

to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Chuck Grassley, James E. Risch, Johnny Isakson, John Barrasso, Steve Daines, David Perdue, Roger F. Wicker, Jerry Moran, John Cornyn, John Thune, Richard Burr, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Lindsey Graham, 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. 24.

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 Wendy Vitter, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

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 Wendy Vitter, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, David Perdue, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, John Thune, John Hoeven, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Steve Daines, John Kennedy.

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. 221.

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 Brian J. Bulatao, of Texas, to be an Under Secretary of State (Management).

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 Brian J. Bulatao, of Texas, to be an Under Secretary of State (Management).

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, Steve Daines, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Tim Scott, Mike Rounds, David Perdue, Mike Crapo, John Thune, John Hoeven, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, Pat Roberts, John Kennedy, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE HACKLEY AND RECOGNIZING BBQGUYS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I rise as a Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship to highlight a veteran-owned Louisiana business that is a true success story. With me today is my colleague from my office, Ms. Cassie Leonard.

We all know small businesses are how many Americans live the American dream. They start small; they start with a passion; they create jobs; and then they help us compete globally in America and spark innovation. These American small business owners are often our friends. They are often our neighbors.

They succeed through the hard work of entrepreneurs like Mr. Mike Hackley of Baton Rouge. I am talking about Mike and his business BBQGuys because it is National Small Business Week and because BBQGuys was named Senate Small Business of the Week just last week.

Mike has served our country in many ways. He has served our country in the Air Force for more than 10 years. Once his military career ended, he worked in a number of different sectors. Like a lot of Louisianans, Mike loves the outdoors. In Louisiana, we will barbecue no matter how hot it gets outside.

Mike turned his passion into a profession, and he did it by starting an outdoor business called The Grill Store & More.

Early on, being the perceptive business person he is, Mike saw an opening with e-commerce, something we take for granted today. He launched a

website called www.bbqguys.com, and he did this in 2001, 18 years ago, when Americans who did have the internet were on dial-up connections.

Today, 18 years later, BBQGuys is a giant in outdoor living online retailers. Mike now employs nearly 300 workers. He started with less than 10. That is the American dream. That is American success, and BBQGuys continues to evolve and to grow.

They started designing and manufacturing premium barbecue grills, with manufacturing operations here in the United States, and they are looking to export into Europe and Australia.

Mike also remains committed to a culture of teamwork at BBQGuys. Every day he makes a point of going around the office to say good morning to his employees, and I am not talking about just to the executives. It is no wonder Mike has a high employee retention rate, a reputation for outstanding customer service, and an A-plus rating from the Better Business Bureau. BBQGuys has also been named one of the 5,000 fastest growing businesses in the United States by Inc. Magazine for 11 years in a row.

I am proud to stand today before the U.S. Senate to say I am proud of Mike Hackley. I am proud of what he has built. He is realizing the American dream, and he is creating good jobs for my State.

Mike, if you are listening, thank you for making Louisiana proud.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

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

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

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GOLDEN SPIKE

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, on May 10, 1869, a golden spike was driven into the last link joining the rails of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit, UT. Made of 17-carat gold and driven into a predrilled hole in the very last ceremonial tie, it bore the inscription: "May God continue the unity of our country as this railroad unites the two great oceans of the world." Indeed, it did, with the joining of the Union Pacific Railroad, stretching from the Missouri River near the Iowa-Nebraska border, and the Central Pacific Railroad, stretching from Sacramento, CA—east met west. The United States became truly united.

As the spike was struck, a telegraph was sent around the Nation, and bells rang out from coast to coast. This moment, you see, gave lots of people throughout the United States and lots of people in my State of Utah in particular access to what they needed to grow, to thrive, to prosper, to feed their families; that is, access to other people.

Throughout the history of humanity, people have needed access to other people. That is why great civilizations have sprung up along great rivers and in areas where they had access to an ocean port. It is one of the reasons why, throughout much of history, people in land-locked regions of any country, including our own, very often have a hard time making a living. The introduction of the railroad started to help to change that.

Tomorrow marks the 150th anniversary of this pivotal moment, and so it is only right that we pause for just a minute to recognize it, for this was a moment that changed the course of history in Utah and in our Nation and ultimately the entire world. With the driving of that golden spike, the arduous 6-month journey that used to be required to cross the country—costing \$1,000—had become a mere 10-day trip costing only \$150.

Thousands of miles of tracks were laid across the country, allowing people to migrate west and to establish new settlements far more quickly, safely, and easily. It transformed the economy across Utah and throughout the Nation. Goods became efficiently transported across much farther distances. Settlers found new markets, and buyers on the frontier and in rural areas were able to purchase items that had previously been completely unavailable to them in some cases or at least very difficult to obtain. It spurred a boon in communications, commerce, agriculture, construction, and mining. It started a significant new chapter in our relationship with Asia and the Pacific region, and it served as a model of innovation and prosperity for the rest of the world.

All of this came about, it is important to note, from the perseverance and efforts of many different people from different walks of life working together. It required a clear-eyed vision from President Lincoln and the Federal Government and a fruitful private-public partnership that allowed the engineers, railroad companies, and local communities the freedom to do their jobs and to do them well and without undo interference. It would not have been possible without the work of the Chinese, Irish, Mormons, Civil War veterans, Native Americans, and countless other laborers who toiled so long and so hard with such a clear devotion to build these railroads.

Most of this is, of course, in the history books, as well it ought to be. Most of us have a sense of the enormous achievement this moment represented some 150 years ago tomorrow, of the great impact it had on our Nation and the legacy it has left behind for us and for our posterity. But what we often do not know are some of the stories of the ordinary men and women behind these achievements and the ones who have worked so hard to preserve this great legacy. There are, in fact, hidden heroes who make history and unseen efforts of people who worked so hard to

keep that history alive. The doors of history sometimes turn on small and often unseen hinges, and so I would like to take a moment to honor a few of those people today who helped move history forward.

Some of us might know the name of Theodore Judah—a railroad and civil engineer who was key to the original idea and design of connecting these railroads and who advocated for the so-called Central Route for the first transcontinental railroad, the Central Route marked in red in this picture. But less familiar is the name of Theodore's wife, Anna Judah.

While many routes were surveyed as possible paths for the railroad, Theodore Judah had an often-scoffed-at dream of laying rails through the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, from California going eastward. Anna Judah shared Theodore's dream of connecting the first transcontinental railroad. When Theodore hiked and surveyed the Sierra Nevadas, Anna hiked and worked right alongside of him. She sketched and did water colors and even oil paintings of the terrain, plants, and the foliage. She gathered and labeled the various fossils and minerals. She took copious notes all the while, taking into account different things she and her husband observed as they were traveling.

After their time in the Sierra Nevadas, Theodore and Anna, like Brigham Young, knew: This is the place. Together they fell in love with the idea of the railroad taking the Central Route across the Sierra Nevadas, believing that it would provide the perfect path for what they wanted to accomplish. So they began traveling back and forth from California, dedicating their efforts to lobbying for their dream in Washington.

Anna was sharp, charming, tenacious, and undoubtedly she was Theodore's biggest booster. She had the idea to display an exhibit right here in the Capitol showcasing her notes and her clippings from their travels in the area, her drawings and her paintings, samples of mineral and ore she had collected, and charts and graphs that she was able to present in a way that made them understandable to laymen, that helped other people understand why this area was so important and the significant role it could play in our Nation's development.

Literally hundreds of Senators, Congressmen, lobbyists, and government clerks visited her display, which helped convince the eastern legislators of the beauty of the western mountains—which many of them had never seen or at least not experienced anything like the way she had—and turned their hearts to the possibility of building a railroad over them and through them to unite a country.

Ultimately, Congress was persuaded—to everyone's benefit—to choose Judah's proposal for the Central Route and did so in large part because of Anna Judah's efforts.

Tragically, Anna's husband Theodore contracted yellow fever. As a result, he died before seeing the railroad completed and, in fact, even before the project was started in earnest. But Anna lived to see their dream to fruition. In fact, the driving of the last spike took place on what would have been the couple's 22nd wedding anniversary. On the date of the ceremony, Anna visited her husband's grave, and she wrote that there her husband's spirit—so long dedicated to the railroad—felt somehow near to her once again.

Years later, another young woman fell in love with the history of the Golden Spike and the beginning of the first transcontinental railroad. Bernice Gibbs Anderson, known to some as the Mother of the Golden Spike, was born in Colorado in 1900 and lived the majority of her life in Corinne, UT.

As a little girl, Bernice helped trail cattle near Promontory Summit and grew up hearing cowboy stories around the campfire, including stories about the Golden Spike, and, as her granddaughter put it, "She just plain fell in love with it." From the time she was 19 up until the moment of her death, she tirelessly dedicated her life to recognizing and preserving the history surrounding Golden Spike.

Bernice conceived the idea that the area around Promontory Summit ought to be set aside to commemorate the completion of the transcontinental railroad. For years, she campaigned to make Promontory Summit a national historic monument.

She visited countless legislators, Governors, commissioners, and railroad officers to raise support and raise funds for a monument at Promontory Summit.

A mother of six children, she also worked as a correspondent and as a staff writer for the Salt Lake Tribune, where she wrote historic articles and poetry about the Golden Spike. She sent letters and invitations to Members of Congress, U.S. Presidents, and Park Service officials—all in hopes that they might come to recognize the importance of the site.

As President of the Golden Spike Association, she coordinated reenactment ceremonies and anniversary programs, encouraging local communities to participate in those celebrations every year. While some viewed her mission as somewhat unimportant—or, at least, less important than other things—and, therefore, dismissed her efforts, she never gave up.

Thankfully, Bernice lived to see the fruits of her labors. After years of devoting her life to this cause, Promontory Summit was declared a national historic site on July 30, 1965. Just this past March, it was redesignated as a national historic park—the first in Utah—allowing even more of the railroad and the surrounding area to be preserved for history going forward.

Fast forward to 2019. We now reached the 150th anniversary of the Golden

Spike. Today, another dedicated woman has been behind its sesquicentennial celebration, Spike 150. Aimee McConkie, carrying the banner previously carried by Anna Judah and Bernice Gibbs Anderson, has been a driving force in our State and in her community. A BYU graduate, a wife, and mother of four daughters, Aimee has worked for 15 years in professional association management.

In 2005 she founded Utah Venture Outdoors, a summer festival series in Millcreek, UT. For 14 years, she volunteered her time and her resources to this event, seeking to bring the community together through recreational opportunities.

In 2017 she also launched LABELED, a 4-day film festival that seeks to break the stigma around mental health issues. Now she has once again brought her community together for an important cause—this time, to celebrate and commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike.

Under her leadership as director of Spike 150, there are events taking place not only around Promontory Summit but also around the entire State of Utah—events to highlight the history and legacy of the Golden Spike, events for children and families, and events for music, art, and train enthusiasts.

It has taken tremendous amounts of organization, coordination, and perseverance, and it would no doubt make Bernice Gibbs Anderson proud. At the 1957 celebration of the Golden Spike, she said:

This is sacred soil, dedicated to the sacrifices of the thousands who labored in the great race to build the first transcontinental railway in the shortest possible time. . . . The destiny of this nation rode triumphant upon the rails that met at Promontory Station! The future of this site depends on you, my friends. Will it take its rightful place in the heritage and traditions of America . . . or will it remain desolate and forgotten to sink into oblivion[?]

Thanks to the work of people like Aimee McConkie, we know that the Golden Spike will not sink into oblivion but will indeed take its rightful place in history.

Anna Judah, Bernice Gibbs Anderson, and Aimee McConkie might have lived at different times, but there is a common thread that runs throughout their stories: the triumph of ordinary people, of the hidden heroes behind so many of our great achievements in history.

Without the work of these ordinary Americans and Utahns, we never could have achieved one of the most transformative events in our Nation thus far: the driving of the Golden Spike and the completion of the first transcontinental railroad. And without the work of these hidden heroes, we could never reasonably hope and expect to be able to keep this legacy alive.

It is our task now to take up the banner that these women have carried—the banner of innovation, perseverance, and unity—and to ensure that our remarkable heritage lives on. If we do, there is no telling what Utah and our great Nation can achieve together.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). The Senator from Tennessee.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I wanted to spend just a few minutes today speaking with my colleagues and also with Tennesseans about an issue that we hear so very much about every single day. The issue continues to persist. It is our border, and we all know—and, indeed, you read in news count after news count—that yes, indeed, there is a crisis at our border.

Just a few months ago, we had some of our friends who are in the other Chamber who kept saying: Oh, this is manufactured; oh, there is nothing to it.

But as we hear from law enforcement professionals, as we hear from ICE, from DHS, and from the Border Patrol, we have a crisis. Our border is strained to the breaking point.

The real humanitarian crisis at the border is escalating. There are people who are being brought in through Central America, through Mexico, and they are stranded in the desert without food and without water. During the summer, sometimes you have temperatures above 100 degrees.

Our border is at a breaking point, and it is, indeed, time for this body to do something about it and to support these Agencies that are on the front-line dealing with this crisis every single day.

What we know from our hearing that we held yesterday at the Senate Judiciary Committee is that ICE is facing mounting challenges when it comes to expediting the deportations that need to take place. Abuse and exploitation of the asylum process overburdens our court system as illegal immigrants flood our borders claiming persecution.

Our country historically welcomes people who are fleeing political persecution, but there have to be tighter rules on these asylum seekers. The percentage of those who have valid asylum claims is actually relatively low compared to the number who are applying for these protections. I will tell you that I welcome President Trump's moves to raise the standards.

Last week, the President directed the Department of Homeland Security to enact several new asylum changes. As part of these new policies, the President imposed a new deadline for the immigration courts to meet. He directed that cases in immigration courts be settled within 180 days of those being filed.

Tennesseans want to see government accountability. They want to see it across every Agency. Certainly, when it comes to immigration policy, they want this accountability. They know that with a 6-month deadline, it is exactly the kind of accountability that is needed.

Here is the problem that ICE is facing when it comes to meeting that 180-day standard. Right now, as of yester-

day at our hearing, they had more than 800,000 cases that were pending. Think about that. Your court system has 800,000 cases that are pending. There are exactly 400 immigration judges that are there to hear these 800,000 cases. Do the math on that. Think about how many cases that would be.

It is a 2-year wait at this point to get the case heard. So ICE needs additional judges. That means they need additional officers, and that means they need additional funding in order to meet the load.

I asked Director Asher how long it would take them to ramp up in order to be able to hear these 800,000 cases. She said: months, maybe a year, maybe a little bit longer. It depends on when they get the authorization to expand the court system. It depends on when they get the funding for it.

All of this time, what continues to happen? Cases continue to be piled onto that backlog. If we took action today, and if we approved their ability to expand their capacity to have more judges, to have more agents, to have more officers, and to have more resources, it would be a year by the time we worked through this process. It might be as many as 1.5 million cases that they are working on.

This is one of the reasons that it is imperative that we close some of the loopholes that are being used in the asylum process and work through closing these loopholes to help secure this border. It is something that would be of assistance to those who are trying to meet the need that is there from people crushing our border, putting that foot on American soil, and claiming asylum and persecution.

Another thing we talked about in yesterday's hearing is trafficking. We all know that cartels are big business. Cartels deal in trafficking drugs. They deal in trafficking human beings, which is disgusting, and they look at human beings to move them for labor trafficking, for sex trafficking, and for gangs. They look at that as part of their business.

I know Senator CRUZ talked about his EL CHAPO Act, which would allow those seized assets from these drug lords to be used to help pay to secure that border, because stopping this trafficking is something that is an imperative. It really is true that until we secure this southern border every town is, in essence, a border town and every State is a border State because illegal immigration no longer is a problem that is confined to those States that are on the border. We see this all across our country, and it is heart-breaking—you talk about the trafficking of human beings, the sex trafficking, and the effect that has on girls, when you talk about the drug trafficking and the heartbreaking effects that has on families in every single one of our communities. Opioids, fentanyl, heroin—we all see it.

God bless our local law enforcement. Next week we are going to honor our