

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 226 Ex.]

YEAS—55

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

NAYS—37

Baldwin	Heinrich	Schatz
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Peters	Wyden
Feinstein	Reed	
Hassan	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—8

Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Isakson	Warren
Gillibrand	Klobuchar	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 37.

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 Wendy Williams Berger, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Brian C. Buescher, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Chuck Grassley, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, David Perdue, Ron Johnson, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Martha McSally, John Boozman, Richard Burr, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis.

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 Brian C. Buescher, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska, 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).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 227 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—39

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

NOT VOTING—9

Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Isakson	Warren
Gillibrand	Klobuchar	Whitehouse

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 39.

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 Brian C. Buescher, of Nebraska, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, earlier this week, the administration and House Democrats reached a bipartisan budget deal to deliver on the President's priorities and prevent a funding crisis this fall.

As our Armed Forces continue their global engagements, this agreement importantly secures the funding necessary to maintain readiness and modernize the force. It provides increased defense spending to recover from the depressed military readiness rates of the previous administration. It provides our men and women in uniform with the resources, equipment, and training they need in order to defend our freedoms.

I know Congress deals with a lot of different topics, and all of them, by and large, are important, but there is nothing more important, nor is there anything more quintessentially a Federal Government responsibility than national security.

All other considerations aside, if this bipartisan budget deal did nothing more than fully fund our national security efforts, I would support it, but importantly, it also keeps other important elements of the congressional consensus intact—things like the Hyde amendment, which, as the Presiding Officer knows, since the late 1970s has ensured that no taxpayer dollars can be used to fund abortions. In addition, this agreement prevents our Democratic colleagues from trying to block President Trump from using funds to strengthen border security.

The administration—Secretary Mnuchin—negotiated a tough deal and one that excludes any radical, leftwing poison pills—a difficult task in these times, to be sure.

We know they wanted to use policy riders—nearly 30 of them and counting—to try to implement elements of the Green New Deal to undo the President's regulatory reforms or to rewrite our immigration laws through the back door. Earlier this year, their far-left policy riders led to the longest government shutdown in history and almost prevented the enactment of bipartisan border supplemental funding. I saw the devastating impact that shutdown had on dedicated public servants across the country, especially in Texas. This agreement will prevent another senseless shutdown and ensure that the trains of government run on time.

To be sure, no bipartisan agreement is ever perfect. That is the definition of a negotiation—both sides give a little. It is the nature of compromise, which

is a necessary part of effective governing. There is no doubt that there are other priorities I would have liked to have seen included in the deal. I wish we had done something to reform our entitlement programs, which will continue to outpace inflation and increase our national deficit. Someday, we are going to have to deal with our deficits and debt; I just hope it is not during the time of a national emergency. But as a practical matter, Speaker PELOSI wasn't going to agree with such far-reaching reforms in the context of this spending deal and debt limit provision. Thankfully, the President was able to secure half of the spending cuts he asked for—roughly equal to next year's increase in non-defense spending.

Above all, this deal carries out the most critical responsibilities of the Federal Government, which is to support our national defense and fully fund the government's operation.

Again, I appreciate the President's efforts here and particularly those in his administration who helped negotiate this bipartisan deal—particularly Secretary Mnuchin. I look forward to supporting it.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. President, last week, the National Center for Health Statistics released preliminary data showing that drug overdose deaths in America declined by about 5 percent last year. Before anybody begins to applaud, let me point out that drug overdoses killed more than 70,000 Americans the year before. So a 5-percent reduction is welcome, but obviously it is still very alarming. This 5 percent decline is the first national drop in three decades, though, and for communities across the country that continue to battle the opioid epidemic, it is a small indication that our efforts here in Congress are having an impact. We certainly have a long fight ahead of us, but this is an encouraging sign.

If you look closer, the data shows that the decline is due almost entirely to a decrease in prescription opioid-related deaths. Those caused by other opioids—particularly fentanyl and heroin—remain on the rise.

The cruel reality is that the more we step up our efforts to limit prescription opioid diversion, the higher the demand is for other illegal drugs, many of which come across our southern border. We can't limit our efforts to what can be done here at home. In order for our work to be successful and for us to save more lives, we have to stop this poison from entering our country in the first place.

I have the honor of cochairing the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control with Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California, where we are working on ways to do exactly that—to slow down the poison coming across our borders.

If you look at many of the challenges we face here at home—whether it is the opioid epidemic, the humanitarian cri-

sis at the border, the criminal gangs on our streets—much of that can be directly traced to the violence that exists in Central America and Mexico.

This morning, I had the pleasure of speaking at the Hudson Institute about my proposal to attack this crisis from every angle, an all-government approach, something we call the New Americas Recommitment to Counternarcotics Operations and Strategy. As the Presiding Officer knows, we love a good acronym here in Washington, DC, so we can simply refer to this initiative as the NARCOS Initiative.

First, it takes aim at the dangerous substances that are crossing our southern border. Customs and Border Protection officers are incredibly well-trained and equipped to find illegal drugs, and seize an average of 5,800 pounds of narcotics each day. By the way, on June 16, Customs and Border Protection seized 20 tons of cocaine—which is the largest seizure in the 230-year history of Customs and Border Protection—with an estimated street value of \$1.3 billion. So good for them. They are extremely professional and well-trained law enforcement officers.

As we know, many of these drugs managed to make their way into the interior of our country and into local communities, causing untold misery and grief. Stopping their production and movement is not a fight we can win alone. It will take a bipartisan, long-term commitment from the Federal Government, as well as our foreign partners. An important step is to strengthen law enforcement cooperation by improving intelligence-sharing and providing training for some of our foreign partners. It is an important force multiplier and a necessary component of our counternarcotics efforts.

In addition to attacking the drugs themselves, the NARCOS Initiative goes after the cartels and transnational criminal organizations that profit from this business. These groups are what I call commodity-agnostic. They really don't care who they hurt or what they ply. The only thing they care about is making money. It is not just narcotics they are dealing; it is human trafficking, migrant smuggling, money laundering, counterfeit goods, public corruption. The list of crimes is long, indeed, and they do all of it.

These transnational criminal organizations turn an enormous profit from their corrupt dealings, and then they have to launder the money they use to finance their operation. We know that one of the most effective ways to suffocate criminal networks is to cut off the money, so that is precisely where we should aim.

The Senate Judiciary Committee recently passed legislation to combat money laundering and other illicit financing, which includes a provision that I offered that has to do with the role of remittances. According to the United Nations, over \$300 billion in illicit transnational crimes proceeds

likely flows through the U.S. financial system. The provision included on remittances requires Treasury to submit an analysis of the use of remittances by drug kingpins and crime syndicates and develop a strategy to prevent them from using that remittance system in order to launder proceeds from criminal enterprises.

It is also time for us to reevaluate our current strategy and to determine how to update the Bank Secrecy Act, which was enacted more than 50 years ago and is the primary money laundering law regulating financial institutions.

In addition to fueling violence and instability, the conditions in Central America serve as a push factor. As human beings, we all understand people fleeing violence and poverty. So encouraging those countries to provide safety and stability for their own people so they can stay in their homes and live their lives ought to be one of the things that we do. Otherwise, these push factors encourage migrants to take the same routes used by cartels and criminal organizations to reach the United States. As we know, some of them simply don't make it. They die in the process. Young girls and women are routinely sexually assaulted. It is a miserable alternative to staying at home and living in safety and security.

We know all of this has contributed to the humanitarian crisis at our southern border. We all know but have not yet had the political will to reform our broken laws and prevent these smugglers and criminal organizations from gaming the system.

I know the Presiding Officer was at the border earlier this week. I have tried to figure out how we crack this nut. How do we take this polarized environment and provide the tools necessary to begin to staunch the flow of humanity coming across our border? They are attracted by the easy access to the United States through our broken laws but also the push factors, like the violence and poverty in their countries.

I am working with a Democratic colleague of mine from Laredo, TX, HENRY CUELLAR. Together, we introduced the HUMANE Act, which made great strides to help fix our broken asylum system in a way that would give legitimate asylees an opportunity to present their case on a timely basis in front of an immigration judge. It would also make sure the conditions of their custody while they are here in the United States are something we can be proud of. Specifically, what this bill does is closes a loophole in the law known as the Flores settlement, which is often used by smugglers to gain entry into the United States. It would streamline the processing of migrants and improve standards of care for individuals in custody.

If we want to restore law and order and make it sustainable, we need to look at ways to invest in economic development to help these countries build