Take Americans for Prosperity, for instance. It is a lovely, benign-sounding name. Who could possibly be against prosperity? Yet, in reality, Americans for Prosperity is a front group that is funded by the fossil fuel billionaire Koch brothers, whose company, by the way, also lobbied against the standards. Americans for Prosperity doesn't disclose its donors. It is a secretive organization. So what little we know about its funders comes thanks to the hard work of a few muckraking, investigative journalists.

We do know that both ExxonMobil and the fossil fuel industry's flagship trade association, the American Petroleum Institute, give the AFP money, and they give them big money. Since the Citizens United decision, the AFP has spent about $70 million on Federal elections. It is throwing its weight around.

To oppose the auto standards, the AFP created an elaborate online deception campaign that was centered on this petition against the standards. Unfortunately, for them, the public was not buying its nonsense. Despite an onslaught of online advertising, only 231 people signed up. It looks like no one wanted to spend more on gas and that no amount of fossil fuel lies could convince them otherwise.

FreedomWorks is yet another front group that has received millions in funding from the Koch brothers and fossil fuel interests like the American Petroleum Institute. It also started an online campaign against the standards, and that, too, bombed. There is a word for this stuff. It is called astroturf. It is fake grassroots. Real grassroots organizations don't need tens of millions of dollars from fossil fuel front groups. Real grassroots organizations thrive on the engagement and the passion of citizens, not on millions in special interest, dark money.

In having flopped at astroturfing, the oil industry organized its front groups to write directly to Trump administration officials and lobby them to repeal the standards. Here is one of these letters, and a dozen phony front groups signed it. Like I said, they built a constellation of these phony front groups, and a dozen signed this letter. These groups together have received—like I said, mostly of secret money—a minimum of $196 million from fossil fuel industry interests, including from the Koch brothers, API, ExxonMobil, and Chevron.

This $196 million did a lot of talking, for this letter found its way to an eager audience in the Trump administration, which is stuffed with fossil fuel lobbyists and flunkies. So they gave the oil industry exactly what it wanted—a proposal to freeze the auto emission standards and to challenge California and other States, like mine, our authority to set our own standards.

What is strange about this is that this proposal isn't what the auto industry says it wanted. Once the oil industry jumped into the fray, the auto industry let Big Oil take over, or it got shoved aside by Big Oil. Big Oil barged in and got exactly what it wanted—weakened standards that would allow it to sell—hold your breath here—up to $1 trillion in extra gasoline. For a mere expenditure of $196 million through these 12 phony front groups, they got to sell $1 trillion in extra gasoline. That is how you make big money—by renting out the U.S. Government. That, by the way, is $1 trillion that comes out of consumers' pockets and goes into Big Oil's. No wonder Big Oil is hiding behind front groups.

In the press, unnamed auto industry lobbyists have complained that the proposed freeze isn't what they asked for. Well, that is not good enough. Auto industry executives need to step up and tell President Trump and Secretary Chao and Administrator Wheeler that their oily proposal is not acceptable.

This car rule saga that we have seen play out is a microcosm of the climate change problem that we face. The fossil fuel industry, through its armada of phony front groups, fights to defend its own massive sales and massive, massive taxpayer subsidies for its product. The IMF has estimated that the fossil fuel industry receives a $700 billion—with a ''b''—annual subsidy in the United States alone. So it has every incentive to spend whatever it takes to control things in Washington, like giving $196 million to these front groups. Meanwhile, the rest of corporate America, including car companies that claim to support reducing carbon pollution, just don't show up.

One side lobbies Congress against climate action, and the other side doesn't show up. One side spends tens of millions on attack ads against candidates who support climate action, and the other side doesn't show up. One side pours hundreds of millions of dollars into trade associations and phony front groups, and the other side doesn't show up. The result is entirely predictable—money talks, unfortunately, around here, and big money commands.

Things would change a bit if the rest of corporate America would challenge the fossil fuel industry's money and influence to help our colleagues on the other side get something done on climate change.

I close by pointing out that democracy and the free market are the twin pillars of our American example. What does it say for them as institutions when one industry—the fossil fuel industry—can simultaneously capture our democracy and pervert the free market with its massive subsidies? It is not a good story.

America's strength has always been our example. Our inaction on climate change—one of the foremost challenges of the world—sullies our American example. For the good of our country, for the good of those institutions, for the good of our American example, it is time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on this nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Is there further debate?

If not, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Brady nomination?

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 73 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Burr	Inhofe	Rubio
Capito	Isakson	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Jones	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sinema
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	McSally	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—42

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

NOT VOTING—2

Booker	Harris

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Brady nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative 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 David Steven Morales, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of David Steven Morales, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber wishing to vote or to change their vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 74 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Alexander	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Blackburn	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hawley	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Roberts
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Burr	Inhofe	Rounds
Capito	Isakson	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Collins	Jones	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sinema
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Manchin	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Enzi	McSally	Toomey
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—2

Booker	Harris

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of David Steven Morales, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, 2 years ago, I exposed the Democrats' plan for socialized medicine and allowed every Senator here to take a clear stand and reject this disastrous idea once and for all. Unfortunately, very few Senate Democrats were willing to oppose socialized medicine then. Well, they are back at it again today. So now I am here again to shed some much needed light on what seems to be a never-ending game to score political points and, even worse, to set the stage for terrible policy—a continuing call for socialized medicine.

We are seeing this false narrative of ''free socialized medicine'' making headlines, but you see, it is not actually free; somebody has to pay for it. In fact, every single one of us and our kids and our grandkids will be paying for it for a long time if this nonsensical plan becomes reality.

Montanans face enough hardships with rising prescription drug costs and rising premiums. The Democrats' socialized medical scheme will cost the American taxpayer $32 trillion over 10 years—$32 trillion—not to mention that this scheme would kick millions off their healthcare plan and eliminate private health insurance.

In combination with the left's absurd Green New Deal, what we are seeing here today is a pattern when it comes to the Democrats' very liberal and leftist agenda. They don't blink an eye when their liberal policies cost the taxpayers trillions of dollars, and they aren't coming up with feasible solutions.

In fact, too many Montanans are faced with the very tough choice of choosing between health and putting food on the table. Prescription drug prices are out of control. Montanans are sick and tired of being sick and tired. They want Congress to do something. They want results. They want outcomes. That is why I have been fighting for a commonsense solution like my bill, the CREATES Act, which addresses high prescription drug costs and improves access to care in our rural communities.

The left's pie-in-the-sky proposal promises a great deal, but we all know the extent of empty promises in this town. These proposals do nothing but throw hard-working Montanans under the bus, foot the massive tax bill to the taxpayers, and prop up failed policies just to appease a radicalizing base across this country in the Democratic Party. The people of Montana want better than this. They deserve better than this.

To my colleagues who are attempting to make a hard run to the left to score some points within your base, I simply ask this: Will you please put your country over your party? Will you put the interests of the people over your own self-political interests, or will you continue to peddle the lie of socialized medicine to the American people?

I think it is time we get to work, hunker down and roll up our sleeves and produce real results that the people of Montana and across our Nation deserve. They deserve serious answers, and they deserve serious solutions, and it is long overdue that we give them that.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Virginia.

NOMINATION OF JOHN P. ABIZAID

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I rise to speak today about the vote we cast earlier confirming GEN John Abizaid, Retired, to be U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

I was proud to vote for him. I think he is very well qualified for that position. The position has been vacant since 2017. Other critical countries in this most important region are without Ambassadors—Egypt, Jordan, and Pakistan.

General Abizaid has his work cut out for him, and I want to speak specifically about some of the challenges in Saudi Arabia now.

I believe there is a great day of reckoning that is now pending in the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

Last week, the House of Representatives passed a Senate resolution ordering the President to stop U.S. military action in support of Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen's civil war. The Senate had earlier acted on that bill in 2018. It went to the House and died. The Senate took up the bill again recently, and the House passed it. The bill is now on its way to the President's desk.

The President has indicated that he is likely to veto the bill, to continue U.S. support for Saudi military activity in Yemen. If that happens, the bill will come back to the Senate, and the Senate will then have the opportunity to vote on whether that veto should be overridden.

The House vote to withdraw U.S. support for this military activity was 247 to 175. The Senate vote was 54 to 46.

The Yemen civil war has been a humanitarian disaster. Many of my colleagues have spoken at length about this, so I will not speak at length. Just to underline key points, it has been a humanitarian disaster, and the United States should not be involved. Saudi intervention has made it worse.

As of November 2018, nearly 7,000 civilians have been killed, nearly 11,000 had been wounded—the majority by Saudi Arabia-led coalition airstrikes, many of which are targeted and prosecuted in amateurish ways. Those statistics are according to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for