

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Sarah Daggett Morrison, of Ohio, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Ohio.

YEAR-ROUND SALE OF E15

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I came to the floor last week to talk about the challenges facing farmers right now. While the broader economy is thriving, a combination of low commodity prices, protracted trade disputes, and natural disasters and weather-related issues have left many farmers and ranchers struggling.

In my home State of South Dakota, farmers and ranchers are dealing with the aftermath of severe winter storms, heavy rainfall, bomb cyclones, and spring flooding. Planting is behind schedule, and many farmers will not be able to plant at all this year. Yet, while the news has generally been tough for farmers and ranchers lately, there are a couple of recent happenings that are worth celebrating.

Japan's announcement that it was lifting age limits on U.S. beef imports is a win for America's ranchers, who will be able to substantially increase their sales to Japan. Also, the administration's move to lift the ban on the year-round sale of E15—15-percent ethanol-blended fuel—went live in the Federal Register yesterday. This is great news for corn producers in South Dakota and around the Nation.

I have been advocating for higher blends of ethanol for more than a decade, and I have spent a lot of time advocating for the year-round sale of E15. Year-round E15 is a win-win-win-win situation. It is a win for consumers and for our economy. It is a win for the environment. It is a win for our Nation's energy security. It is also a big win for our Nation's agriculture industry.

Year-round E15 will not only provide consumers with a cheaper alternative at the pump, but it will keep gas prices lower. Plus, the year-round sale of E15 means more ethanol can be sold each year, for gas stations will have a greater incentive to sell E15 now that they will no longer have to go through the costly process of reworking and relabeling E15 pumps at the start of the summer's driving season and then of converting them back in the fall. Increased demand will fuel further growth in the ethanol industry, which already supports hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs and contributes tens of billions of dollars to our economy.

Year-round sales of E15 are also a win for our environment in that ethanol is a cleaner burning fuel than is regular gasoline, which means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by more than one-third. Biofuels like ethanol are key to there being a lower carbon energy future, and the next generation of advanced biofuels will further lower emissions.

Another major advantage to ethanol is that it diminishes our dependence on foreign oil. Ethanol is a homegrown fuel, and the more we are producing here at home the less we have to rely on unstable countries or far-off sources to meet our fuel needs.

Finally, of course, the year-round sale of E15 is a big win for our Nation's corn producers. America's farmers don't just feed our country. They help fuel it, too. Roughly half of the corn produced in my home State of South Dakota goes into ethanol production.

Increased demand for ethanol as a result of the administration's decision could boost demand for corn by up to 2 billion bushels. That would be a significant boost to U.S. corn producers at any point, but it is an especially big deal given the challenges the agriculture sector has faced over the past several years.

U.S. corn producers are one of the main reasons I have been a relentless advocate for higher blends of ethanol, and I am very happy the President has delivered on his commitment to year-round sales of E15. As we move forward, I will continue to advocate for biofuels and the environmental and economic benefits they bring. Conventional ethanol has laid the foundation for advanced biofuels, which will have even lower life cycle emissions.

American ingenuity has turned the corner to create ethanol from other parts of plants like corn kernel fiber, boosting yields, but we need the Environmental Protection Agency to end the yearlong delays and approve registrations.

I will also continue to urge the Environmental Protection Agency to stop its practice of granting small refiner exemptions to the renewable fuel standard that discourage demand for ethanol. These so-called hardship waivers should be limited only to instances where small refiners would no longer be profitable or competitive if they comply with their blending obligation. They should not be granted to refiners who are posting billion-dollar profits and seeking to game the system. We need to make sure the EPA is granting waivers appropriately and in a transparent manner.

That said, the year-round sale of E15 will actually help refiners because it will incentivize higher ethanol blending and drive down compliance costs.

I am thankful that President Trump made good on his commitment to our farmers to get the E15 rule done, and I am glad he is back in the heartland today so he can hear firsthand about

the difference this will make in farm country.

While we have a long way to go to get the agricultural economy thriving again, I am heartened by this victory for our corn producers, and I will continue to make our Nation's farmers and ranchers a priority here in Washington.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EQUAL PAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, later this afternoon, the U.S. women's soccer team will begin its quest for another World Cup title with its opening match against Thailand. As the entire Nation cheers them on as they take the field, I want to shine a light today on an issue the women's national team has been fighting for off the field: pay equity. The women make just as much of a sacrifice, put in just as much mental and physical energy, absorb just as much risk of injury as the men who play for the national team. Yet when you break it down, a women's national soccer team player earns a base salary of \$3,600 per game while a men's player earns \$5,000. Over the course of a season, if both the men's and women's teams have the same record, a male player could earn \$30,000 more than his female counterpart.

Female soccer players who earn the privilege of representing their country on the world stage get a much smaller bonus, \$15,000, than male soccer players who earn the same privilege, \$55,000. When a woman's national team wins a World Cup, something the U.S. women have done three times—with some New York State players helping—it wins a percentage of what a men's team gets if it wins at all, something the U.S. men have never done.

For the sake of comparison, U.S. soccer awarded the men's national team a \$5.4 million performance bonus for losing in the round of 16 in the 2014 World Cup. It awarded the women \$1.7 million for winning the World Cup.

Let me repeat that so you get the contrast. The women won the Cup and were given \$1.7 million. The men got into the final 16 and got \$5.4 million. That is discrimination staring us all in the face.

This is an issue of basic fairness. Performances aside—and the women have been excellent and often dominant over the past two decades—we shouldn't reward women less for doing the same work as men. We shouldn't say to generations of girls and boys who look up to these talented stars that women's

sports is in any way “less than” because it is not. These women, who inspire our country with their poise, tenacity, skill, and excellence every time they take the field, deserve to be fairly compensated.

Right now, the Senate could take a meaningful step to support the women’s international team by passing legislation that aims to end gender-based wage discrimination. The House passed a paycheck fairness bill months ago, which languished here in the Senate in Leader McCONNELL’s legislative graveyard. Bill after bill comes from the House, has the support of large percentages of Americans, gets Republican support in the House, and Leader McCONNELL just lets them lie there—another tombstone in the graveyard.

As the women of Team USA take the field today, I call on Leader McCONNELL to bring up the House legislation already passed that would aid in their fight for equal pay.

I will be rooting for Team USA women to kick off their campaign with a win against Thailand.

HUAWEI

Madam President, on another matter, Huawei, according to public reports, the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Russell Vought, is pushing a 2-year delay—a 2-year delay—in the implementation of key portions of a law intended to protect U.S. agencies and government contractors from Chinese telecom technology, chiefly Huawei.

This is deeply concerning for two reasons. First, from a national security standpoint, the FBI, CIA, and other members of the intelligence community have testified that the technology from Chinese telecom companies, such as Huawei and ZTE, present a national security risk, potentially allowing China to build backdoors into our networks, enabling their cyber theft and cyber espionage for which they are, unfortunately, well known. That is why Congress banned U.S. Government agencies and contractors from using this technology—because they are our highest valued targets. We have been encouraging our European allies to do the same.

Why on Earth, then, is the Acting Director of OMB, Russell Vought, asking for a 2-year delay in these rules? We passed the law more than a year ago. President Trump has signed it, and our agencies and contractors have had time to make sure their technology doesn’t come from Huawei.

There is simply no reason, in my mind, for such a lengthy delay. It would only extend a window of opportunity for what is already a dire threat to our national security.

The second reason this news concerns me so is that it is about the Trump administration’s broader approach to China. Across many issues in the Trump administration, it sometimes feels as though the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing. A few weeks ago, the administration

issued an Executive order largely banning U.S. companies from selling equipment to Huawei, an action I praised. But then the Commerce Department abruptly delayed that decision by 3 months. Now we have this additional request from OMB to soft-pedal a different set of restrictions on Huawei.

China needs to understand that the United States is serious when it comes to our trade relationship. We must have a consistent policy implemented with rigor. This idea of reciprocity, of barring China’s companies from doing business here until they let our biggest companies do business there, is an important part of our overall effort to increase pressure on China to agree to meaningful economic reforms.

I am very troubled by the OMB’s request, and I plan on strenuously opposing the approval of the delay here in Congress.

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. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order of the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today in defense of net neutrality. In April the House of Representatives took an important step in passing the Save the Internet Act, legislation that would overturn the Trump administration’s Federal Communication Commission’s wrongheaded decision and restore net neutrality protections. Another way of saying it is that net neutrality is nondiscrimination online. That is what it is. It is the principle of nondiscrimination online so that large companies just can’t discriminate against smaller voices, smaller companies, and startups.

In the Senate, we have already successfully passed the same proposal last year. In April of 2018, my Congressional Review Act resolution passed in the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 52 to 47. In April 2018, on a bipartisan basis, we debated net neutrality and the Senate decided to join the majority of Americans and support a free and open internet.

In that vote we sent a message to President Trump about what that means: an internet, free of corporate control and open to all who want to communicate, engage, and innovate. We made it clear that Congress will not fall for President Trump’s special interest agenda and his broadband baron allies who just want to block, slow down, or discriminate against content online just to charge Americans more on their cable bills.

Unfortunately, the rules for the Congressional Review Act that allow just 30 Senators to force the majority to schedule a vote is not an option in this

Congress. So, instead, on this, the 1-year anniversary of President Trump’s net neutrality repeal going into effect, we will call for an immediate vote on the Save the Internet Act. Unfortunately, our Republican colleagues are failing to listen to the voices of their constituents and plan to block the vote from happening.

Let’s be clear. Net neutrality is just another way in which the Republican Party refuses to side with the ordinary people in our country—regular families, small businesses, and startup software companies. How do they get access to the internet in a way in which they cannot feel that corporate pressure restricting their ability to use this incredible invention to further the democratization of access to opportunity or, at the same time, to innovate in a way which continues to change not only our own country but our own world?

We can’t let big companies discriminate against individual consumers. We can’t let big companies stifle speech. Once you pay your monthly internet service bill, you can go anywhere you want on the internet without your provider slowing down or blocking your path to a website of your choosing.

This is a fight. It is a fight for innovation, for entrepreneurship, for the American economy, and a fight for free speech—the cornerstone of our democracy—and a fight for the most powerful platform for commerce and communications in the history of the planet. The Save the Internet Act does exactly what the American people want. It restores the rules that ensure that families aren’t subject to higher prices, slower internet speeds, and even blocked websites because the big broadband providers want to pump up their profits.

Under Senator McCONNELL’s leadership, the Republicans are trying to bury this bill in a legislative graveyard. Instead of acting on legislation, which, again, passed the Senate a year ago—it just passed in the House in April of this year—Leader McCONNELL has been doing little but confirming unqualified, extreme-right nominees for the Trump administration.

Just listen to the bills the Senate Republicans refuse to act on: the Violence Against Women Act, no votes out here on the Senate floor; voting on democracy reform, no votes out here on the Senate floor; gun background checks, passed in the House but no vote here in the Senate; paycheck fairness; the Paris climate agreement—no, no, no.

But the Senate majority leader and his Republican colleagues can keep populating the legislative graveyard at their political peril because this is the agenda that the American people want to see the Senate debating, and they want to see these laws put on the books to protect families in our country. That is because the issues they are blocking are enormously popular, most with strong bipartisan support.

Take net neutrality. Now, 86 percent of Americans do not approve of the