

delivering bigger paychecks, more opportunities, and a better quality of life for American workers.

Tax reform might be our biggest achievement in the 115th Congress, but it is far from the only thing that we did to make life better for American families. We also enacted legislation to provide better education and training to American workers. We passed multi-billion-dollar bipartisan legislation to combat the opioid epidemic, which has devastated families and communities across the United States.

We passed the longest extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program in the program's history. We passed legislation to provide hope to terminally ill patients by giving them access to experimental treatments. We passed bipartisan clean energy legislation. We passed a farm bill to support our Nation's farmers and ranchers, to protect our environment, and more.

But there is more work to be done. Republicans are working right now to develop and pass legislation to continue to address the cost of living and to improve Americans' quality of life. We are committed to making tax relief permanent for American families. We are also committed to ensure that the economic progress we have made sticks around for the long term.

We are working to open new markets for American goods and services so that American workers and businesses can thrive. One priority is passing the United States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement, which would grow our economy and create 167,000 new jobs.

Republicans are also committed to making healthcare more affordable. We want to give Americans more and more affordable insurance options. We are working on legislation to reduce the cost of prescription drugs and increase access to lower cost generics. We are focused on developing solutions that will bring greater clarity to healthcare costs and address so-called surprise billing. You should not go to an in-network hospital expecting to pay one thing and then get an unexpected enormous bill weeks later because it wasn't disclosed to you that the doctor you saw wasn't in your insurance network.

Another challenge facing American families is the cost of education. Republicans are currently working on legislation to make it easier to apply for Federal student aid and to pay back student loans. We will also continue to support career and technical education, and we will work to further increase the usefulness of 529 savings plans to help families plan and meet educational expenses.

One bright spot for family budgets over the past few years has been energy costs. Republican policies have helped to make energy more affordable, and we are committed to keeping American's energy bills reasonable by supporting responsible energy development.

We are also committed to continuing our work to keep our air clean and our environment healthy.

We currently have multiple bills in the pipeline to promote clean energy technologies with more to come. There are a lot of other Republican plans that I could talk about, everything from making it easier for small businesses to offer retirement plans to ensuring that rural communities enjoy equal access to broadband services and the economic opportunities that they bring.

One thing the American people can count on is that Republicans are working every day to improve Americans' quality of life. Our proposals may not always make it into the news. A lot of them do not have catchy names, like the Green New Deal, and they do not make pie-in-the-sky promises. But unlike the so-called Green New Deal, our plans are actually achievable, and they would actually make life better for American families.

I am proud that more families are thriving today thanks to tax reform and to other Republican policies, and Republicans will continue to work every day to make sure that life continues to improve for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. THUNE. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 108 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Daines	Lee
Barrasso	Enzi	McConnell
Blackburn	Ernst	McSally
Blunt	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Gardner	Murkowski
Braun	Graham	Paul
Burr	Grassley	Perdue
Capito	Hawley	Portman
Collins	Hoeven	Risch
Cornyn	Hyde-Smith	Roberts
Cotton	Inhofe	Rubio
Cramer	Isakson	Sasse
Crapo	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lankford	Scott (SC)

Shelby
Sullivan
Thune

Tillis
Toomey
Wicker

Young

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Hirono	Rounds
Gillibrand	Kennedy	

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.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant 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 Kenneth Kiyul Lee, of California, 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.

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 Kenneth Kiyul Lee, of California, to be United States Circuit Court Judge, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 109 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—5

Cassidy	Hirono	Rounds
Gillibrand	Kennedy	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenneth Kiyul Lee, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Lee nomination.

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the years, I have spent a great deal of time on the Senate floor highlighting the evolving challenges along our southern border.

My home State of Texas shares a 1,200-mile common border with Mexico, so any major shift in terms of who or what is arriving at the border is felt quickly by my constituents and by my State. In recent months, I have heard from the Border Patrol, local officials, nongovernmental organizations, community leaders, businesses of every size, and just average citizens alike about how the situation today is far more challenging than it has ever been before.

In the past, the number of illegal border crossings have fluctuated by varying degrees, but now we have seen a complete shift not only in number but also in the “who” of those crossing.

While we used to see single adults from Mexico, that is simply not the case anymore. There is no new net migration from Mexico, we are told. As Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost highlighted in a hearing last week, 68 percent of those apprehended are now families or unaccompanied children, and that is on purpose. The human smugglers have figured out what our laws are and how to exploit them in order to successfully place people in the United States by overwhelming our system. The 68 percent of families or unaccompanied children amounts to roughly 293,000 apprehensions so far this fiscal year—293,000. What is more, 70 percent of the unaccompanied children and families are occurring in just two Border Patrol sectors, the El Paso sector and the Rio Grande Valley sector, making the State of Texas and its border communities the hardest hit.

The vast majority of those crossing aren't from Mexico. They are coming from Mexico, but they are actually coming through Mexico. So far this fiscal year, 74 percent of the Border Patrol's apprehensions along the southern border are people from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—what is called the Northern Triangle. This means that in 7 months, nearly 341,000 people from the Northern Triangle of Central America made the decision to leave their homes and to make a dangerous journey in the hands of a human smuggler to illegally enter the United States. Here is another shocking statistic, Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan recently noted that Guatemala and Honduras have seen more than 1 percent of their total population migrate to the United States in the first 7 months of this fiscal year—more than 1 percent of their entire population.

While it is abundantly clear that the mass movement of people across our border is a problem that must be addressed, it is an understatement to say that Members of the Senate disagree on what a solution looks like. We spent a lot of time debating the semantics of the entire situation without making any real progress. I believe our strategy to alleviate this humanitarian crisis hinges on three important steps:

First, we need stronger physical security at the border. The experts have told us that means three things: barriers and, in-hard-to-control places, people—that is law enforcement—and technology. That is what our frontline officers and agents need to do their jobs, and that is what we should provide.

Secondly, we need to provide Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol with the authorities—that means the laws—they need in order to effectively do their job. That includes closing the loopholes that are being exploited by the human smugglers and the illegal immigrants entering the country because they have figured out how to

game the system. They know our laws better than most Americans do.

Both of these are what are called pull factors—what attract people to come to the United States illegally. They are gaps in our physical security and legal system that encourage Central American migrants to make the dangerous journey north because their chances of making their way into the interior of our country are pretty high.

There is a critical third step here. We also need to eliminate the push factors. That is what is driving people from Central America on that dangerous road north through Mexico into the United States. The reason so many of these families are leaving their home countries in the first place boils down to poverty and violence. We know these three countries in the Northern Triangle are plagued by crime, corruption, and a lack of economic opportunities. Sometimes it is difficult for Americans to grasp the deep-seated nature of these problems and why it is so tough to resolve them because it is such a far cry from what most have experienced here at home.

In October of 2018, the International Organization for Migration conducted a survey of a group of Salvadoran migrants who banded together as a caravan to make the journey north. It found that 52 percent of the people who were coming from El Salvador cited economic opportunity as their motive for leaving the region, 18 percent cited violence and insecurity, 2 percent said they wanted to unify their families, and 28 percent cited some combination of these factors. Now, this may not be the case for migrants from each country, but it paints a broad picture of how these challenges are affecting them.

We must help these countries address their problems, but we can't do it for them. Looking at South America and the successful efforts we have had to help countries rebuild themselves into successful economies with security for their people, there is one that stands out the most, and that is Colombia. What is different about Colombia from the rest of these countries is we had, one, a bipartisan plan that was applied over many years by both Republican and Democratic administrations. We also had a strong partner, a leader, President Uribe in Colombia, which is something we are missing in Central America. Then we had a plan, as the name Plan Colombia suggests, so we knew what we were doing, and we knew how to measure success. We don't have any of these things now as part of our effort to help the Central American countries help themselves.

Having said that, I think that is a challenge we need to rise to, to find a way of helping these countries create economic opportunities and security for their people so we can help relieve some of the strain on our own border.

This morning, my colleague from Delaware, Senator CARPER, and I participated in a discussion by the Bush