

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
Cardin	Hoeven	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

NAYS—8

Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Gillibrand	Markey	Wyden
Harris	Merkley	

NOT VOTING—2

Isakson	Sanders
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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)

and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 221 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—3

Isakson	Sanders	Whitehouse
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

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).

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, this afternoon the Senate will vote on permanent reauthorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund. I am proud to lead this legislation with Senator GILLIBRAND, and I thank all of the incredible first responders for their efforts to make this day happen and, day in and day out, to get this legislation to where it is today.

This critical legislation would fully fund the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund and ensure that all those exposed to toxins and impacted by 9/11-related illnesses are thoroughly compensated, both now and as conditions are diagnosed in the future.

Solving this problem is urgent as more and more people become sick—people like Luis Alvarez, who came to Washington, DC, just a few months ago, postponing chemotherapy treatment to advocate for his fellow heroes. Luis is not here to watch from the Gallery today. He is watching from above.

As we celebrate this vote today, we celebrate the lives of people like Luis Alvarez.

The Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act is named in honor of these three first responders who lost their lives to 9/11-related illnesses. Today, the Senate has an opportunity to honor these three and so many others we have lost who never stopped fighting for 9/11 first responders and the country they loved by voting yes on this critical legislation.

I have shared with many of my colleagues that I never had the privilege of going to New York City before September 11, 2001, but I will never forget my first visit after September 11, 2001. It was just a few weeks after the attack had happened. I will never forget the smell. I will never forget the smoke coming out of the debris piles. I will never forget the silent firetrucks—their lights on but no siren—as they delivered even more heroes to the recovery efforts at Ground Zero. I will never forget the fierce dedication of the men and women who came when they were called, watching the firetrucks with their flags heading to continue the work that by then had become so emblazoned in people's minds across this country.

The work they did in those days, those weeks, and those months wasn't just for those in Manhattan who suffered an incredible loss. The work they carried forward for our country became symbols of our security, symbols of our freedoms, symbols of this country's willingness, determination, effort, and tenacity to fight back.

Law enforcement officers and firefighters from across the Nation, including the West Metro Fire Rescue in Colorado, home of Colorado Task Force 1, have been tireless advocates for this effort. Every State has people who served in one capacity or another during the rescue and recovery operations of September 11.

West Metro Fire District chief Steve Aseltine was one of 64 Coloradans with Colorado Task Force 1 who participated, as he said, searching through the rubble piles. Steve said: No one should be at risk of standing up and worrying, when this country needs them the most, whether the American Government has their back.

If passed today, without amendments, the legislation will head straight to the President's desk for his signature. So I urge my colleagues today not to forget, to pass a clean bill, and to join me in opposing both amendments, and to stand with all of our first responders and heroes from that tragic day for this bill's final passage and ultimate enactment.

I urge this Chamber to support those who have given so much to this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, today I will offer an amendment to pay for the spending in this bill. This is not something unusual. I do this day in and day out. It has been part of the reason I ran for office—that we shouldn't add more debt to our country without trying to pay for it by maybe reducing spending from wasteful spending.

In the last week or so, we have seen a manufactured crisis. Rarely has there been a manufactured crisis so intense—a fake furor instigated by partisans more concerned with scoring points than telling the truth. But, for some of us, the truth is still important.

The mob and demagogues in this body accuse me of holding up this bill for political points. They obviously don't know much about politics, because there certainly hasn't been any political gain by my holding this bill for debate and amendment. But I think it is important we do this, rather than rush through and everybody says: No questions asked, please. It sounds a little more like an authoritarian atmosphere than it would be a democracy, to actually have debate, discussion, and amendments. That is all we have asked for.

In fact, last week when we were granted the amendments, we said to the other side: Let's have the vote—last week. And all of those who were in such a furor, all those who were so hysterical that the world was ending said: Oh, we cannot vote on it—it was not convenient last week—because some of our Democrat Members have already gone home for the weekend. So when the mob was told last week they could have the vote, they said no. It is a manufactured crisis. As of today, the

fund in question has \$2 billion in it, and no one is being denied medical care.

So let's have an honest debate. Let's have an honest debate about whether it matters to this country whether we are \$2 billion in debt, and whether or not, when we have new spending programs—no matter how charitable, no matter how needed—whether or not we are going to pay for them by reducing spending in wasteful programs.

It is perhaps a historical anomaly that this bill appropriates unlimited funds for a virtually unlimited time period.

What would you think if someone came to you, they had a good cause, and they said: You know, my neighbors' house has burnt down, and I want to help them, and I want to give them unlimited money for an unlimited period of time?

That wouldn't be wise. No one would do that. So why do we, in our hysteria, throw out all common sense and say that we are going to approach this as if we don't have a problem?

We have this enormous problem in our country. We are borrowing over \$1 million a minute. My amendment today is to offer to pay for the \$10 billion in the first 10 years. Realize that this bill as written is not a 10-year bill. It is a 72-year bill. It goes to the year 2092. To my knowledge, we have never, ever had a bill that was unlimited in the dollar amount and unlimited in the time period. Mine would be to pay for the first 10 years of this. The pay would come by reducing mandatory spending by 0.06 percent. That is 6/100th of 1 percent of other mandatory spending.

At the same time, we would exempt Medicare, Social Security, and Veterans Affairs from cuts. We would exempt the vast bulk of mandatory spending, but we would still say: If this is a wise expenditure of money, if we need more money for this fund, we would simply take it from something that is less pressing.

No matter how good a cause may be, it makes no sense to borrow from China to pay for our immediate concerns. Spending someone else's money is not charity. Spending borrowed money is just not wise or sound governance.

Being a legislator should be about making choices, about deciding priorities.

For example, which is more important—spending \$275 million teaching foreign countries how to apply for U.S. foreign aid and teaching foreign countries how to get our money and how to fill out the grant process? Is that more important than the spending in this bill? We will never know because the people who promote this bill aren't willing to cut any spending. They are not going to look at waste.

We wonder why we have waste run from top to bottom in our government? Because no one is willing, even for a good cause, to say: Why don't we cut out some of this waste? Why don't we