

deal with the big forces pushing them around, will no longer hover over our work on the Federal budget.

Not only did we permanently end that devastating sequester, which, by the way, the military hated, as well as people who wanted help on the domestic side—it slashed them as well. General Mattis was fanatic, almost, in a good way about this. I miss him. But we Democrats did this in an extraordinary fashion.

The agreement includes a significant increase in funding for critical domestic priorities, including an increase in the domestic budget authority that even exceeds the increase in defense by \$10 billion over the next 2 years. For those counting, yesterday's deal means that Democrats have secured over \$100 billion in funding increases for domestic programs since President Trump took office. At the same time, it ensures that our military is prepared to keep Americans safe around the world.

This \$100 billion sounds abstract. But let me tell you what it means: more funding to the States for opioid treatment. The States are desperate for more help. Young people are dying of these horrible drugs. Treatment works.

I held in my arms a father from Buffalo whose son had served in Iraq, had PTSD, and then got hooked on opioids when he came back here. Finally, the kid hit bottom. He said: Dad, I want to go to a treatment center.

Unfortunately, there was a 23-week waiting period, and the young man killed himself in the 22nd week. The father cried in my arms, a big steel worker with tattoos and everything else. He was devastated, as anybody else would be over the loss of a child. Now there will be more money for that. This is not abstract.

What about fixing VA hospitals? What about more money to help educate our kids properly? What about some money to make the burden of college less great, as heavy as it is? What about money for climate and clean energy? What about money for infrastructure and transportation? That \$100 billion is not abstract. It is for all of these things. It is going to mean jobs for the American people. It is going to mean ladders up for the American people. It is going to mean some hope for the American people.

I know that on the other side some on the right will say: This increases the deficit. Just a year ago they voted to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion—now, maybe \$2 trillion—with a deep tax cut, the overwhelming part of which went to the wealthiest people in America. So don't start hollering “deficit” when it comes to helping the middle class when you are willing to deepen the deficit when it comes to helping the wealthy. Of course, now, part of this is that the debt ceiling will be extended until the summer of 2021, preserving the full faith and credit of the United States.

Looking forward, I think we have laid the groundwork for legislation

that will hopefully avoid another senseless and harmful government shutdown. The House will now move quickly to put this agreement up for a vote, and then the Senate can follow suit and send it to the President's desk. I was glad to see that the President tweeted—I believe it was tweeted—and put out a statement that he supports this agreement.

9/11 VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, there is something we can vote on today at long, long last—the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund for those brave heroes who rushed to the Towers on 9/11. The light at the end of the tunnel of what has been a very long and sometimes very dark time is now only a few hours away. We have waited too long to settle this matter. Too many people have put up bipartisan roadblocks along the road.

Now we are here, about to exit the tunnel and guarantee once and for all that the heroes who rushed to the Towers 18 years ago will no longer have to worry about compensation for their families when they are gone. These men and women, many of them sick, some of them gravely so, will not have to return to Congress anymore to fight for the compensation they always should have been given. They will be able to go home, tend to their illnesses, their family members, and their friends. That is what they always wanted to do—just take care of themselves, their families, and their friends who got sick from the poisonous stuff that was in the air right after 9/11, when, bravely, these men and women rushed to the Towers. That is what we want. We have waited too long.

Now, we are going to have a few amendment votes first, and I warn my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: If you vote for these amendments, you will, at best, delay the bill but, at worst, kill it. Neither is a good choice, neither is a palatable choice, and neither is an acceptable choice. Let's defeat these amendments. I believe they will be defeated. Then, let's pass the bill overwhelmingly.

This body has come together to help veterans time and again. These people are just like veterans, and 9/11 seemed like a war. I was there. I was there the next day. I was in Washington the day it happened. In a time of war, these brave people selflessly risked their lives and rushed to the Towers to defend our freedom, just like our soldiers do and just like our armed services do. So we should sign this bill into law.

Now, I will have more to say on the matter before and after the vote, about what this means, and thanking the many people, particularly the first responders—names like Zadroga, Pfeifer, and Alvarez—who made this happen. Until then, let me just say it is hard for me to express how much I am looking forward to passing this bill here today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NEVER FORGET THE HEROES: JAMES ZADROGA, RAY PFEIFER, AND LUIS ALVAREZ PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION OF THE SEPTEMBER 11TH VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1327, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1327) to extend authorization for the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 through fiscal year 2092, and for other purposes.

NOMINATION OF MARK T. ESPER

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, later this morning we will be voting on the nomination of Mark Esper to be Secretary of Defense. Dr. Esper is an outstanding choice. I don't need to tell anyone how essential the position of Secretary of Defense is to our national security. The Secretary of Defense is key to ensuring that our Nation is prepared to meet and defeat any threat. Dr. Esper has the experience, the knowledge, and the character for the job. He has an illustrious resume: West Point grad, Gulf war veteran, Bronze Star recipient, Rifle Company commander, a total of 10 years on Active Duty, and an additional 11 in the National Guard and Army Reserve.

In addition to his practical military and leadership experience, he has extensive experience on the policy side of things as well. He has a master's degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and a doctorate in public policy from George Washington University here in the Nation's Capital. He worked as a senior professional staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Governmental Affairs Committee, as policy director for the House Armed Services Committee, and as national security adviser to former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. He also served

as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense during the George W. Bush administration, and during the Trump administration, of course, he has served as Secretary of the Army.

As Army Secretary, he has driven budget reform and Army modernization, supported Defense cooperation with our allies, and supervised the most significant reorganization of the Army in 45 years. His character and his expertise have won him respect from both sides of the aisle.

The Democratic junior Senator from Virginia recently described Dr. Esper as “a person of sound character and moral courage” and encouraged his colleagues to support Dr. Esper’s nomination.

Reacting to Dr. Esper’s appointment as Acting Defense Secretary, the Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee noted that the Department of Defense would benefit from Dr. Esper’s leadership.

Dr. Esper was confirmed as Secretary of the Army by an overwhelming bipartisan majority, and his nomination as Defense Secretary was reported out of the Senate Armed Services Committee with nearly unanimous support. I look forward to seeing a similarly strong bipartisan vote for his confirmation later today.

In November 2018, the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission released a report warning that our readiness had eroded to the point where we might struggle to win a war against a major power like China or Russia. The Commission noted that we would be especially vulnerable if we were called on to fight a war on two fronts.

Rebuilding our military and equipping it to meet 21st century threats has to be a priority. I was encouraged yesterday by the fact that the budget deal arrived at by the administration and Speaker PELOSI prioritizes money for our military. While it is not a perfect piece of legislation, it will ensure that we are able to keep rebuilding our military and deliver on-time funding for our men and women in uniform.

During his confirmation hearing, Dr. Esper revealed his clear understanding of what needs to be done on the national security front: modernize and rebuild our military; ensure that we are prepared for a new era of great-power competition while maintaining our ability to confront terrorist organizations and rogue nations; cultivate our relationship with our allies; and support our men and women in uniform, who sacrifice so much to keep our Nation safe and free.

I am confident that Dr. Esper will be an outstanding Secretary of Defense, and I look forward to supporting his nomination later today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF STEPHEN M. DICKSON

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I rise today to speak in opposition to the

nomination of Stephen Dickson to be the next Administrator of the FAA.

I have said that it is very important that in this day and age, when it comes to aviation, safety must always be our top priority. We considered Mr. Dickson’s nomination, his record, and the ongoing case of a whistleblower retaliation, and given all of that, it is clear to me that he is not the right person for the safety culture we need today at the FAA.

It is distressing to me that Mr. Dickson advanced out of committee on just a party-line vote. We have never had a partisan vote on an FAA nominee in the past, and I believe we should have found consensus on the nominee for the FAA given all the concerns the public has about flying safety.

The reason why I oppose Mr. Dickson is from what I understood, after the hearing, from First Officer Karlene Petitt, who has a Ph.D. in aviation safety and is an experienced pilot over 40 years and happens to be one of my constituents. At a hearing, we basically understood that no one was holding Mr. Dickson accountable for actions that he took against her at Delta Airlines.

Back in 2010, she was a pilot on an A330 flight. She had seen a crash of an A330 plane—tragically, an Air France plane in the Atlantic Ocean. She had also heard comments from those in the Delta executive team that if you have a concern about safety, say something. So she thought she was doing just that.

As part of what she thought was important information following these A330 incidents, she said she had concern about pilot training when it came to potential automation and failures of making sure that they were giving enough rest time to pilots. She observed that there were issues she thought were putting both her and passengers at risk.

So what did she do? She did what all employees, we hope, would do. She informed her superiors and suggested possible solutions. She was persistent and wanted to make sure that these recommendations were met with by the leadership of the organization—Mr. Dickson and his second-in-command, Jim Graham. Some of the concerns she raised about inadequate pilot training and not enough pilot rest were things that you thought would have maybe gotten her recognized for the great contribution to a safety culture that is so necessary today in an age of more and more automation. Whether you are talking about an automobile or an airplane, it is essential that automation and training go hand in hand.

Instead of Officer Petitt getting the attention she deserved, the company sent her for a mandatory psychiatric evaluation. Can you imagine a whistleblower bringing up concerns as a pilot flying for many years and instead of being paid attention to, being sent for a psychiatric evaluation?

Just a few months after Officer Petitt raised her concerns, that is ex-

actly what happened. Delta and Mr. Dickson removed her from duty and required her to undergo a mental health evaluation, forcing her to protect her career and her reputation.

The psychiatrist Mr. Dickson’s team handpicked to examine Ms. Petitt had his own problems of serious red flags and retaliatory threats. For example, the doctor cited that just because Officer Petitt had three kids, a job, and helped her husband with his career, she must be manic. I don’t know about the Presiding Officer, but to me it just sounds like being an American woman today, juggling many things.

The psychiatrist even had the nerve to ask when the first officer was pumping breast milk for her children. That is the kind of questioning the officer had to answer.

The good news is that there are laws on the books that protect people in these kinds of incidents when they are a whistleblower and they have been retaliated against.

Later, a panel of eight doctors from the Mayo Clinic and another independent doctor came to the opposite conclusion of this psychiatrist, stating that Officer Petitt had no mental issues and that she should continue to fly as she had done for many years.

It is very unfortunate that this situation arose, but it is more unfortunate that Mr. Dickson was not evenhanded about it when his nomination came before the committee. It is standard operating procedure in the U.S. Senate to ask nominees this question: Have you or any business or nonprofit that you have been associated with been involved as a party to an administrative agency, criminal, or civil litigation?

Why do we want to know that? We want to know of any kind of derogatory information about a nominee whom we are about to entrust with the public confidence through the U.S. Senate. We want to know whether there have been any issues and whether that trust has been misplaced. Instead of answering that question, he did not bring up this incident at Delta.

I don’t know of any nominee before the Commerce Committee who, having failed to disclose this kind of information, then moved forward after it was brought up. That is right. The only reason we knew about this incident is not because of his requirement to disclose it and his failure to disclose it but because, during the hearing when everybody heard all of this glowing information, a whistleblower came forward to explain to members of the committee that this incident took place and exactly what had happened to her in her career as she tried to raise important issues.

When Mr. Dickson was asked for further information about this lawsuit and why he didn’t disclose it, he went on to minimize his involvement, saying that it amounted to essentially one meeting with the pilot; however, a review of written records, emails, depositions, and other materials showed that

Mr. Dickson was more involved than just one meeting.

We all want our officials to show a commitment to safety, establishing rules and a culture that protects the flying public. That is one reason Captain Sullenberger has come out against this nominee. He knows that when it comes to creating a culture of safety, it has to start at the top, and we have to listen to people like the pilots who are showing concerns today about the Boeing 737 MAX. We should listen to them and the inspector general on what types of processes should be put in place to resolve the challenges we face as we integrate more automation.

Automation can help us make things safer, but automation without the pilot training, without the integration, without a culture that rewards people for bringing up issues, instead of almost red-coding them as a response, is not what we need to be doing.

A 2016 report by the Department of Transportation inspector general highlights the essential role of FAA oversight to reduce the hazards with regard to increased reliance on flight deck automation. The FAA estimates that automation is used 90 percent of the time in flight. Yet, according to the inspector general report, the FAA did not have a process to ensure that airline pilots are properly trained to use and monitor automation systems while maintaining proficiency in manual flight operations.

The report recommended that the FAA provide guidance in defining standards that airlines can use to train and evaluate pilots in the use of automation. It also recommended that standards be established to determine whether pilots were receiving sufficient training to develop and maintain manual flying skills.

These are the very matters First Officer Petitt had focused on when making her observations and suggestions regarding safety. They are as critical today as they were for the A330.

We are living in an era of increasing automation, and we have work to do. I guarantee that we are going to continue to play a role in this in the Commerce Committee, making sure the inspector general's criticisms of the FAA with regard to these issues are addressed. We need someone on the front-line who takes safety seriously and listens to the pilots. I know these issues are weighing on the American public—the very questions that Dr. Petitt asked. I am sure, with the right amount of engineering and cooperation, we can get them right.

But Mr. Dickson has doubled down. He basically said that he had no regrets about how he handled the situation when we came back at him about the fact that the information wasn't submitted. He basically said he had no regrets about trying to end a 40-year career of a whistleblower. I find this very challenging. I want the FAA to move forward with confidence that we are going to create the safety culture necessary for today's environment.

Captain Sullenberger said it best:

This nominee, while a senior executive at Delta Airlines, either caused or allowed a whistleblower with validated safety concerns to be retaliated against. I strongly oppose his nomination. The decisions the next FAA Administrator makes will determine how safe every airline passenger and crew will be.

I know that it is hard for people in busy jobs to slow down and listen to whistleblowers, but I guarantee they have helped us many times to solve many problems.

I ask my colleagues to turn down this nomination today and to help us create an environment where whistleblowers will be listened to.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WYDEN. 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.

ENCRYPTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to rebut the deeply flawed proposal the Attorney General made this morning. This morning, he raised a tired, debunked plan to blow a hole in one of the most important security features protecting the digital lives of the American people. Mr. Barr—once again echoing the views of some on the far, far right—is trying to undermine strong encryption and require government back doors into the personal devices of the American people.

“Encryption” is a technical term that gets thrown around by people in government who don’t want you to use it. The idea, however, is simple: It is using math to encode your information so that the only people who can read it are the ones you want to read it.

As is often known, encryption is used every time a credit card is swiped or an online bank account is accessed. It helps protect our kids from predators who would spy on them through their cell phone cameras or surreptitiously track their movements. It keeps our health records, our personal communications, and our other sensitive data secure from hackers. Strong encryption helps protect national security secrets from hackers working for the Russians, the Chinese, the North Koreans, and other hostile governments.

I have spent a full decade fighting off horrible plans to undermine strong encryption. My usual argument goes something like this: You can’t build a back door only for the good guys, for government officials who are trying to protect people. Once you weaken encryption with a back door, you make it far easier for criminals and hackers and predators to get into your digital life. Then I go through all the reasons the government’s plan to build a back door is just about the worst idea since Crystal Pepsi.

Today, I want to raise some even more pressing concerns that are new. Many times in the past, I have warned that unnecessary government surveillance holds the potential to be abused, but I have never done what I am doing today. Today, I fear—rather, I expect that if we give the Attorney General and the President the unprecedented power to break encryption across the board and burrow into the most intimate details of Americans’ lives, they will abuse those powers. I don’t say that lightly. Yet, when I look at the record, the public statements, and the behavior of William Barr and Donald Trump, it is clear to me that you can’t make the case for giving them this kind of power. There is too much evidence that they will abuse it. Their record shows they do not feel constrained by the law. They have not been bound by legal or moral precedents. Donald Trump, by his own words, has no ethical compunction—these are his words—about using government power against his political enemies.

Never before have I been so certain that an administration in power would knowingly abuse the massive power of government surveillance. It is for that reason that building government back doors into the encrypted communications of the American people is now uniquely dangerous and must be opposed at all costs.

These are serious charges that I have made, and I am going to walk through my reasoning. First, I would like to discuss the Attorney General’s history when it comes to government surveillance and government power.

When this body voted on Mr. Barr’s nomination earlier this year, I laid out in great detail his history when it comes to Executive power. Anyone wishing for a full airing of Mr. Barr’s lifelong devotion to unbounded Executive power can dial up those remarks of mine on C-SPAN, but I just want to highlight one item again this morning.

Mr. Barr testified in October of 2003, and he laid out his ideological position that the President is not restrained when it comes to surveilling people here in the United States—not by laws passed by Congress, not by the Fourth Amendment, no constraints.

In that 2003 testimony, Mr. Barr said that the PATRIOT Act didn’t go far enough in terms of government surveillance. Even worse, Mr. Barr said that laws going back to the 1970s have no real effect on Presidential power. Mr. Barr said: “Numerous statutes were passed, such as FISA”—Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—“that purported to supplant Presidential discretion with Congressionally crafted schemes whereby judges become the arbiter of national security decisions.” In one sentence, Mr. Barr just swept 40 years of congressional action and 200 years of constitutional governance out the window. We ought to take him at his word that he has contempt for the Fourth Amendment and critical laws that protect our law-abiding people.

It is far more than just words, however, that lead me to this conclusion. It is now public record that William Barr, when he was Attorney General in the 1990s, approved a massive, illegal surveillance program.

The inspector general at the Department of Justice revealed this March that William Barr gave the OK to a bulk phone records dragnet at the Drug Enforcement Agency that ran for more than 20 years. The inspector general found that Mr. Barr never even looked to see whether that Drug Enforcement Administration bulk surveillance program was legal. The inspector general called it “troubling” because of the disconnect between what the law says and how it was secretly being interpreted and used. The Drug Enforcement Agency program that William Barr approved relied on subpoena power that requires that the records being collected be “relevant or material” to an investigation. But Mr. Barr didn’t bother to consider whether all of those phone records that were collected in bulk were consistent with the law; he just went ahead and rubberstamped it.

The inspector general tends to be polite about outright calling government programs illegal, but even the inspector general pointed out that there are multiple court cases that “clearly suggested potential challenges to the validity of the DEA’s use of this statutory subpoena power in this expansive, non-targeted manner.”

Finally, the inspector general found that the records collected from the program were used outside the Drug Enforcement Agency for investigations that had nothing to do with drugs—a practice the inspector general said “raised significant legal questions.”

The inspector general goes on to note that Congress was kept almost entirely in the dark. At a time when the American people are hungry for transparency and openness and accountability, the inspector general says Congress was kept in the dark by Mr. Barr about a decades-long, illegal bulk collection program, with the exception of a single secret Intelligence Committee hearing in 2007. Even then, it was obvious the program was illegal. That is why my colleague Senator Feingold and I wrote to the head of National Intelligence pointing out that the subpoena authority the DEA was using was never intended for bulk collection. This was secret law, and it was wrong and dangerous.

That is why I wanted to make sure people knew Mr. Barr’s history, because this secret, illegal bulk collection program was approved by the current Attorney General. So you have an Attorney General who not only has said he is not constrained by the law, but he has a history of breaking the law. You also have a President who almost every day expresses contempt for any legal or constitutional restraints on his powers. That attitude applies to surveillance too. In 2016, in response to

Russian hacking of his opponents, Donald Trump said: “I wish I had that power.”

So Donald Trump—a President who Attorney General Barr thinks can do no wrong—is the one who is driving this. This is the President who Attorney General Barr thinks is above the law. This is the President whom the Attorney General will, in effect, cover for at virtually every turn, as he did when he repeatedly lied about the contents of the Mueller report.

Let me close by talking about why this matters to William Barr’s efforts now to break into Americans’ encrypted communications. The argument that the government needs to weaken encryption has always been based on the promise that the government will never use the back door without a court-ordered warrant.

Yet Mr. Barr, in his own words and actions, has demonstrated repeatedly, when it comes to surveillance, that the laws don’t matter, that the courts don’t matter, and that even the Constitution doesn’t matter. The only thing that matters is what he and the President feel like doing.

So I would ask my colleagues who are here, what Senators in their right minds would give these men the authority to break into the phone of every single American? Imagine what kind of information they could gather on their political opponents. Imagine if a Member of Congress were secretly gay and were desperate to hide the fact. Despite campaigning on family values, imagine if a Member of Congress had cheated on his wife. Would a man like the individual I have described here use that information against them? Would Donald Trump use it to secure their loyalty in the face of his own wrongdoing?

I understand that the world is a frightening place, and anybody who serves on the Select Committee on Intelligence would share that view. Some government agencies will always advocate for greater powers to surveil Americans and intrude into their digital lives. It is important to remember, as I touched on in the beginning, that the banning of encryption in America will not stop the bad guys from using encryption, and it will not ban basic math algorithms elsewhere in the world. It will only leave Americans less secure against foreign hackers, and—I regret having to say this—it will leave Americans less secure against intrusions by an administration that has shown it is willing to support lawless measures.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I am honored to rise to deliver my maiden speech as the senior U.S. Senator from the great State of Arizona. I was sworn in to this distinguished body just over 6 months ago. I am incredibly honored and humbled to join only a dozen oth-

ers who have had the honor of representing the great State 48 in the U.S. Senate, and I am filled with gratitude to the people of the State who have entrusted me with this duty. In continuing the work of leaders who have held the Senate seat, from Senators Barry Goldwater and Dennis DeConcini to, most recently, Senators Jon Kyl and Jeff Flake, I have pledged to uphold Arizona’s proud tradition of putting country above party.

Most new Senators deliver their maiden speeches soon after being sworn in. I have waited so I could use these 6 months to demonstrate to Arizonans, in actions more than words, exactly how I intend to serve our State in the Senate. I promised Arizona that I would do things differently than have others in Washington.

Americans see a lot of chaos in this city. There is intense pressure from all sides to spend time and energy on every scandal, every insult, every tweet, and every partisan fight, and it is very easy to get distracted. It is the simplest thing in the world to line up on either side of a partisan battle. What is harder, though, is to ignore the chaos and get out of our comfort zones to build coalitions and get things done. I promised Arizona I would do the hard work, and that approach has produced results.

In these first 6 months, two bills I have sponsored to improve protections and services for veterans have passed the Senate and the House, and they now await the President’s signature to put them into law. These new measures expand American Legion membership to veterans across the country, protect veterans from scam artists, and help veterans achieve the dream of home ownership. Few efforts better illustrate my approach to service or are more worthy of our attention than that of the Somers family.

As a Congresswoman, I shared the story of SGT Daniel Somers on the floor of the U.S. House, and I will now share that story for the first time on the floor of the Senate.

Sergeant Somers was an Arizona Army veteran who served two tours in Iraq. He served on Task Force Lightning, an intelligence unit, and ran more than 400 combat missions as a machine gunner in the turret of a humvee. Part of his role required him to interrogate dozens of terror suspects. His work was deemed classified.

Like many veterans, Sergeant Somers was haunted by the war when he returned home. He suffered from flashbacks, nightmares, depression, and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder—all made worse by a traumatic brain injury. Sergeant Somers needed help.

He and his family did what all families who face similar challenges are urged to do—they asked for help. Yet, when the VA’s answer came, it demonstrated exactly what happens when America’s veterans are left behind. The VA enrolled Sergeant Somers in group

therapy sessions—sessions he could not attend for fear of his disclosing classified information. Despite repeated requests for individualized counseling or some other reasonable accommodation to allow Sergeant Somers to receive appropriate care for his PTSD, the VA delayed in its providing him with suitable support and care.

Like many veterans, Sergeant Somers' isolation got worse when he transitioned to civilian life. He tried to provide for his family, but he was unable to work due to his disability. He struggled with the VA bureaucracy. His disability appeal had been pending for more than 2 years without there having been any resolution, and he didn't get the help he needed in time.

On June 10 of 2013, Sergeant Somers wrote a letter to his family.

He wrote:

I am not getting better. I am not going to get better. And I will most certainly deteriorate further as time goes on.

He went on to write:

I am left with basically nothing. Too trapped in a war to be at peace. Too damaged to be at war. Abandoned by those who would take the easy route and a liability to those who stick it out and thus deserve better. So you see, not only am I better off dead, but the world is better without me in it. This is what brought me to my actual final mission.

On that day, we lost SGT Daniel Somers to suicide.

Americans who return home from having served our Nation must always have somewhere to turn for support. I am committed to ensuring that no veteran feels trapped like Sergeant Somers did and that all of our veterans have access to appropriate mental health care.

Sergeant Somers' story will sound too familiar to too many military families. Perhaps less common is the astonishing bravery that had been demonstrated by Sergeant Somers' parents, Howard and Jean, after their son's death.

Howard and Jean are in the Senate's Gallery today, and I am so honored to have them here as I share their son's story.

Howard and Jean were devastated by the loss of their son, and nobody would have blamed them if they had turned inward to deal with their grief, but they didn't. Howard and Jean faced the world and bravely shared SGT Daniel Somers' story, and they have created a mission of their own. Their mission is to ensure that Sergeant Somers' story brings to light America's deadliest war—the 20 veterans we lose to suicide in this country every day.

While I served in the U.S. House, I worked closely with Howard and Jean to develop and pass into law the Daniel Somers Classified Veterans Access to Care Act, which is legislation that ensures veterans who serve in a classified capacity receive behavioral health services in an appropriate care setting.

Now it is time to take the next innovative step in providing the support our servicemembers and veterans have

earned, for servicemembers' loved ones are not always aware of the resources that are available to them—resources that can prove to be critical when those servicemembers encounter challenges during Active Duty or after their separations from the military.

The Somers' family and I have worked over the past several months with the Department of Defense on new legislation to create a network of support for our military members. In May, I introduced the bipartisan Sergeant Daniel Somers Network of Support Act, which was cosponsored by my friend and colleague on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Republican Senator THOM TILLIS. Our legislation requires each new servicemember be asked for the names of loved ones whom he or she considers to be part of his or her network of support. In return, the Department of Defense and the Red Cross will provide information about benefits and services that are available to military members.

By engaging loved ones and families from the beginning, the Department of Defense can better prepare and equip our military families and friends to better understand military life, to notice when servicemembers are in need, and to help ensure that servicemembers get the right kind of assistance or care. We must do everything possible to empower family and friends, who are the first line of defense in our preventing suicide amongst our veterans and servicemembers.

This commonsense solution could be a game-changer for the men and women who have risked their lives to protect our freedoms, for their isolation leads to tragedy. We have worked with Congressman SCOTT PETERS, of California, who has introduced companion legislation in the U.S. House. In working as a team across party lines, we successfully included our network of support legislation in the national defense bill that was passed by both the Senate and the House over the past few weeks.

I am proud of this accomplishment, but we have so much more to do. When servicemembers transition from active service to veteran status, they face old and confusing regulations that can be difficult to navigate even for those who are able to care for themselves. We must ensure that veterans who receive care from the VA also have a network of support in place to help them thrive and prosper when they return to civilian life. I have spoken directly with VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, who expressed his support for extending the network of support to veterans, and I look forward to working closely with him to get it done.

As we continue this work, I urge my colleagues to join me in expanding this critical program. We can help ensure together that all veterans have networks to turn to so they never have to face their challenges alone.

The story of Sergeant Somers and his parents, the failure of the VA bureauc-

racy to provide the support this Arizona veteran needed, and the resulting tragedy is not a story that dominated the national headlines. It is not a political scandal, and it is not a partisan food fight to which Members of Congress are pressured to respond. It is not what reporters in the Capitol's hallways ask me about, and it is not what people tweet to me on a daily or on even an hourly basis. You will never see a push notification on your iPhone about legislation like ours. Yet this is the kind of work that matters. It matters to Sergeant Somers' parents, and it matters to veterans across my State. It matters to military families and to loved ones, and it matters to Arizona. It is exactly why, as Arizona's senior Senator, I will not spend my time focusing on areas of disagreement, because expending energy on the latest tweet, on the latest insult, and on petty politics simply doesn't move the needle for everyday people like the Somers.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am fortunate to serve with Republican Chairman JOHNNY ISAKSON and Ranking Member JON TESTER—two Senators who demonstrate every day what can get done when leaders put aside their differences and work toward common goals. Our bipartisan legislation got this far thanks in part to support from Senators ISAKSON and TESTER, as well as from the leaders of the Armed Services Committee, Chairman JAMES INHOFE and Ranking Member JACK REED. However, in this effort and in so many others, I sorely miss the leadership of the former Armed Services chairman and my personal hero, John McCain.

So many of my colleagues in this body came to know and love Senator John McCain for his military heroism and for his years of leadership in the Senate. Back home in Arizona, Senator John McCain is also a hero for what he represented in public service.

What Senator McCain said in his last speech in this very Chamber shapes my service to Arizona every day. He said:

But make no mistake, my service here is the most important job I have had in my life. And I am so grateful to the people of Arizona for the privilege—for the honor—of serving here and the opportunities it gives me to play a small role in the history of the country I love.

He went on to say:

Merely preventing your political opponents from doing what they want isn't the most inspiring work. There's greater satisfaction in respecting our differences, but not letting them prevent agreements that don't require abandonment of core principles, agreements made in good faith that help improve lives and protect the American people. . . . What a great honor and extraordinary opportunity it is to serve in this body.

Senator McCain talked of what is possible when the Senate works the way it was meant to work. He stood for everything we stand for as Arizonans: fighting for what you believe in, standing up for what is right even if you stand alone, and serving a cause greater than one's self.

He taught us to always assume the best in others, to seek compromise instead of sowing division, and to always put country ahead of party.

One of Senator McCain's last acts in the Senate was to shepherd last year's annual Defense bill into law—the same annual bill which, this year, includes our Daniel Somers Network of Support Act. I hope we are making Senator McCain proud with such important work.

With Senator McCain's example lighting the way, and with the trust of the people of Arizona shaping my service, I recommit to ignoring political games and focusing on upholding Arizona values to get things done for the State and for the country I love.

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.

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

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

BORDER SECURITY

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I rise to address an issue that transcends politics and strikes at the very core of who we are as Americans.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have made it my priority to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to look past partisanship, and to work toward passing commonsense legislation so we can help working families in Nevada and across our country.

In the House, I was proud to be named one of the most bipartisan Members of Congress, and that is a title I plan to keep in the Senate. So I hope my colleagues recognize the seriousness of why I rise today.

It is without partisan motivation when I say that we have a crisis on our hands. Make no mistake about it, there is a humanitarian crisis at our southern border and we are failing to address it. This administration is failing to address it. This Congress is failing to address it.

With violence and political unrest increasing in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, we are experiencing a surge in the number of migrants who have come to our southern border seeking refuge from violence and persecution.

More than 60 percent of migrants are families and unaccompanied children fleeing for their lives and seeking a safe place. Children and their families are coming to our country for the same reasons so many of our ancestors did—because they have no other choice. They are coming to the United States, a nation of immigrants, a nation built on a foundation of core values, and we do not turn away those fleeing persecution and certain death.

It is those same values that tell us that when children—including infants

and toddlers—are at our doorstep, we do not put them in cages, tear them from their mother's arms, let them go without showers, food, or medical attention, or let them sleep on cold floors.

The reality is, Customs and Border Patrol officers are not trained to care for children, much less those who have experienced trauma. They are not prepared nor qualified to provide the much needed care to the families and children who are coming here.

What is also true is that there are members of our Border Patrol and law enforcement who are trying to do the right thing. Those men and women signed up to protect our country from terrorism, narcotics, and foreign threats. They are not trained to take care of traumatized children. The fact remains, the state of things in these immigration facilities is untenable and indefensible.

I have had the chance to see this crisis firsthand, so allow me to speak a little bit on what I have witnessed and how we got here.

Children and families have been placed into overcrowded and unsanitary facilities, left without suitable living conditions or even the most basic of necessities for days or even weeks.

Last year, while serving as a member of the House of Representatives, I traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border with one of my colleagues. We toured the Tornillo unaccompanied minor facility and the Paso del Norte Processing Center in Texas. What we witnessed there was heartbreaking.

We saw a tent city holding unaccompanied migrant children and children separated from their parents. They have no access to legal counsel, no way to regularly talk to their families. They are without any idea of what might happen next. Throughout their camp, there was a sense of anxiety, hopelessness, and despair. I have carried the images of what I saw during that tour with me to this day.

In committee testimony and in followup briefings, in conversations with the administration and its agencies, we were told conditions would improve, that plans were in place to provide the care that is so desperately needed, and that families would be reunited. We now know that was wrong.

We have all seen the news and read reports detailing the abysmal state of these facilities—children still in cages, still going to sleep hungry, still going weeks without bathing or having access to clean clothes, young children being tasked by officers to care for toddlers, and, in some cases, allegations of sexual abuse by officers.

To find out firsthand whether conditions are improving, just last week I joined my Senate colleagues in touring detention facilities in the McAllen, TX, area. I am sad to say these news reports are accurate. These horrific conditions have not changed, families are still being separated, children are still

in cages, not knowing if they will ever see their parents again, and this administration continues to ignore basic human rights. Children should never be held in these conditions under any circumstances, for any amount of time, period.

We saw children stuffed into crowded spaces. The people detained in these facilities lack access to basic necessities like toothpaste and access to sanitary supplies. There are few, if any, pediatricians, no child welfare professionals, no hope, just thousands of children and families in the care of law enforcement officers. This is not who we are.

The dehumanization of migrants, including many tender-age children in our detention centers today, is unacceptable. The psychological trauma they have experienced, and that they are continuing to experience, will likely leave children with deep scars that will haunt them for the rest of their lives.

Let me be clear: We are failing our law enforcement, we are failing our families, and we are failing children.

We can agree that immigrants with criminal records or those who have falsified their reasons for coming should not be allowed to stay, but during my visit to McAllen last week, the acting head of Border Patrol told all of us that the vast majority of migrant families are not criminals.

I refuse to stand by while this takes place on American soil. So I decided to take action by placing holds on two individuals nominated by this administration to serve in administrative and policy roles of DHS until conditions in these facilities drastically improve, until DHS meets the standards it is obligated—obligated—to uphold.

This is the United States of America. All children deserve to be treated humanely and with dignity, and those of any age who come to our country claiming asylum have a legal right to present their case.

We must ensure that we achieve, at the very least, minimum humanitarian standards at CBP facilities. That means all CBP facilities where children are processed or detained need to have onsite medical professionals with pediatric training and child welfare professionals. That means implementing a process for announced and unannounced site visits by NGOs so we can ensure proper oversight and accountability, as well as direct services for children. Even something as simple as a sign that communicates to migrant families explaining where they are and what to expect—something that simple could reduce anxiety and hopelessness that these individuals and children are feeling.

There is so much good in the American people, and that shows in the outpouring of support from NGOs that are ready and willing to step in and respond. They do so many other humanitarian efforts. Yet our government is

turning away these offers of help. Conditions at these facilities have not improved, and until they do, I will not remove my holds on this administration's nominees.

Once we have taken the necessary steps to ensure migrant children are being held in safe and sanitary conditions, we must then take up the critical and long-overdue task of reforming our long-term immigration policy. We owe it to migrant children and families to reach an immediate solution. We owe it to our law enforcement to prevent this difficult situation from continuing.

We must come together. We must take action now because, at the end of the day, these are human lives, and they depend on us.

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

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

VOTE ON STEPHEN M. DICKSON

MR. WICKER. Mr. President, in a few moments, at 12 noon, the Senate will vote on a cloture motion for the nomination of Stephen M. Dickson to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. I rise in strong support of that motion. I think it will pass today. I will be supporting the nomination when it comes to a full vote on the floor of the Senate sometime later.

As chair of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, let me report that we recently voted to report Mr. Dickson's nomination favorably out of the committee. I hope the Senate will soon confirm this highly qualified nominee. Steve Dickson was chosen for this important position based on his strong qualifications, which include almost 40 years of combined service in the U.S. Air Force and the commercial air transportation sector.

Mr. Dickson is a 1979 distinguished graduate of the Air Force Academy and graduated magna cum laude from Georgia State University College of Law in 1999, where he earned his J.D. He served in the U.S. Air Force as an F-15 fighter pilot, including assignments as a flight commander, instructor pilot, and flight examiner. From 1991 until October of 2018, Mr. Dickson was employed by Delta Air Lines as a pilot and management executive. He retired after rising through the ranks to become Delta's senior vice president of flight operations.

On May 15, the committee held a hearing to consider Mr. Dickson's nomination, and he clearly demonstrated the experience and leadership abilities necessary to lead the FAA. I don't know if there was a single member of the committee who failed to be impressed.

After Mr. Dickson's hearing, new information came to the committee's at-

tention, which we gave due diligence to looking into. The information involved employees reporting possible safety violations at Mr. Dickson's former employer while he was serving as senior vice president. These matters merited further examination. The committee conducted an extensive review of these allegations, including multiple followup conversations and meetings with Mr. Dickson. We have studied hundreds of pages of legal documents.

Here is what we know for a fact about these allegations. We know for a fact—and it is uncontested—that Mr. Dickson was not a named party in any of these matters. We also know for a fact that he was not personally alleged to have retaliated against any of his fellow employees who raised the safety concerns.

Mr. Dickson's responses to post-hearing questions for the record demonstrate that he has commitments to safety and to the protection of employees who report concerns and that that is paramount, in his view. In fact, Mr. Dickson unequivocally stated in his written responses that he was never named as a party to any judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceedings and was never accused of retaliation of any sort during his tenure at his former employer.

I think the FAA, we all agree, should be the gold standard in aviation safety. I think Steve Dickson is the correct person to be confirmed and sit at the helm of the FAA at this crucial time for the agency. The majority of the committee believes that Mr. Dickson is an excellent nominee for this position and will bring the commitment, experience, and expertise necessary to lead the FAA and fulfill its mission. I am going to be urging my colleagues to vote yes on the cloture motion and then to swiftly confirm Mr. Dickson's nomination.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

MR. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I complete my remarks before we move to the vote to confirm our next Secretary of Defense.

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

NOMINATION OF MARK T. ESPER

MR. INHOFE. Mr. President, we are in a great position that we are not very often in. We have someone who is enthusiastically supported by Republicans, by Democrats, and he is obviously the right person. He has the trust of our President, he has the trust of our military, and he has the trust of Congress and the country to keep our Nation safe.

Dr. Mark Esper is the right man for the job. He is a great choice to lead the Pentagon, and I am proud to support him. And I am not the only one. In fact, I would like to take a moment to share some of the bipartisan support we have for Dr. Esper from the defense experts, former officials, and my own colleagues.

SENATOR KAINES from Virginia said this at Dr. Esper's confirmation hearing:

He is a person of sound character and moral courage. He's been proactive and transparent . . . trademarks of exceptional leadership.

SECRETARY MATTIS—you remember him—when Dr. Esper was being sworn in as the Secretary of the Army, then-Secretary of Defense Mattis said:

The bottom line is the virtuous and vile alike have written history, but let's remember here today that we're the good guys . . . and this is the man who can take us forward.

MARK JACOBSON, a senior adviser to Ash Carter, said:

This is someone who can work across the aisle. This is somebody who can work with Congress. And that's really what defines him. A soldier, a scholar.

THE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER, MITCH MCCONNELL, said:

Anybody impartial would have to have come away impressed by Dr. Esper's mastery, intelligence, and thoroughness.

My colleagues in the Armed Services Committee also widely support Dr. Esper's nomination, advancing his nomination with an overwhelming bipartisan vote.

Across the Capitol, both the chairman and ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee support Dr. Esper. They all support him. Chairman ADAM SMITH said that Dr. Esper is "capable of executing the National Defense Strategy in a way that is insulated from outside influence and political considerations. . . . The Department would benefit from his leadership." That is my counterpart over in the House.

Ranking Member MAC THORNBERRY said he has "done an outstanding job as Secretary of the Army." I agree with Congressman THORNBERRY.

Under Dr. Esper's leadership, we saw Army modernization leap forward by leaps and bounds. He managed the largest reorganization of the Army in 45 years, prioritizing research, development, and innovation. He showed accountability to the taxpayers by being responsible with his budget, making tough decisions, tough choices, streamlining legacy programs, and directing defense dollars to critical future needs.

It is impressive, but being a good Army Secretary isn't enough on its own. Secretary Mattis reminded us that civilian leaders in our military must be more than their past accomplishments. Mark Esper is more because he truly respects and honors his commitment to the men and women in uniform. I have seen this firsthand.

Back in April, I asked Dr. Esper to join me on a visit to Fort Sill in my State of Oklahoma. What impressed me was how well he communicated with the troops in the field. He is one of the troops out there, and you could see the love that he had for them. In Fort Sill, he even joined them—and I was there—for an Army combat fitness test workout. He participated with the troops. He ate the MREs out in the field. Any one who has been in the Army can tell

you that you don't often find people who choose to do that, but Mark Esper did.

Dr. Esper deeply cares about the troops, whether it is making sure that they have the weapons, equipment, and training they need to succeed in their missions or simply that they have quality housing when they are on base.

We moved quickly to consider Dr. Esper's nomination here on the floor, but that isn't because we didn't fulfill our duty of advice and consent. We did. Dr. Esper testified for over 3 hours. Between his hearing and his followup questions for the record, he answered approximately 600 questions. It is clear that Dr. Esper has what it takes to lead the Department of Defense and that most of my colleagues think so as well.

He has served the Nation with honor and integrity, and I am certain that he is going to continue to do so when he is confirmed.

I strongly request a strong vote to confirm Dr. Mark Esper to be our next Secretary of Defense.

With that, I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Mark T. Esper, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Defense.

VOTE ON ESPER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Esper nomination?

Mr. WICKER. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) would have voted "yea".

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 90, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 220 Ex.]

YEAS—90

Alexander	Blackburn	Braun
Baldwin	Blumenthal	Brown
Barrasso	Blunt	Burr
Bennet	Boozman	Cantwell

Capito	Hirono	Roberts	and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.
Cardin	Hooven	Romney	
Carper	Hyde-Smith	Rosen	
Casey	Inhofe	Rounds	
Cassidy	Johnson	Rubio	
Collins	Jones	Sasse	
Coons	Kaine	Schatz	
Cornyn	Kennedy	Schumer	
Cortez Masto	King	Scott (FL)	
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)	
Cramer	Leahy	Shaheen	
Crapo	Lee	Shelby	
Cruz	Manchin	Sinema	
Daines	McConnell	Smith	
Duckworth	McSally	Stabenow	
Durbin	Menendez	Sullivan	
Enzi	Moran	Tester	
Ernst	Murkowski	Thune	
Feinstein	Murphy	Tillis	
Fischer	Murray	Toomey	
Gardner	Paul	Udall	
Graham	Perdue	Van Hollen	
Grassley	Peters	Warner	
Hassan	Portman	Whitehouse	
Hawley	Reed	Wicker	
Heinrich	Risch	Young	

Isakson	Sanders	Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Booker	Klobuchar	Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Gillibrand	Markley	Blumenthal	Blackburn	Roberts
Harris	Merkley	Enzi	Blunt	Grassley

Isakson	Sanders	Boozman	Boehner	Romney
Booker	Klobuchar	Braun	Hawley	Rounds
Gillibrand	Markley	Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Harris	Merkley	Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)

Isakson	Sanders	Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Booker	Klobuchar	Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Gillibrand	Markley	Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Harris	Merkley	Cotton	Lee	Thune

Isakson	Sanders	Cramer	McConnell	Tillis
Booker	Klobuchar	Crapo	McSally	Toomey
Gillibrand	Markley	Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Harris	Merkley	Daines	Murkowski	Young

Isakson	Sanders	Ernst	Perdue	Young
---------	---------	-------	--------	-------

NAYS—8

Isakson	Sanders	Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Booker	Klobuchar	Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Gillibrand	Markley	Blumenthal	Blackburn	Roberts
Harris	Merkley	Enzi	Blunt	Grassley

NOT VOTING—2

Isakson	Sanders	Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Booker	Klobuchar	Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Gillibrand	Markley	Blumenthal	Blackburn	Roberts
Harris	Merkley	Enzi	Blunt	Grassley

NAYS—45

Isakson	Sanders	Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Booker	Klobuchar	Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Gillibrand	Markley	Blumenthal	Blackburn	Roberts
Harris	Merkley	Enzi	Blunt	Grassley

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 nomination of Stephen M. Dickson, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years.

James M. Inhofe, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Joni Ernst, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, John Cornyn, James E. Risch, Roger F. Wicker, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Mitch McConnell.

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 Stephen M. Dickson, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) would have voted "yea".

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS)

NOT VOTING—3

Isakson	Sanders	Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Booker	Klobuchar	Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Gillibrand	Markley	Blumenthal	Blackburn	Roberts

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephen M. Dickson, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Maine.

RECESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:04 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).