

rest right next to Barbara, his loving wife and partner of 73 years, and their daughter, Robin.

It has been reported that, some years ago, as the Bush family discussed funeral plans and the subject of lying in state came up, the former President joked in a self-deprecating way: "Do you think anyone will come?"

Well, Mr. President, they sure did. Dignitaries, world leaders, and thousands of Americans from all walks of life waited for hours and streamed through this Capitol to pray for and pay tribute to the life and legacy of George Bush. I might add, in addition to that, on the way up to the National Cathedral, there were citizens on both sides of the road, all along the way, with their iPhones, taking photographs of this great American.

Today, at President's Trump's direction, the country is observing a national day of mourning. I know this body continues to stand with all Americans in appreciation for his inspiring example and in solidarity with the Bush family.

#### NOMINATION OF BERNARD L. MCNAMEE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on a completely different matter, the Senate is resuming our work this afternoon. Later today, we will vote to advance the nomination of Bernard McNamee, the President's choice to serve on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

This is an impressive nominee who has the right qualifications for this important job. In his career as a well-regarded lawyer on energy issues, he has represented clients and gained expertise all across the energy sector. He has helped clients build solar projects and natural gas facilities and get renewable energy standards approved. In his own words, he said: "I have not just talked about fuel diversity and 'all of the above' energy policies; I have worked to help make them a reality."

Mr. McNamee has worked as an energy policy expert at the Department of Energy, as well as right here in the Senate. FERC plays a pivotal role in ensuring our energy security and enabling prosperity. Among other responsibilities, the Commission is responsible for permitting important infrastructure investments such as pipelines and export terminals. Continuing with a deadlocked and understaffed Commission could threaten the status of these investments and the jobs that revolve around them. Therefore, we need to confirm Mr. McNamee promptly.

His obvious qualifications and his commitment to fairness and impartiality earned him a bipartisan vote out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee last month with a favorable recommendation. I hope the same common sense will prevail today so we can move this nominee forward with the bipartisan vote he well deserves.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Bernard L. McNamee, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2020.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 4 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senate is going to soon vote on the nomination of Bernard McNamee to be a Commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

If Mr. McNamee takes a seat on the Commission, it will mean that Christmas is coming early for the executive who wants big, dirty energy bailouts.

Mr. McNamee has had for some time a plan to bail out some of the oldest, dirtiest plants in America, and he wants typical Americans to pay for it with higher utility rates. That is right—a bailout for some of the dirtiest, oldest facilities—and a pretty small number of them at that—and then a big spike in rates for working families and seniors across the country. We shouldn't sugarcoat the McNamee plan. It is a rip-off, plain and simple.

All of this doesn't come out of thin air. Mr. McNamee, in fact, was directly responsible for this miserable proposal while he was at the Trump Energy Department. The plan was to interfere with utility companies' private business decisions, to force them to actually prevent utility companies from

shutting down those dirty, old powerplants—some of them coal plants—even when the utilities wanted to move to cleaner, newer plants. So much for the free market. The utilities actually wanted to move to cleaner plants. Yet this would have prevented them from shutting down dirty, outdated plants to go to the more efficient, newer ones. So much for the free market. So much for protecting consumers.

This proposal was so flawed that every member of the Commission joined in a vote to reject it. Let me repeat that. Every member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that Mr. McNamee is so eager to join voted against his plan to stick it to all the consumers with a rate spike.

For a period, I chaired the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and we always saw that, traditionally, if a flawed proposal gets met with enormous rejection, the typical person in a rational way says: Hey, we had better get back to the drawing board and take a different tack. That is not so with the Trump administration.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission wouldn't green-light Mr. McNamee's rate-hiking plan to prop up the executives at these dirty facilities. So the President wants to put Mr. McNamee on the inside and give him a seat on the FERC. I have to say that I haven't seen anything like this sort of deliberate effort to hijack sound market-oriented principles that would naturally take you to cleaner power rather than to dirty old coal facilities. But what we have here is, in effect, an individual who has shown a track record of wanting to do the bidding of special interests.

FERC is supposed to be an independent, apolitical energy regulator.

As I said during the committee's hearing on this nomination, this is not a question of the fox guarding the henhouse. This is a question of putting the fox inside the henhouse. That is what this will do if the Senate makes a flawed judgment to approve this nomination. Several of us at the Energy Committee hearing—myself and other colleagues—asked Mr. McNamee if he would recuse himself from matters that he worked on that relate to this flawed bailout for dirty, outdated plants. He refused to commit to that.

Since the hearing, new evidence of his energy policy biases has come to light in the form of video footage where he candidly expresses that he is just plain, old biased against renewable power. The video reveals Mr. McNamee speaking frankly about his skepticism of wind and solar power. He basically says: You shouldn't regulate carbon dioxide as a real pollutant. His comments, joined with his recent actions, which I have described as the "Trump Energy Department," make it clear to me that he is not going to bring the judicious, objective approach, if he is confirmed as FERC Commissioner, to these critical issues. He certainly is not in this to protect the American

consumer, because his policies would pick their pocket with higher rates.

Finally, the nomination comes at a particularly troubling time, just after the scientists for the Federal Government released the "National Climate Assessment." The report warned that without substantial and sustained measures to reduce emissions, climate change and worsening climate change would wreak havoc on our economy. Yet juxtapose or put right next to what the Federal scientists said about climate change worsening and then say: Here is going to be a Trump nominee who, if chosen for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, is going to say: Let's double down on support for the dirty, outdated facilities for generating electricity.

It doesn't sound very viable to me in terms of our economic future. On the entire matter of confronting the imminent threat of climate change, I think we have to recognize that this administration is defying the will of the American people. We are no longer talking about far-off theories.

In Oregon and across the country, we have seen Americans watch fires getting bigger and hotter. They are ripping through populated areas. They are not your grandfather's fires. In our part of the world, we saw a fire leap over the Columbia River. We have seen hurricanes making landfall with Biblical, unprecedented winds. Each year almost sets a new high mark for the hottest year on record.

The policies that this nominee is advancing are misguided. They would accelerate the problems that the scientists for the Federal Government cited last week.

I will close by way of saying that what the scientists said last week is that dealing with cleaner, more efficient energy and promoting it is urgent business right now because there is no time for going backward. What the McNamee nomination is all about, in one concept, is this: It is going backward—backward to bailouts and backward to supporting dirty, outdated plants.

We ought to be going forward.

Mr. President and colleagues, I urge that this nominee be rejected.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to urge my colleagues to vote no on the nomination of Bernard McNamee to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. I thank my colleague from Oregon for coming out here to explain why this nomination matters and why my colleagues on both sides of the aisle should turn it down.

This is a very important time as we move forward on energy policy in the United States. I am pretty sure that my constituents probably already know what the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission does because, when it came to the Enron crisis, they had to

count on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to make sure energy markets were properly policed. In the end, the FERC did do that, protecting consumers from what were unjust and unreasonable rates.

However, the fact is that a lot of Americans don't understand what the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission does. That is because the job of the Commission can range from overseeing the reliability of the electricity grid to ensuring that wholesale electricity and natural gas rates are just and reasonable. That was what we argued in the Enron case. They were going to make utilities pay for 9 years on what were fraudulent contracts. We emphasized: How could fraudulent Enron contracts ever be just and reasonable if they had admitted to manipulating them?

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission also oversees the licensing of hydroelectric dams and approves construction of natural gas pipelines. We also rely on FERC to protect the electric and national gas markets, as I mentioned, from manipulation.

After Enron, we ended up putting even stronger language in the law to make sure the definition of manipulation was clear and people were protected. I remember my colleagues from Texas joining me in getting that language passed because they knew how much the Enron manipulation cost all of us and our economy.

These are important responsibilities. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission deserves due diligence of their record done by Members of the Senate because FERC decisions affect many energy projects and how people will pay to heat their homes and keep the lights on. It is also about how we protect our energy infrastructure for the future. Trust me, the number of cyberattacks that are going on in energy, we want to exercise strong oversight of these nominees.

It is important that the Commission remain independent and impartial because its role is quasi-judicial. Like judges, they need to be impartial, making decisions about important energy projects that get built around the United States.

For this reason, one of the qualifications written into the law creating the Commission is that members be "individuals who, by demonstrated ability, background, training, or experience, are specially qualified to assess fairly the needs and concerns of all interests affected by Federal energy policy."

I would add that it is the duty of the Senate to make sure that these commissions remain free from political influence. I know that, from time to time, people have been on the Commission and there have been issues about how those on the outside have tried to influence them. We must continue to make sure that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission remains above this kind of political influence and that they remain unbiased as decision mak-

ers on these important policies. I believe that this nominee, Mr. McNamee, does not meet this standard. I believe that he is too ideologically motivated to undertake a job where fact-based decision-making is essential to outcomes that affect people's individual energy rates.

The Commission has to police and regulate energy markets without regard for fuel source, market power, or political lens. I want to see Commissioners who have the words from the Federal Power Act of "just and reasonable rates" practically tattooed into their psyches. Why? It is the standard by which they should judge our nation's energy projects.

Like many of my colleagues, I have been troubled by this administration's effort to try to subsidize high-cost, coal-fired power plants at the expense of American ratepayers. According to a July report by experts at the Brattle Group, the administration's bailout plan would have cost consumers \$34 billion over 2 years. That would have been a \$34 billion tax on American consumers. How would they have done that? By saying that you have to use coal-fired electricity as a way to keep the grid reliable. I disagreed with that. I would say, probably, many members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee disagreed with that, and, clearly, members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, as it is currently comprised, also disagreed with that.

Why was there such an adamant reaction? It is almost as if you were saying that, instead of letting the market make these decisions, people were going to force utilities to do projects that included coal—forcing coal onto the grid, even though the renewable energy was driving down costs and helping consumers to diversify. This is important because the bailout proponents have argued that coal is needed to ensure the grid is always working. When you look at this analysis, it does not hold up under the scrutiny. Trying to prop up uneconomical coal plants for the sake of the reliability of the grid is a fake rationale that the administration tried to use, and it would have impacted the free market and consumers.

I know that these rate increases would hurt manufacturers—because we have a lot of manufacturers in the State of Washington—who rely on affordable hydro to help drive down the cost of manufacturing. I think the cost of doing business and electricity rates all through the United States are going to be key issues for how we drive manufacturing competitiveness in the future. I certainly don't want to see a mandate by this administration that you have to use coal and drive up the costs for that manufacturing base and our consumers.

A fuel security report that was issued last month by the PJM Interconnection, which extends from Pennsylvania to New Jersey and all way to Illinois, found that there was no need to prop

up uneconomical power plants. They were confident that their grid—which is the world's largest competitive wholesale electricity market—would remain reliable over the next 5 years without having this mandate to use coal-fired electricity.

And this conclusion has nothing to do with the temperature outside. Even in a severe cold snap, the grid would continue to operate. In fact, the Washington Examiner—hardly a newspaper from which I quote a lot on the Senate floor, but I am going to in this case—reported that the largest power grid operator dismisses the threat of coal and nuclear power plant closures. It was referring to this report. It was referring to the PJM report that basically says: No, we don't have to worry about our grid reliability. This report dismisses the notion that the coal plant closures would somehow put us all at risk.

People are asking: What does that proposal have to do with Mr. McNamee?

As a senior political appointment at the Department of Energy, Mr. McNamee had a key role in promoting and defending this policy. He had a hand in ignoring the other experts at the DOE, who basically told him that his facts were wrong. He ignored the fact that this bailout proposal would place an undue burden on ratepayers and, as I mentioned, would impact our economy moving forward. He ignored the fact that we are seeing changes in clean energy markets—that they are cheaper and more effective than coal—and that this proposal, even though he continued to push it, was not going to help us keep an open and free electricity market.

Part of what the energy regulators do is to make decisions about projects moving forward that are based on what the market is bringing them. It is based on pure economics. Their job is to determine the return and the rates that would impact consumers. That is where the term “just and reasonable” comes into play. Their job is not to pick winners and losers in the market. Their job is to determine whether there will be just and reasonable rates for the individual consumers in those markets. It is their job to make sure that there are not excessive prices but true competition in the market—not to favor a high-cost fuel source like coal and try to protect it from other fuel sources that might be more economical for consumers.

As the Supreme Court has said, FERC is the guardian of the public interest in these matters. The duties of Commissioners is to protect the public interest, not the private interest, and they are to make sure there are fuel supplies for the future.

I view this threat of really trying to disrupt the free market as one of the most important things we need to continue to protect. Why? Because innovation shifts markets over time. We are trying to make decisions about distrib-

uted energy, and there will be major discussions by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on how to achieve that, particularly as we deal with the impacts of climate change.

Our historic energy system is at an inflection point, but it doesn't mean we should hold on to more expensive sources to generate electricity. It means that we should make sure that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission does its job as a quasi-judicial arbiters and are not politically motivated or coming to issues with non market-based rate solutions.

The fact the cost of wind has declined an incredible 69 percent over the last 9 years and solar a whopping 88 percent. If coal or nuclear costs had dropped that much, we would be having a different conversation about their future, but it hasn't. Even in States where coal has been a big part of the mix, building renewables is cheaper than keeping existing coal plants open.

According to the Northern Indiana Public Service Company's 2018 Integrated Resource Plan, they found that they could save their constituents \$4 billion over 30 years by ramping down the amount of coal it uses from two-thirds of its generation today, to 15 percent by 2023, and by eliminating coal entirely by 2028.

I would like to have taken Mr. McNamee at his word when he came before the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee and said that he would be a “fair, objective, and impartial arbiter.” That is what you want from a Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner. He also said that he would decide matters that would come before him based on the law and not based on politics. Yet, after his committee hearing, which I still remain very concerned about, we asked further questions. And a video of a speech Mr. McNamee gave earlier in the year on fossil fuels surfaced. I believe it shows that he has a continued bias beyond the President's asking him to draft a coal bailout. And he has tried to push it through the Federal Department of Energy even when scientists and others have told him that the facts just did not support the proposal.

Mr. McNamee's words reveal a very strong bias in favor of fossil fuels against renewable energy. For example, he claimed that fossil fuels were “key not only to our prosperity” but “to a clean environment.” And he continued to make comments that, I think, are demonstrably false. Now, as a private citizen, he is free to say whatever he wants. Yet, when you are hired to put a report out and have scientists within the agency correcting your false information and you are continuing to push these ideas, I think it puts you in a different category. It is hard to believe that you will be quasi-judicial and a fair arbiter.

I know that he has had many conversations, and I include the information in the video. One of his most striking statements is this: “The green

movement” is in a “constant battle between liberty and tyranny.” Then he said that his son should just deny climate science even if it hurts the boy's grades. These are not the words or sentiments, I believe, of someone who is going to play that role of an arbiter for Federal energy regulatory policy.

And these policies will come up before the Commission. I know the administration plans on continuing to find ways to have coal mandated into the market instead of allowing the free market to take place. I want to make sure that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission does not subject itself to some sort of bias in this process.

If Mr. McNamee becomes a Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner and if he continues to try to overturn relevant FERC decisions in court by arguing against these things, what kind of process will we see at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in response to his biases?

To me, you have the threat of legal uncertainty. Projects could be put on hold. Investments could be further delayed. Grid reliability rules could be impacted. Why? Is it because he is right? No, people already believe his previous statements have shown sufficient bias that would put in question his decisions on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. These energy policies, particularly in the area of cyber security, are going to be so critical for us to move forward on. Every day, our grid is impacted by these attacks by foreign entities. It is so important that we get about the task of making our grid more reliable and better protected against cyber security, not getting weighed down in a bunch of arguments against someone who does not appear, in my opinion, to have that quasi-judicial approach of making sure that the market and market decisions are fair and reasonable and just and reasonable rates for consumers. All of this is particularly distressing as Mr. McNamee's speech surfaced just days before the U.S. Global Change Research Program released its fourth quadrennial report.

Why is this important? Because the report showed the cost to the Federal Government and individual citizens of continued fossil fuel use. We all know that we need to have a diverse sources of energy. We know that we have to do better than what we are doing today. Yet, by pushing Mr. McNamee's name forward, this administration is simply trying to hold onto the past.

That approach could cost taxpayers trillions of dollars over the next few decades. The climate assessment basically estimates that, if we do nothing, by the end of the century the impacts will cost the United States upward of a half trillion dollars a year in crop damage, labor loss, and extreme weather damages. We can't afford that. We need to keep moving forward, and we need to let the market do its job.

For over 40 years, an independent and impartial Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission has provided Americans with decades of fuel-neutral competition, which has resulted, as I said, in those just and reasonable rates. Now, thankfully, technology advances are helping us to step up to new opportunities while still having the Commission oversight, based on just and reasonable rates. The Commission is making sure that we are doing all that we can to hold down the costs to consumers and move things forward in energy markets.

I ask my colleagues to review the video and this nominee's remarks in the video and to come to the Senate floor to vote against this nominee in the hopes that we can get someone else to take this job at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. I hope my colleagues will realize the importance of this before it is too late and that we will move forward with someone who can help us continue to have a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Clearly, this is not viewed as just politics on our side. There are many people who are on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission who have very strong political backgrounds. A few used to work right here in the Senate. So this is not about that. This is about somebody's having the quasi-judicial mindset to review these issues and not advocate, at all costs, a market-eroding notion that utilities should be forced to purchase uncompetitive coal and raise rates on consumers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in a few moments, we are going to have an opportunity to vote on moving to proceed to the nominee for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. I come to the floor this afternoon to speak in support of that nominee, Mr. Bernard McNamee.

Mr. McNamee has been nominated to serve on the FERC—the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—to complete the remainder of the term that runs through June 30, 2020.

The FERC is an independent agency within the Department of Energy. For a long period of time, nobody really paid much attention to the FERC or was quite sure what the mission was. The agency itself is one that has a very key and a very critical role within our country in that it regulates the electricity, the hydropower, the natural gas, and the oil pipeline industries. That basically means that FERC plays a critical role in keeping the lights on and ensuring the deliverability of reliable, safe, and affordable energy to American homes and businesses. The FERC really is key to so much of what goes on in the world of commerce and our economy.

It is important that we move forward with this vote today. If we confirm Mr. McNamee, FERC will once again have a full complement of five Commissioners on that agency. This is something we have worked hard to restore

in this Congress for a period of time. The Commission was down to just three Commissioners. They have a lot of work to do. The responsibilities are hard. Making sure that they are at full speed must be a priority. It is necessary to enable the agency to address a substantial backlog of energy infrastructure project applications and decisions that are pending on a range of important energy matters.

Let's talk about the qualifications Mr. McNamee has to serve at the FERC. Over the course of his career, he served in the Federal Government, including here in the Senate and in two State governments. He has also worked in the energy practice group of a major law firm. As a result of his work and his experience, Mr. McNamee has a deep understanding of energy issues, and I think a clear appreciation of FERC's mission. He has made a strong commitment to continue FERC's role as an independent and an impartial regulator, which to me is key. He also knows that it is FERC's duty to keep the lights on and not to carry out policy decisions that are made by other parts of the Federal Government. His mission within the FERC is pretty well defined.

There has been some discussion about Mr. McNamee's prior position implementing policy during the brief tenure he had at the Department of Energy. This was at a time when the administration was considering whether it could provide economic relief to coal and nuclear powerplants. That has generated its own level of discussion. Some have suggested that Mr. McNamee's work at the Department raises questions about his independence and have compared him to Ron Binz. Mr. Binz was a former nominee for FERC Chairman back in 2013. I would remind colleagues that there is a difference here.

Back in 2013, when the Senate was considering Mr. Binz, in fairness, we didn't actually have him up for consideration on the floor. Mr. Binz voluntarily withdrew his nomination from consideration, and that was based on bipartisan concerns that were raised about substantive comments of his and the approach he took to recruit support for his own nomination. I would rather not rehash history today, but I think there is a clear difference between the two nominees, and I believe the concerns about Mr. McNamee's independence are largely unfounded.

First, the Department of Energy's proposal to FERC on coal and nuclear plants was unanimously rejected by FERC just about a year ago. The Commission is currently not considering any other administration proposal to assist coal or nuclear powerplants.

I think it is also wrong to suggest that because someone has experience implementing policy somewhere that they should be disqualified from any role as an independent regulator. In fact, in this Congress alone, we have already confirmed two former Senate

policy staff members to the Commission. The first one was Neil Chatterjee, an individual many, many of us know. He previously served as the majority leader's energy policy adviser. The second one was Mr. Rich Glick, who served as senior counsel to Senator CANTWELL on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Like Chairman Chatterjee and Mr. Glick, Mr. McNamee's decisions as a Commissioner will not be contingent on the implementation of policy decisions in his prior roles. In private meetings and in his nomination hearing last month, Mr. McNamee repeatedly committed to be fair, to be objective, and to be an impartial arbiter in all of the cases that come before the Commission. He repeated this commitment in response to two rounds of questions for the record.

I believe Mr. McNamee understands and understands well that FERC is an independent Agency and that it must continue to function as such. I take his commitment to uphold FERC's autonomy and maintain an independent role as a Commissioner at face value. I also expect him to be fuel-neutral and not a champion of one resource over another.

As I mentioned, there is a lot of work that must go on at FERC. We need to have all five Commissioners in place to make sure that it happens. With a full set of Commissioners, FERC will be able to reduce or certainly work to reduce its backlog of energy infrastructure projects, including important natural gas pipelines and LNG export terminals.

If we are going to remain a prosperous nation with strong growth and affordable energy, we need our interstate pipeline network and our LNG facilities to continue to meet customer demands for our natural gas.

This resource serves a variety of critical needs, ranging from keeping us warm to enabling our manufacturing renaissance and, increasingly, to fuel our electric grid.

LNG exports also represent a significant opportunity for States like Alaska, scores of communities, and, looking abroad, for America's friends and allies.

FERC is also examining other important issues, including its regulations under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act—PURPA—the integration of energy storage onto the grid, and the impact of State policies on interstate electricity markets. These issues are incredibly complex, and they have widespread implications for our economy.

Again, it is key, it is timely, and it is important that we have a full complement on the FERC. Mr. McNamee is well qualified to join the other Commissioners in tackling these issues, and I urge all of my colleagues to support his nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak on leader time before we have a vote.

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

#### REMEMBERING GEORGE H.W. BUSH

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning, the life and career of the 41st President of the United States was celebrated at the National Cathedral. Friends, family, former leaders of our country, and leaders from around the world gathered to pay tribute to a life spent in joyful service to our country and unfailing dedication to his family. I was there. It was a very moving and wonderful ceremony.

The Senate now joins the rest of the country in mourning President George Herbert Walker Bush.

#### NOMINATION OF BERNARD L. MCNAMEE

Mr. President, now on another matter—a less happy matter—at the conclusion of my remarks, the Senate will vote on whether to consider the nomination of Bernard McNamee to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC. I staunchly oppose this nomination.

Throughout his career, Mr. McNamee has been manifestly biased in favor of the fossil fuel industry and biased against renewable energy sources—so much so that one cannot believe he would be a fair arbiter on these issues at FERC.

Mr. McNamee has called for “a unified campaign” to support fossil fuels. As a policy official at the Department of Energy, he played a significant role in designing a coal and nuclear bailout program that was unanimously rejected by FERC—hardly a liberal agency—the agency he is nominated to join.

When it comes to fossil fuel competitors, Mr. McNamee has expressed thoughts that only a real fossil fuel zealot could have. Not only has Mr. McNamee made numerous false claims about clean energy technologies, he has labeled support for renewable energies “organized propaganda” and likened its boosters to supporters of “tyranny.”

At a time when our globe—with wildfires in California, with flooding and hurricanes—is totally being changed because of global warming, we are putting someone on FERC—or there is an intent to put someone on FERC who has the most regressive views we have seen come around in a very long time.

Commissioners at FERC have matters related to all types of energy brought before them. They are supposed to be nonpartisan. They are supposed to impartially oversee rates and reliability and delivery based on what is best for the American people, not deep-seated personal beliefs and cer-

tainly not views that are so out of touch with so many people.

My guess is that maybe only a handful of Republicans agree with him on his views that are so regressive. I see my friend from Iowa here. What this guy said about wind and things like that are way off the charts.

Just a few weeks ago, the Trump administration itself released a report on climate change outlining its current impact and the devastating and dire consequences we will see if actions are not taken. That was not our report; that was the Trump administration's report. So now would be an awful time to elevate someone to our chief energy regulator who is so clearly biased against renewable sources of energy, such as wind and solar. I strongly urge—fervently urge—my colleagues to oppose this nomination.

I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). 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 Bernard L. McNamee, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2020.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Tim Scott, John Cornyn, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, Tom Cotton, Jerry Moran, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman.

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 Bernard L. McNamee, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2020, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 253 Ex.]

#### YEAS—50

Alexander	Collins	Enzi
Barrasso	Corker	Ernst
Blunt	Cornyn	Fischer
Boozman	Cotton	Flake
Burr	Crapo	Gardner
Capito	Cruz	Graham
Cassidy	Daines	Grassley

Hatch	Lee	Rubio
Heller	McConnell	Sasse
Hoeven	Moran	Scott
Hyde-Smith	Murkowski	Shelby
Inhofe	Paul	Sullivan
Isakson	Perdue	Thune
Johnson	Portman	Toomey
Kennedy	Risch	Wicker
Kyl	Roberts	Young
Lankford	Rounds	

#### NAYS—49

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

#### NOT VOTING—1

Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50 and the nays are 49.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

#### TRIBUTE TO MAJOR AARON HOUSE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am here to talk for a few minutes about Major House and the work he has done in our office. We have benefited for the last several years from a military detailee being on the Intelligence Committee and on the Defense Appropriations Committee and having significant military installations in our State, as many of us do, but we certainly have those in Missouri. It has been valuable having MAJ Aaron House with them.

Major House has been a great resource on a number of important national security issues in our office. The knowledge and experience he has gained as a U.S. Army Reserve officer have helped inform our discussions on defense issues critical to Missouri and critical to the country.

Aaron was born in Plattsburgh, NY, on the shores of Lake Champlain. He joined the Army in 2001. He first served as an enlisted soldier for 3 years and then as a commissioned officer after that. He has served in both the Engineer Corps and the Finance Corps. He deployed to Iraq, where he conducted rapid crater repair, route clearance, and construction operations. His most recent assignment before joining our office was with the joint staff working as an analyst for the Office of the Comptroller in Defense.

He is extremely well educated and holds a bachelor of science in manufacturing management from Clarkson University in New York, a master of science in human relations and business from Amberton University in Texas, and he has both a master of business administration and a master of public administration from Syracuse University in New York.