I have always enjoyed working with Wendell on behalf of the people of Kentucky. His decades of leadership have produced tangible benefits for the Lincoln Trail area, which will continue to be felt for years to come. In addition, his daughter Amanda is a constituent caseworker in my Louisville office. It is clear that a commitment to helping Kentuckians runs in the family.

When Wendell retires later this year, he will begin a new chapter in his life. Whatever his next adventure may hold in store, I am confident that with the support of his wife, Jackie, and their children, Amanda, Thomas, and Meredith, he will continue to find success.

I would like to join the people of Kentucky and the staff of the Lincoln Trail Area Development District in thanking Wendell for his years of achievement and wishing him well in the future. I urge my Senate colleagues to join me.

TRIBUTE TO JORGE RAMIREZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to thank Jorge Ramirez for his extraordinary service to the city of Chicago. Earlier this year, Jorge announced that after 12 years at the Chicago Federation of Labor—8 as president—that he will be retiring at the end of the month.

Jorge's story is the story of the American Dream. The son of Mexican immigrants, Jorge Ramirez attended high school in Texas and was a 4-year letterman in football at the University of Texas El Paso, where he earned a double major in marketing and computer information systems. In 2006, Jorge joined the Chicago Federation of Labor as its secretary-treasurer and, four years later, became its first Latino president.

Jorge Ramirez is a trailblazer, but anyone who knows his father, Ruben, a Chicagoland legend, wouldn't be surprised. Ruben was the Ramirez's family original Labor leader, spending four decades as a member, officer, and in 1993 becoming the first and only Latino president for United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 100A, Chicago's meatpacking union. You could say organized Labor is in Jorge's blood.

Jorge watched his father closely and learned important values and principles that would serve him well throughout his career. As president, Ruben made sure the leadership of Local 100A mirrored the members they served by including women and men of all backgrounds on the Union's executive board. Inclusivity and respect for

all people became an ideal Ruben and his wife, Sarah, later instilled in their children. Just ask Jorge's fellow Labor leaders, the people who know him best: "For Jorge, every day is a another chance for him to fight for dignity and respect for workers and nothing will ever stop him from doing what is right and just." That is a legacy I know Ruben and Sarah are proud of.

Under Jorge Ramirez's leadership, the Chicago Federation of Labor helped the city avoid massive layoffs, pushed an \$8.5 billion plan through, city council, expanding O'Hare Airport and creating 60,000 new jobs. He partnered with the mayor to guarantee O'Hare employees a living wage and paid sick leave. Jorge's efforts on behalf of Chicago's working women and men also resulted in raising the minimum wage to \$13 an hour by 2019.

Last summer, Jorge led a labor investment group that bought the Chicago Sun-Times, breathing new life into the paper, returning it to its roots, and giving working families a voice. Jorge believes a paper for and by these families is fitting in Chicago, home of the American labor movement and the place that gave us the iconic Studs Terkel and Upton Sinclair's classic, "The Jungle." Thank you, Jorge, for helping save the Sun-Times, one of Chicago's beloved institutions, and preserving one of the last two-newspaper cities in America.

Last month, after announcing his intention to step down, one of Chicago's union leaders gave what Jorge called the ultimate compliment, telling him he had left the Chicago Federation of Labor "in a condition that's better than what [he] found it in." Jorge Ramirez will be missed, but his fellow Labor leaders are right. He is leaving the Chicago Federation of Labor stronger than ever and in the capable hands of its secretary-treasurer, Robert Reiter.

Fortunately for Chicago, Jorge isn't going far. He will remain as the Chicago Sun-Times board chairman and plans to stay for as long as they will have him. They would be wise to keep him at the helm for as long as he would like. Jorge Ramirez has earned it.

I want to close by congratulating Jorge Ramirez on his distinguished career and thank him for all he has done and all he will continue to do, but for all his professional accomplishments, Jorge's biggest achievement is his family. A father of four young boys—Marino, John Paul, Antonio, and Santino—Jorge has sacrificed time with them to make things better for countless men, women, and less fortunate children across our dear city. Lastly, I need to thank his wonderful wife, Catrina, for sharing so much of Jorge's time with the city of Chicago. Chicago is grateful for all of their service and sacrifice. Now, as they enter the next chapter in their life, I want to wish my friend Jorge and his beautiful family all the best.

COUNTERING AMERICA'S ADVERSARIES THROUGH SANCTIONS ACT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I would like to raise concerns about efforts to erode the effectiveness of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA. This law requires the administration to impose a host of costs on the government of the Russian Federation for its interference in democratic processes around the world, its support for the brutal regime of Bashar Al-Assad, and its active role in destabilizing Ukraine. Ninety-eight Senators voted in favor of this legislation and should expect the administration to fully implement it.

Of particular concern to me today is section 231, which requires the imposition of sanctions on those who conduct significant transactions with specific entities in the Russian defense and intelligence sectors. We targeted those sectors because our intelligence community deemed them responsible for the attack on our election in 2016. The law is meant to cut financial income for these sectors.

Using the model implemented in the CISADA sanctions regime on Iran, section 231 includes a provision to delay sanctions if the individual in question can show that they are substantially reducing significant transactions from these Russian entities. This model was extremely effective in diminishing the volume of energy products that Iran was able to sell to the rest of the world and ultimately helped to drive them to the negotiating table. This model allows for some flexibility while maintaining appropriate pressure to wind down business with these sectors in Russia. It can work if we allow it to.

The State Department reports that the law is actually already having an impact. Billions of dollars' worth of deals around the world with the Russian defense sector have been turned off due to leverage created by this law. That means billions of dollars less for Russia to interfere in elections and sow discord in democratic societies, billions of dollars less to support war crimes in Syria, billions of dollars less to kill Ukrainians and violate the sovereignty of that country. If the administration fully allows the law to work, the Russian Government will have less money for all of these things.

The leverage CAATSA provides is critically necessary. In Turkey, this leverage is vital in our efforts to ensure that the Erdogan government does not purchase the Russian S400 air defense system. Such a purchase would be a win for Putin in a strategically important part of the world and could pose a security and intelligence threat to U.S. and NATO personnel and equipment already in the country. CAATSA gives our negotiators an important tool which we hope can leverage the right policy decisions in Ankara.

Over the course of the debate on the NDAA, voices in the administration

want to weaken section 231 and have called for blanket waiver authority. I opposed these efforts, not because I want sanctions on our close friends who continue to do business with Russian defense sector, but because such a move would gut CAATSA and render this key provision of the law toothless. We need to remain true to the principles laid out in the law. Either we want to increasingly maintain pressure on the Russian defense and intelligence sectors—or we don't. Either we want to send a strong message to the Kremlin that interfering in our elections and those of our allies is unacceptable—or we don't. Either we want to defend our democracy—or we don't.

No one wants to impose sanctions on our close friends, especially as defense relationships with those countries are improving. We should continue building on the positive momentum around our defense cooperation with several countries around the world. It is precisely for this reason that countries should begin to make a choice. Either they want a strong and growing defense partnership with the United States—or they don't. Either they want access to the best defense technology that the U.S. has to offer—or they don't. Either they believe that standing up for democratic institutions matters—or they don't.

The choice seems pretty clear to me.

We built flexibility into CAATSA that allows them to avoid sanctions if they can show a substantial reduction in purchases over time.

I would also stress to my colleagues here: CAATSA is the only significant bipartisan piece of foreign policy legislation passed since Donald Trump came into office. We should be proud of this brief moment of bipartisanship in support of our collective national security. Our responsibility did not end with one vote. Stringent oversight matters now more than ever. Will you stand by the law or buckle to attempts by the administration to fundamentally weaken it?

A central challenge in the administration's implementation of section 231 is its refusal to make formal determinations that individuals have in fact conducted significant transactions with specific Russian Federation entities. Without such a baseline of information, it is impossible to determine whether individuals are substantially reducing significant transactions with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors. I sought to remedy this shortcoming with an amendment to the NDAA which would require the administration to regularly report on whether such transactions have taken place. While the amendment did not make it into the bill, I will continue to urge such reporting moving forward and more transparency from the administration on how this law is being implemented.

I want to acknowledge the work of those at the State and Treasury Departments, especially the Office of Foreign Assets Control, who have done the