

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Cella nomination?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 299 Ex.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—38

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

NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Jones	Tillis
Harris	Sanders	Whitehouse

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Daniel Habib Jorjani, of Kentucky, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to address a matter relating to the nomination of Daniel Jorjani to be Solicitor at the Department of Interior. In March, I joined a bipartisan, bicameral letter to Interior raising concerns about proposed updates to its Freedom of Information Act, FOIA,

regulations. These changes appeared to shift the burden of identifying the location of agency hold records from the agency to the public, set limits on requests when they involve processing a “vast quantity of material,” and imposed a monthly limit on the processing of records for a given requester—all of which have no identifiable basis in the FOIA statute. Since then, reports indicated other concerning FOIA policies at Interior that could result in unlawful delays of FOIA responses—policies that were in place while Mr. Jorjani served as Deputy Solicitor, with key FOIA responsibilities. Over the weekend, Interior’s inspector general confirmed an investigation into the FOIA process at Interior. I look forward to reading the results of this investigation and learning more about the development of these policies. If confirmed as Solicitor at Interior, Mr. Jorjani would oversee and resolve FOIA appeals, among other critically important transparency policies. As we have seen in successive administrations, FOIA requests are often viewed as the skunk at the picnic. But the government’s business is the people’s business. Going forward, Mr. Jorjani would do well to consult with Congress on any FOIA policy matters at Interior to ensure compliance with the law. I intend to vote for Mr. Jorjani today, but let me be clear: I will be holding him—and any others under any administration—accountable to faithful compliance with both the letter and spirit of FOIA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Jorjani nomination?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES), 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 result was announced—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 300 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Cornyn	Gardner
Barrasso	Cotton	Graham
Blackburn	Cramer	Grassley
Blunt	Crapo	Hawley
Boozman	Cruz	Hoeben
Braun	Daines	Hyde-Smith
Burr	Enzi	Inhofe
Capito	Ernst	Isakson
Cassidy	Fischer	Johnson

Kennedy	Perdue	Scott (FL)
Lankford	Portman	Scott (SC)
Lee	Risch	Shelby
McConnell	Roberts	Sullivan
McSally	Romney	Thune
Moran	Rounds	Toomey
Murkowski	Rubio	Wicker
Paul	Sasse	Young

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Jones	Tillis
Harris	Sanders	Whitehouse

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Fabian Black, of North Dakota, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security for a term expiring January 19, 2025 (Reappointment).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I oppose the nomination of David Black to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security. I have longstanding concerns about how management at the Social Security Administration has treated the unions representing their workforce, and I am concerned about the role that Mr. Black may have played in these anti-union practices.

SSA was especially hostile towards its workers when it implemented the anti-union Executive orders that President Trump issued on May 25, 2018. SSA was one of the few agencies to evict unions from office space pursuant to the Executive orders, in the brief time before a Federal district court issued an injunction blocking key parts of the Executive orders. SSA also abrogated its unexpired contract with administrative law judges who are represented by the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, which even the Executive orders themselves expressly prohibited.

After the Executive orders were blocked in court, SSA went to the Federal Service Impasses Panel to impose a contract on workers represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, and the terms of this contract were highly similar to provisions of the Executive orders. SSA is now using similar tactics against workers represented by National Treasury Employees Union.

We need to stop a bad situation from getting worse. The Senate should demand stronger commitments to improve labor relations from President Trump’s nominees for leadership positions at SSA.

When SSA took these anti-union actions, Mr. Black was the White House senior adviser at the Social Security Administration. Despite Mr. Black's responsibility for SSA, he claimed in a letter to me that, "I was not involved in SSA's implementation of the EOs."

It is my understanding, however, that there is a pending Freedom of Information Act request that may shed new light on Mr. Black's involvement with the Executive orders. SSA has stated that an email records search generated thousands of emails that need to be reviewed for pertinence and disclosure in response to the request, and that review is still ongoing. I certainly hope that SSA's response will confirm Mr. Black's statement that he was not involved with the Executive orders, but the Senate should wait until all the facts are in before moving forward with his confirmation.

For those reasons, I will oppose Mr. Black's nomination at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Black nomination?

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES), 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 result was announced—yeas 68, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 301 Ex.]

YEAS—68

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blackburn	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hassan	Roberts
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Burr	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cardin	Inhofe	Sasse
Carper	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Casey	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Coons	King	Sinema
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Leahy	Thune
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Manchin	Warner
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McSally	Wyden
Enzi	Moran	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	

NAYS—26

Baldwin	Cantwell	Durbin
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Gillibrand
Brown	Duckworth	Heinrich

Hirono	Peters	Stabenow
Klobuchar	Reed	Tester
Markey	Rosen	Udall
Menendez	Schatz	Van Hollen
Merkley	Schumer	Warren
Murray	Smith	

NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Jones	Tillis
Harris	Sanders	Whitehouse

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Texas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

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

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on Sunday I had the great honor of joining President Trump in welcoming Prime Minister Modi to the Lone Star State in an event that was appropriately named "Howdy, Modi."

When his trip was announced, people on the west coast and the east coast wondered, "Why Texas?" They thought, maybe, he would go to Silicon Valley to talk to Big Tech executives or spend some time in Washington hobnobbing with diplomats and legislative leaders. Those are great places to visit, but Houston is the energy capital of the world. It is providing literal fuel for our growing relationship with the Nation of India.

After nearly a four-decade ban on U.S. crude oil exports was lifted, Texas sent the first American crude oil to India, and today India is increasingly running on American natural gas. The reason that is important is, when I visited India for the first time in 2004, I witnessed a country that is a study in contrast—some highly populated areas like Delhi and others, and then rural areas on the way to the Taj Mahal in Agra, you can see people literally living off the land and using dried cow manure as fuel for their food and for warmth. Obviously, India needs access to affordable energy that America—and Texas, in particular—can provide to help improve their standard of living.

This trade is also vital to our economy in Texas, and we will keep exporting our greatest natural resource to our friends in India and around the world as a result of the energy renaissance we have seen and as a result of the use of unconventional extraction techniques like fracking and horizontal drilling.

Those must sound like foreign words to people in Washington, DC, who think we ought to be able to live on solar panels and windmills exclusively, but I always say, as important as renewable energy is—and it is important—Texas generates the most electricity for any State in the Nation from wind turbines. The wind doesn't always blow and the Sun doesn't always shine, and you need some sort of baseload to try to keep the electricity flowing so people can be afforded the comforts of life and particularly in hot Texas summers make sure the air-conditioner continues to work.

For as deep as our economic ties are, our cultural ties are just as strong. Texas is home to a vibrant Indian diaspora, with more than 150,000 Indian Americans living in the Houston area alone and perhaps about half a million across our entire State. I was glad the Prime Minister had a chance to witness the Indian culture that is woven into the fabric of our State and meet a number of proud Indian Americans, including the 50,000 who showed up for the "Howdy, Modi" events in Houston on Sunday, from 48 States, I am told.

Knowing the importance of a strong U.S.-India relationship, 15 years ago I cofounded the U.S.-India Caucus in the Senate. That was at the request of one of my constituents who founded one of the Indo-American Chambers in the metroplex in Dallas, TX, years ago. He is the one who encouraged my wife and I to travel to India in the first place, where I learned a lot about the country—the study in contrasts I mentioned but also that this is the world's largest democracy, and we shared so many values with that country because of our common English heritage and particularly our respect for the rule of law and use of the English language predominantly.

We also saw the advantage of collaborating with India economically—1.3 billion people—a great market for the things we make and grow in the United States and a great way to raise the standard of living in India as we deepen our ties militarily and from a national security standpoint. The difference between today and what things were like as recently as 2008, in terms of trade, is just like night and day.

In 2016, the United States designated India as a "major defense partner," with the goal of elevating our partnership with India to the same level as those of our other closest allies.

Since then, we have taken a number of steps to strengthen our defense relationship, such as establishing ministerial dialogue, increasing arms sales to India, and the first U.S.-India triservice exercise later this year. We have made real progress, but there is more we can do to ensure that our efforts are aligned, just as our interests are aligned. Particularly as China is on the march, having a strong and vibrant economy and a strong defense partner in India is more important than ever.

Earlier this year, I also introduced an amendment to the National Defense