

That is one story of many across Montana and across this country, where Medicaid expansion has done an incredible job getting people back into the economy and helping build our economy. Know, once the ACA is repealed, Medicaid expansion is gone.

In Montana, we have 152,000 Montanans with preexisting conditions that before the ACA would disqualify them from coverage for healthcare. If the ACA is repealed, they could once again face lifetime caps; so, when you get sick and need that health insurance the most, it will not be there because you would be up against a cap.

They already have Medicare, where more than 110,000 Montana seniors rely on Medicare prescription drug plans for coverage of prescription drugs. That is going to be gone. It would reopen the doughnut hole and make hundreds of thousands responsible for increased costs.

I can tell you, in Montana, where poverty is the highest is in Indian Country. They would lose their assistance to purchase coverage or cost-sharing reductions to eliminate out-of-pocket expenses—these are our Native Americans—or those who were able to get on expanded Medicaid would lose that.

These aren't nameless, faceless folks. These are folks like Donna from Big Timber, who, after battling cancer, wouldn't be able to access quality, affordable healthcare without the ACA. They are people like Jeffrey from Great Falls, who has a daughter with special needs and owns a business. He told me his family and business would both fall apart without the ACA. It means the many folks in Libby who rely on quality insurance to access their community health center to address the unique healthcare challenges their government promised to protect would be gone.

Look, I have sat in this body, and I have heard speech after speech after speech about the ACA, what it does good and what it does not so good, but I am telling you, if you want to cause a train wreck in healthcare, this is a great way to do it—repeal it and let everybody be on their own—and it is not going to be pretty.

If you start losing rural hospitals in rural America, they will not come back. You will see further depopulation in rural America—because, by the way, that golden hour is called golden for a reason when you get hurt. If that hospital isn't there, you are more likely to go live in a more urban population center where healthcare is more expensive.

Nobody in this body has ever said the ACA was perfect, but I firmly believe it was a lot better than what we had. We always have the opportunity to step forth and improve it. Repealing it is not improving it.

What repealing is, is a campaign promise. We have heard them before: We are going to repeal the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare. We are going to build a wall on the southern border, no

matter if it separates farmers from their land, no matter if it creates a different border on the southern border. It was a campaign promise, just like repealing the ACA was.

The reason we are in single-digit popularity in this body is that we don't listen to the people. We listen to a select few who have certain people's ears in this body, and we don't make decisions based on what is best for this country and the people who live here. This is just another example of that.

It is time the Members of the greatest deliberative body wake up, take the ACA and improve the things that are wrong with it, and do our level best to make sure people can afford to get sick. It is pretty basic.

I yield the floor.

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

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

NOMINATION OF NICOLE R. NASON

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Nicole Nason to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Federal Highway Administration plays a central role in America's mobility. The administration is the lead partner to State and local transportation programs that maintain and improve our Nation's roads, highways, and bridges. It has been without a Senate-confirmed leadership director for far too long.

America's transportation infrastructure faces a number of challenges. Authorization of the Federal highway programs are going to expire at the end of September of 2020. We need to work together in Congress to write and pass a bipartisan highway infrastructure bill that upgrades America's roads and bridges.

The Environment and Public Works Committee, which I chair, has already begun the bipartisan process of drafting this legislation. The Federal Highway Administration needs a strong Administrator in the office, one who can work with Congress on the development and implementation of highway infrastructure legislation.

Nicole Nason is the right person for the job. She is well qualified, and brings impressive experience in transportation policy to this critically important position.

Under President Bush, she served as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. That is the Department of Transportation's top road safety official.

Before that, she served as the Department of Transportation's Assistant Secretary for Government Affairs. In that role, she played a key part in ne-

gotiating the bipartisan passage of a 5-year highway reauthorization bill.

Ms. Nason most recently served as the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Administration, a position where she has managed nearly 2,000 employees and contractors.

Ms. Nason has won praise from a wide variety of groups. Helen Witty is the national president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. This is what she stated:

Nicole is a true champion of highway safety and will be an asset to the Department of Transportation as the Federal Highway Administration Administrator. On behalf of MADD, I wholeheartedly endorse her for this position.

The Associated General Contractors of America had this to say:

Ms. Nason is a superb choice to fulfill the Federal Highway Administration's leadership role in improving mobility on our nation's highways.

The Governors Highway Safety Association has stated:

Throughout her career, Ms. Nason has demonstrated a clear commitment to public service and, during her tenure as Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) a dedication to advancing highway safety.

Confirming Ms. Nason to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration will be an important step in supporting our Nation's highways, roads, and bridges.

The Environment and Public Works Committee recognized this when we reported her nomination by voice vote on February 5. That has been nearly 2 months ago. It shouldn't take this long to confirm such a highly qualified nominee to such an important position.

Nicole Nason will be an excellent Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. I encourage every Senator to vote to confirm her.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Nicole R. Nason, of New York, to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 15 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my friend and colleague, Senator BARRASSO, to speak on behalf of the nomination of Nicole Nason to serve as Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

Ms. Nason is currently serving as the Assistant Secretary for Administration

at the State Department. Right now, though, there is no Administrator leading the Federal Highway Administration. In fact, it has been more than 2 years since we had an Administrator in charge at that important Agency. The last time our country went this long without top leadership at the Federal Highway Administration was more than 100 years ago, back when the Agency was known as the Bureau of Public Roads. Henry Ford had just introduced the Model T, and the idea of speedy and safe transcontinental travel was still outside of our imagination and even further from being realized.

Today the Federal Highway Administration oversees more than 220,000 miles of our National Highway System and some 145,000 bridges. The sad truth is, many of these roadways and many of these bridges are in poor, in some cases, even dangerous condition, having been in use far beyond the intended duration of their original design.

Moments from now, when Ms. Nason is confirmed—and I hope she will be confirmed—to be our Administrator, I think she is going to inherit responsibilities and political realities far more challenging and complex than perhaps all of her predecessors.

As our next Administrator, Ms. Nason will find herself at the center of a national crisis because our highway trust fund is going broke, and the system of paying for it is broken.

Last year, we spent about \$11 billion more from the highway trust fund than we collected in revenues. When that happens, the highway trust fund turns to the general fund, Treasury, and says: How about \$11 billion? The general fund doesn't have \$11 billion, so what Treasury does is it issues debt in order to finance the hole in the trust fund, the general fund, so we can actually fund the hole in the highway trust fund. It is crazy. In fact, to pay for the FAST Act, we took \$70 billion from the general fund and other programs.

For the next Transportation bill, we need to find an additional \$68 billion—\$68 billion—just to prevent the highway trust fund from going broke for 5 more years and to keep our programs at the current funding level.

We all know that the current funding isn't sufficient, either. Despite spending more than we collect, we still aren't spending enough. The backlog of money to rehabilitate and improve highways and bridges in this country has grown to \$800 billion. The backlog for roads, highways, and bridges is \$800 billion. The 800-pound gorilla in the room is really an \$800 billion gorilla.

We have to figure out how we are going to pay to maintain or better yet rebuild and modernize our roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems. That should be near the top of our to-do list. It is not just the Senate, not just the House, not just the Congress, not just the administration, but all of us together.

Whether or not it is fair, Ms. Nason's job as Administrator will be made ei-

ther easier or all the more difficult by Congress's ability or inability and the administration's ability or inability to responsibly address that 800-pound gorilla.

On the topic of paying for infrastructure, I was encouraged to hear from Ms. Nason at her confirmation hearing that she believes that "all options are on the table." Those are her words: "All options are on the table." I welcome those words.

We also discussed several other policy-related concerns Ms. Nason will need to begin addressing on day one at the Federal Highway Administration. Too many pedestrians, too many bicyclists, and too many drivers put their lives at risk when they use our roadways.

In 2017, 2 years ago, there were more than 37,000 fatalities on our Nation's roadways. In that same year, nearly 7,000 nonmotorized users were killed. That is unacceptable.

I was encouraged that during her confirmation hearing, Ms. Nason promised that she would have a focus on safety at the Agency and work closely with NHTSA and others to improve information-sharing with States, localities, and Tribal communities.

Too many Americans lack access to reliable transit or safe places to walk or to bike. In my State, we have done a lot in the last 20, 25 years. There is a lot more to do, and, frankly, we can learn from other States, and maybe one or two of them can learn from us.

Meanwhile, our country's public safety networks should connect people to commerce and opportunity in every ZIP Code—not just some of them, in every ZIP Code. In too many instances, disadvantaged communities are spatially disconnected from commerce and opportunity. Lower income neighborhoods are often far from good-paying job opportunities, or safe and dependable transit options don't exist for those working outside of an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule. Our country's public transportation networks should lift up disadvantaged communities—lift them up. The Federal Highway Administration must be a strong Federal partner in that effort.

Too many drivers lack access to charging stations for electric vehicles and hydrogen fueling stations for fuel cell vehicles. This is especially frustrating for those who have made investments in this technology but may not have feasible options to use those investments.

That brings us to the glaring reality of climate change and its worsening impact on our infrastructure. Our vehicles and travel patterns exacerbate the impacts of climate change, and mobile sources are our Nation's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. I want to say that again. Our vehicles and travel patterns accelerate and exacerbate the effects of climate change, and mobile sources—our cars, trucks, and vans—are our Nation's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in this country and on the planet.

Meanwhile, increasingly frequent and extreme weather events are continuing to erode our transportation networks. We see it in my State. My guess is that we see it in every other State that is represented here.

Sea level rise threatens the structural integrity and longevity of our roads and bridges. Delaware is the lowest lying State in America, and seas are rising. That is not a good combination.

The challenges are great, but here is the good news: so are the opportunities. The challenges are great, but so are the opportunities.

Today, I am supporting the nomination of Ms. Nason because I believe the key to success at any organization—any organization I have ever been a part of—is its leadership—the Navy, the State of Delaware's Governor, and here. Right now, the Federal Highway Administration needs a top leader, and I believe that in Ms. Nason, they will have one. I hope—more than just hope, I believe she is going to prove to be a partner with Congress and work with us to address some of the many challenges I have laid out and the many challenges before us in the months and years ahead. I call on all of our colleagues—Democratic, Republican, and a couple of Independents—to rise up later today when the vote is taken and vote in favor of her nomination.

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. PAUL. 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. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for both sides to yield back all remaining time.

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

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

Mrs. FISCHER. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 54 Ex.]

YEAS—95

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Bennet	Grassley	Reed
Blackburn	Harris	Risch
Blumenthal	Hassan	Roberts
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Heinrich	Rosen
Braun	Hirono	Rounds
Brown	Hoeben	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schatz
Capito	Isakson	Schumer
Cardin	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Carper	Jones	Scott (SC)
Casey	Kaine	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	King	Sinema
Coons	Klobuchar	Smith
Cornyn	Lankford	Tester
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Cramer	Manchin	Toomey
Crapo	Markey	Udall
Cruz	McConnell	Van Hollen
Daines	McSally	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—1

Sanders

NOT VOTING—4

Booker	Stabenow
Moran	Sullivan

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 actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

FREE TRADE RESOLUTION

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, for the last 3 years, the world has watched with rapt attention as the United Kingdom has debated and negotiated that country's exit from the European Union after the historic Brexit vote in June of 2016.

There have been multiple deals proposed since then, and now the deadline for withdrawal fast approaches this Friday. As the special ally of Britain for a very long time—a very close ally for well over 100 years—this is and it ought properly be of great interest to us in the United States of America.

Throughout times of change and tumult, the UK has been one of our staunchest and most loyal allies. We stood beside each other through two world wars and throughout the Cold War. Now, in the 21st century, the United States and the United Kingdom have become even stronger friends and partners, both in the fight against global terrorism and for freedom, peace, and prosperity.

The United Kingdom, significantly, is the seventh largest trading partner the United States has. In 2017 alone, we are talking about \$232 billion in goods that were traded between our two countries. Now, Britain's impending exit from the European Union presents an enormous opportunity to strengthen and to preserve our special relationship.

As the Brexit deadline approaches, the United States should stand ready and willing to negotiate a free trade agreement with the United Kingdom, which is the purpose of the resolution that I want to bring before this body today. Prior to this, we haven't been able to have true free trade with Britain, precisely because the UK was a member of the EU and, therefore, had to play by its rules.

Yet once the UK leaves, it will reclaim the authority to make its own trade agreements, opening up a window of opportunity for genuine, bilateral free trade with our own country. Such an agreement would advance prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic as an engine of economic liberty.

This resolution—the one I would like to bring up and plan to bring up either later today or Monday, based on the schedule I am trying to negotiate with Senator WYDEN—is a good deal. It is a good deal for the United States and for the United Kingdom. I think it is such a no-brainer, in fact, that most Americans would probably be surprised to find out that we don't already have a free trade agreement with our friends on the other side of the pond.

Yet there are some objections to this resolution. Some of my colleagues have argued that by encouraging a free trade agreement with Britain, we would somehow be meddling in this affair or picking sides, or that we would somehow be affirming Brexit. Yet this resolution that I want to offer and am suggesting that we call up and pass by unanimous consent, itself, says nothing about whether or not Brexit should or should not happen—not at all. That is not a decision that belongs to this body, and it is not a decision that I am even suggesting that this body make. It is not ours to make. It is a decision for the British people to make—the people of the United Kingdom—and they, of course, have made it. They have decided to stand on their own. We should stand with them just as they have stood beside us in conflict after conflict, in cause after cause, defending the dignity of the immortal human soul and the cause of freedom throughout the world.

Others have claimed that the point of this measure is somehow to lambaste the EU, but this, too, badly misses the point, which is simply to preserve a unique and important alliance and to promote America's interests in the world.

Finally, some have suggested that this resolution that I want to propose and call up and pass before this body did not go through the Finance Committee. First of all, this is not a com-

plicated resolution. It is simple. It is a straightforward, 2-page resolution declaring the sense of the Senate that No. 1, the United States has and should have a close, mutually beneficial trading and economic partnership with the United Kingdom without interruption and, No. 2, that the President, with the support of Congress, should lay the groundwork for a future trade agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom.

Also, the vast majority of resolutions that simply specify a general sense of the Senate do not normally go through the full-blown legislative committee process. A straightforward assertion of friendship, support, and economic partnership with one of our oldest and closest allies in the world should not be controversial—not in the least. America's special relationship with the United Kingdom is special because we make it so—our two peoples, our two governments.

It is not our job to decide whether or not the UK stays in the EU. It is up to the British people to decide whether to stick with the EU or not. It is up to us to decide whether we stick with the British, and we should. We should do that by supporting this resolution today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I want to be able to talk about a couple of subjects today, but I want to be able to set the context on these with the recognition of Women's History Month. A lot of fairly remarkable ladies in Oklahoma have set American history and world history into a different pace based on what they have done in the past.

I can't help, when I am talking about Women's History Month, to be able to talk about my own mom, who is a pacesetter in her own leadership. She was a student, librarian, and mom. She went through elementary school librarian and high school librarian and then became the director of libraries for a very large school district.

She led the way for our family and community. She even led the American Association of School Librarians around the country. She was a pacesetter there.

There are other pacesetters that I would highlight who are Oklahoma pacesetters. The first is Claire Luper. Born in Okfuskee County, OK, in 1923, Claire Luper was the first African-American student to enroll in the History Department at the University of Oklahoma. She was a civil rights leader. She led Americans at lunch counters in 1958 as she was seated there and helped to train youth to be seated at lunch counters to break through the racism that was existing in Oklahoma City and in Oklahoma.

Claire Luper herself was arrested 26 times for just eating lunch—for just