

other ways we can lower the costs of natural disasters. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has found that every \$1 spent mitigating against natural disasters saves an average of \$6. Last year, Congress passed the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, which I was proud to support. This bill included programs that encouraged mitigation activities. Congress should be open to any idea that could help our country better plan for annual costs of these natural disasters. This would allow us to respond to natural disasters more efficiently, while also reducing the burden on American taxpayers.

With our country more than \$22 trillion in debt and quickly approaching \$1 trillion annual deficits, we must do everything in our power to put our country on a more fiscally sustainable path. Better budgeting for natural disasters will not fix all of our financial problems, but it is a good place to start.

Before I conclude, I want to touch on another area of concern, and that is the growing prevalence of directed scorekeeping. That is a way of saying: We are not going to count that, even though we are going to spend it, and we can spend it more than once.

Congressional budget statutes have established scoring rules that are intended to provide standardized accounting to ensure that lawmakers have the best possible information upon which to base fiscal decisions. In recent years, however, we have seen more and more attempts to undermine that process and instead direct the scoring outcomes.

Last week, the Senate Budget Committee, which I chair, approved a fiscal year 2020 budget resolution that aims to crack down on this process by allowing a surgical point of order to be raised against any such provision. What that means is that the offending provision can be stricken from the underlying measure unless 60 Senators vote to retain it.

Unfortunately, the disaster bill which was brought to the floor this week included a provision that would essentially direct the appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, up to a limit, to be scored as costing zero dollars. The effect of this change would allow Congress to spend an additional \$2 billion above the statutory spending caps each year, while obscuring the real budgetary impacts from the American people. I filed an amendment that would solve that.

It is long past time for an honest conversation about the fiscal challenges facing our country. In the Budget Committee, we tried to advance that conversation with the budget that was approved last week. Unfortunately, the directed scorekeeping provision in the disaster bill considered earlier this week would set that effort back. I hope that when Congress returns to consideration of disaster legislation, it abandons that multiple-spending effort.

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.

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

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

NATO

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today following our colleague Senator TILLIS to join him in talking about the importance of NATO and expressing our deep appreciation for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Senator TILLIS and I are the cochairs of the newly established Senate NATO Observer Group, which builds on the effort that was started back in the 1990s, by Tom Daschle and Trent Lott, to address the expansion of NATO, following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Our task is not just to shepherd through the Senate any changes in NATO that require Senate approval, but it is also to remind all of us and to remind the American public just how important NATO is.

Over the last seven decades, the NATO alliance has stood by its members in the darkest hours, including in Afghanistan, after the United States was attacked on September 11.

As Secretary General Stoltenberg reminded us yesterday, the only time article 5, the mutual aid clause of the NATO charter, has been invoked was after September 11, after the United States was attacked by terrorists.

Our Transatlantic bond has been critical to the United States and NATO, and, in particular, it has sustained a period of unprecedented global security and stability. While people may not recognize it, every day the United States sees the benefit of NATO. Whether we need to use NATO bases to evacuate American troops from conflict or to ensure that American goods and people travel safely across the Atlantic Ocean, NATO plays a critical role.

As NATO marks its 70th anniversary—today, in fact—the fact is that the alliance makes us stronger around the world and safer at home. So it is no wonder that Americans are very supportive of this organization. Any implication that Americans don't like or understand NATO is just simply wrong.

This week the Pew Research Center unveiled research to show that nearly 8 in 10 Americans, or 77 percent of Americans, including large majorities in both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, agree that being a member of NATO is good for the United States.

We have also seen that the Chicago Council on Global Affairs has recorded a steady increase in NATO favorability across generations of Americans. Even the millennials, the generation born between 1981 and 1996, which are now

the largest voting bloc in the United States, value our alliances, and 72 percent back the United States' contribution to NATO.

Boosted by these numbers, Congress has been more active than at any time in my memory in expressing its support for NATO. In 2017 and 2018, Congress took more votes in support of the United States' enduring commitment to article 5 and NATO than at any time since the fall of the Soviet Union. That is why Senators TILLIS and I reestablished the Senate NATO Observer Group last year. Since then, we have enjoyed a diverse and active membership across the Republican and Democratic Parties, as well as the enduring support of the Senate's leadership—both Senator MCCONNELL, the majority leader, and Senator SCHUMER, the Democratic leader.

Further, Congress continues to put its word into action by allocating significant levels of funding to help Europe deter threats that emanate from NATO's eastern and southern borders, already having provided \$6.5 billion in the last year alone for the European Deterrence Initiative.

I have no doubt that as the Senate prepares to provide its advice and consent to NATO's 30th member, North Macedonia, Members of Congress will, once again, rally to NATO's side and push forward on initiatives to further strengthen NATO.

I should just call out the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as the country of Greece, for reaching an agreement around the name change for North Macedonia that both countries have agreed to and that the Parliaments of both countries have supported.

So as China and Russia struggle to maintain allies and resort to coercion and force to keep countries in their sphere, NATO has proven to be an enduring American advantage in an uncertain world.

Our NATO allies continue to magnify the strength of our military, and they stand ready to protect us and protect our shared interests and values worldwide. For this reason, I thank our allies for what they have done for the United States and for the people of Europe who are part of our partner nations.

While we may have our differences, we will always remain stronger with allies. As the Secretary General said yesterday, "it is good to have friends."

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. 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 21.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Daniel Desmond Domenico, of Colorado, to be United States District Judge for the District of Colorado.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

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 Daniel Desmond Domenico, of Colorado, to be United States District Judge for the District of Colorado.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer, David Perdue, Todd Young, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 27.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Patrick R. Wyrick, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

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 Patrick R. Wyrick, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer, David Perdue, Todd Young, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 105.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Cheryl Marie Stanton, of South Carolina, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

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 Cheryl Marie Stanton, of South Carolina, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor.

John Thune, Thom Tillis, Steve Daines, James Lankford, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Mike Rounds, John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Richard Burr, David Perdue, Roger F. Wicker, Lindsey Graham, James E. Risch, Mitch McConnell.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 173.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John P. Abizaid, of Nevada, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

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 John P. Abizaid, of Nevada, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, John Thune, John Barrasso, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, John Boozman, James E. Risch, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Shelley Moore Capito.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 31.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Holly A. Brady, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Indiana.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

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 Holly A. Brady, of Indiana, to be