

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 55.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John Milton Younge, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 John Milton Younge, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Rob Portman, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roy Blunt.

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 344.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Mary S. McElroy, of Rhode Island, to be United States District Judge for the District of Rhode Island.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Mary S. McElroy, of Rhode Island, to be United States District Judge for the District of Rhode Island.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Rob Portman, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roy Blunt.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 346.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Stephanie A. Gallagher, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Stephanie A. Gallagher, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Rob Portman, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roy Blunt.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 351.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Mary M. Rowland, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Mary M. Rowland, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Rob Portman, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roy Blunt.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.

MUELLER REPORT

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, yesterday the American people finally heard at length directly from Special Counsel Robert Mueller. In his testimony before the House Judiciary Committee and the Intelligence Committee, the special counsel gave voice to his report on Russian interference in our 2016 Presidential election and President Trump's obstruction of the investigation into it.

What the American people and I heard from Special Counsel Mueller was an explanation and confirmation of the deeply troubling findings and conclusions of his investigation and his written report. He told us that the Trump campaign welcomed the help of a hostile foreign power, Russia, to influence our 2016 election, accepted that help, lied repeatedly about it, and benefited from it.

He confirmed that there was voluminous evidence that President Trump had obstructed justice through his efforts to interfere with and impede the special counsel's investigation. Most importantly, contrary to the President's claims, the special counsel confirmed that his investigation had not exonerated the President of the crime of obstruction of justice. When asked, Robert Mueller made this crystal clear,

testifying that “the President was not exculpated for the acts that he allegedly committed.”

In his testimony yesterday, Special Counsel Mueller did not back away from any of his written report's findings. The American people saw and heard him emphatically defend them.

Special Counsel Mueller, a decorated war hero, gave every single American cause for deep alarm when he called Russian interference in support of the Trump campaign “among the most serious challenges” to American democracy that he had ever seen.

He agreed that it was “unpatriotic” and “wrong” to seek campaign help from a foreign power, and he decried President Trump's failure to acknowledge or respond to the systematic and sweeping Russian interference, warning: “They're doing it as we sit here.”

Yesterday, Donald Trump tried to defend himself in tweets while Robert Mueller defended our democracy with his testimony.

The special counsel's testimony and events of the past few weeks have led to the undeniable conclusion that it is time for the House of Representatives to begin a formal impeachment proceeding against President Trump.

I stand here today on the Senate floor, the place where an unprecedented trial would occur, understanding the gravity of this moment in our Nation's history. I stand here today because I believe we have reached the moment where we must stand up for the survival of our democracy.

Before I came to this decision, I said that I needed to hear directly from Special Counsel Mueller and other witnesses, that Congress needed to obtain documents, and that we needed to gather all the facts and evidence.

I had hoped that the House Judiciary Committee's investigation would get us answers to the questions about the President's obstructive conduct that remained after Special Counsel Mueller issued his report. I had hoped that the President, who continues to insist that he did nothing wrong, would cooperate and that the House Judiciary Committee would receive testimony and other evidence from the Trump campaign and Trump administration witnesses. That has not happened, and that is because of continued and deliberate Presidential obstruction.

Just listen to the numerous roadblocks that the President has put in Congress's way since Special Counsel Mueller issued his report in March. President Trump has denied the entire Congress access to the full and unredacted version of the Mueller report and its underlying materials.

President Trump has claimed that key witnesses, like former White House Counsel Donald McGahn and former White House Communications Director Hope Hicks, are immune from testifying or simply don't have to comply with congressional subpoenas.

President Trump has opposed testimony from two of the special counsel's

top deputies and restricted the scope of the Mueller testimony, and President Trump has vowed to fight any future congressional subpoenas.

What we have seen from President Trump is a pattern of repeated and baseless defiance of the House's constitutional authority to investigate, especially subpoenas seeking evidence that the President obstructed justice and abused his power.

The President has engaged in stonewalling that shows an unprecedented disregard and contempt for a coequal branch of government under our Constitution—disregard and contempt that would make Richard Nixon blush with envy.

Taken together, Special Counsel Robert Mueller's testimony and the President's obstruction of the congressional investigation compel us to immediately begin a formal impeachment inquiry.

I do not come to this decision lightly. An impeachment proceeding against the President of the United States is a matter of the highest constitutional magnitude, but when the evidence demonstrates that the President of the United States obstructed the special counsel's investigation and when the facts and the evidence demonstrate that the President of the United States is continuing to obstruct justice, seeking to derail a legitimate congressional investigation into the lawfulness of his conduct while in office, then Congress must do its constitutional duty and act.

The acts of obstruction that Special Counsel Mueller described in his report and in his testimony yesterday to Congress are impeachable offenses—a view shared by myriad constitutional scholars, attorneys, and prosecutors.

The President improperly pressed then-FBI Director James Comey to drop the investigation of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn and, subsequently, fired Comey because of the Russia investigation—confirmed yesterday by the special counsel's testimony.

The President unlawfully demanded that then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions reverse his recusal from the Russia investigation and take over the investigation—confirmed yesterday by the special counsel's testimony.

The President engaged in witness tampering and falsification of government records when he directed White House Counsel Don McGahn to fire Robert Mueller and later pressured McGahn to deny that it had happened—confirmed yesterday by the special counsel's testimony.

The President engaged in a coverup when he sought to prevent public disclosure of evidence about the infamous June 9, 2016, Trump Tower meeting—confirmed yesterday by the special counsel's testimony.

The President abused his constitutional authority by holding out the prospect of pardons in exchange for witnesses' silence—confirmed yesterday by the special counsel's testimony.

That Robert Mueller found so much evidence that this President committed impeachable offenses might be shocking, but it should not be surprising. After all, look at what we have learned about this President during his 2½ years in office, what he is willing to say and what he is willing to do.

Did an American President put family members in high-level White House policy positions—positions requiring security clearances that should never have been issued? Yes, he did.

Did an American President repeatedly show infatuation with and express sympathy for authoritarian figures around the globe, most notably Vladimir Putin, the man who interfered with the 2016 election to President Trump's benefit? Yes, he did.

Did an American President face multiple, repeated, and credible allegations of sexual assault by more than a dozen women—sexual assault that he bragged about on tape? Yes, he did.

Did an American President become known as individual No. 1, in effect an unindicted coconspirator on charges of Federal campaign finance law violations that were brought against his lawyer, Michael Cohen, in New York? Yes, he did.

Did an American President seek to divide Americans based on race, religion, and ethnicity, directing racist language at elected Members of Congress and urging others to celebrate that hate? Sadly, yes, he did.

We have watched as Donald Trump has given the Constitution a stress test, the likes of which we haven't seen in 230 years. We have watched him attack judges and seek to intimidate the judiciary.

We have watched him disregard Congress's coequal role in government under article I of the Constitution, whether by spending unappropriated money on his border wall, relying on “acting” government officials to eviscerate the Senate's advice and consent function, or ignoring legitimate oversight requests.

We have watched the President sue Congress in order to block release of his tax returns and refuse to disclose any meaningful information about his business operations, especially sources of foreign investment and loans, raising alarming questions about violations of the Constitution's emoluments clause.

This President relishes attacking the freedom of the press and has incited violence against journalists for exercising their First Amendment rights.

Donald Trump is tearing at the fabric of our democracy, literally, every single day. And yesterday, the Congress and the American people heard the facts and evidence that Congress can and should act to hold him accountable.

In the face of impeachable offenses, it is the Constitution that entrusts the Congress with the responsibility of deciding whether to remove a President of the United States from office for

high crimes and misdemeanors. Indeed, in the face of evidence of serious and persistent misconduct that is harmful to the Nation, Congress would be abusing its constitutional discretion and setting a dangerous precedent if it did not begin an impeachment inquiry.

If the evidence of obstruction of justice and other wrongdoing that Robert Mueller explained yesterday is not evidence of impeachable offenses, what is? What damage would a future President have to inflict in order to trigger an impeachment inquiry?

I have no illusions about where an impeachment inquiry will lead. My Republican colleagues have thus far shown themselves unwilling to hold this President accountable. They believe that everything is “all over.” But the evidence in the Mueller report and the special counsel’s testimony yesterday explaining it, defending it, and reaffirming it compel us to do what is right and what is necessary, and that is to exercise our authority and begin an impeachment proceeding against Donald Trump. Nothing less than our democracy is at stake. I call upon my colleagues in the House of Representatives to do so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I have one message for my colleagues in the Senate and those who might be watching. It is about this chart, which is very simple. This is the line of what we call discretionary spending. This is about 31 percent of the budget. That is the budget agreement you have read about in the newspapers the last couple of days. That is what we are talking about.

It is a blue line. It has to do with paying for our national defense, so it is about half of the dollars; then for our national parks, America’s best idea; then for the National Institutes of Health, the source of medical miracles ranging from restoring your heart to curing Zika to the National Laboratories, which are the sources of our competition with the rest of the world. That is what this money is for.

What the blue line recognizes is that for the last 10 years, the growth in spending for national defense, national parks, the National Institutes of Health, and National Labs has gone up at about the rate of inflation, and for the next 10 years, including the budget agreement that the President and the congressional leaders recommended this week, it will go at about the rate of inflation.

The point is, for 20 years—2008 to 2029—the increase in spending for the amount of money we are talking about and for the type of spending in the budget agreement is not the source of the Federal deficit. What is? Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and interest—that is the red line that 10 years ago was \$1.8 trillion. At the rate we are going, it will be \$5.4 trillion in 10 years.

That is not the type of spending we are talking about in the budget agreement.

My message today is in support of properly funding national defense, national parks, National Institutes of Health, and National Labs and not beating our chest and pretending that we are balancing the budget on the backs of our soldiers, our medical miracles, and our national parks when, in fact, it is the entitlements that the President and the Democrats and the Republicans in Congress need to address.

I will talk about the blue line today. I have talked about the red line plenty before. Former Senator Corker and I introduced legislation a few years ago that would have reduced the growth of this red line by \$1 trillion over 10 years. The only problem was, we were the only two cosponsors of the legislation.

The budget deficit is vitally damaging to our country, but the budget agreement that President Trump recommended is not the source of the budget deficit. That part of the budget is under control. That is 31 percent of all the dollars we spend in the United States. Just add to that, if this continues for another 10 years, this blue line—national defense, national parks, National Institutes of Health, National Laboratories—is going to go from 31 percent of the budget to 22 percent of the budget, and mandatory spending is going up to 78 percent. This is the budget deficit. This is the budget agreement we are going to be voting on next week. That part of the budget is under control.

Here is what the budget agreement, which the President recommended and our Democratic and Republican leaders in the House and Senate have recommended and which I strongly support, does. The first thing it does is suspend the debt limit—the amount we can borrow. If we don’t do that, we have a global fiscal crisis. We all know that, so we need to do it.

Second, it raises the defense and non-defense discretionary budget caps. That is this blue line down here. That is the amount of money we can spend, as I said, on national defense. That is about half of the spending—and then our veterans, National Labs, biomedical research, and national parks.

Let’s talk about the military for just a minute. Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis, who had enormous respect here in Congress, said that “no enemy in the field has done as much harm to the readiness of the U.S. military than the combined impact of the Budget Control Act’s defense spending caps, worsened by operating for 10 of the last 11 years under continuing resolutions of varied and unpredictable duration.”

In plain English, what that means is that because of the President’s leadership and the recommendations of our bipartisan leaders, we will avoid what Secretary Mattis said has been so damaging to our military.

Here is what happened. Back in 2011, we passed the Budget Control Act to try to limit this part of the budget. That came after a special committee was appointed, which everyone hoped would deal with this part of the budget—the problem part, the part that is causing the deficit.

The Budget Control Act came up with a formula that everybody thought would work. They said: Well, if we put in there that we will have dramatic reductions in military spending, Congress will never do that, so they will be forced to finally do something we all should have had the courage to do a long time ago, and that is deal with entitlements.

What happened? We didn’t deal with the red line, and we cut the military. We cut the military badly over the last 10 years, and we are just now beginning to catch up. Last year, Congress avoided sequestration and increased discretionary spending for fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

Let me say it again, because I am going to repeat it over and over and over: We increased spending last year at about the rate of inflation. That is not the cause of the Federal deficit. Reaching that agreement, though, meant that for the first time in nearly a decade the Department of Defense received its budget on time, and it received a record funding level for research and development.

This new 2-year budget agreement that the President has recommended will rebuild our military by providing \$738 billion for defense discretionary spending for 2020 and \$740 billion for 2021.

It will also allow us to fulfill the commitment we made as a part of the New START Treaty in 2010 in December. I voted for that, and part of the deal with President Obama was that if we passed the treaty limiting nuclear weapons, we would make sure that ours worked. President Trump said the other day that Russia has 1,111 nuclear weapons, and they all work. We don’t want them to use them, and the best way to keep them from using them is to make sure ours work.

We have reached a budget agreement so that we can get to work on the appropriations bills and hopefully get many of them done before the end of the fiscal year, which is the 30th of September. That is important to the military especially.

When I met with Secretary of the Army Mark Esper, who was approved by a big vote yesterday as Secretary of Defense, we talked about what it meant to have an appropriations bill passed into law on time, instead of a so-called continuing resolution, which is just a lazy way to go. It just says to spend next year what you spent last year, which means we don’t spend for the things we need to spend, and we don’t stop spending on the things we shouldn’t spend.

Here are some of the benefits of passing the appropriations bill on time,