

detainees escape and regroup—many of them planning to hurt us here in our homeland—again, President Trump articulates no plan to fix what he has broken.

His top officials—Secretary of State Pompeo and Secretary Esper—have canceled two briefings with the Senate, during which they were supposed to update the Senate on the administration's plan. I think they keep canceling and ducking because they don't have a plan and wouldn't know what to say. That is very, very disturbing.

My Republican colleagues, please stand up and speak out about the obvious dangers to our national security that President Trump has invited.

Some, to their credit, have done so, but others have gone so far as to excuse the President's decision even if it results in the ethnic cleansing of the Kurds, our brave and former partners in the fight against ISIS. That is not right. Democrats and Republicans must continue to press the President to correct course in northern Syria and quickly develop a plan of action to contain ISIS and secure its enduring defeat.

#### NOMINATION OF JUSTIN REED WALKER

Madam President, on one last issue—judges—today the Senate will consider the nomination of Justin Walker of Kentucky to serve a lifetime appointment on the Federal bench. Mr. Walker is less than 10 years out of law school, has never tried a case, has never served as cocounsel, and it is not clear how much of his 10 years has been spent practicing law. Unsurprisingly, Mr. Walker earned a rare “not qualified” rating by the American Bar Association. Very few are called “not qualified,” but he is one of them.

It seems the only reason Mr. Walker has been nominated for an austere judgeship is his membership in the Federalist Society and his far-right-wing views on healthcare, civil rights, and Executive power.

Unfortunately, Mr. Walker is part of a well-established pattern of Republicans stacking the Federal bench with manifestly unqualified judges. Another brazen example is Steven Menashi, who was slated to be considered in committee today before, thank God, it was delayed. Mr. Menashi's record of extreme views is well documented. He pushed Betsy DeVos's anti-student agenda at the Department of Education and worked closely with Stephen Miller at the White House on policies that harm immigrants. His past writings show scorn for LGBTQ Americans and women. Menashi's conduct before the Judiciary Committee was insulting, his contempt for the Senate reprehensible, and his refusal to be forthcoming about his record should be outright disqualifying. Senators GRAHAM and KENNEDY, in the committee, noted that his refusal to answer questions was troubling.

Folks like Mr. Walker and Mr. Menashi have not earned the privilege of a lifetime appointment to the bench.

I am glad that one of my Republican colleagues has said they will oppose Mr. Menashi's nomination, and other Republicans should follow suit on his nomination and on Mr. Walker's vote today.

I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 12 noon.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:37 a.m., recessed until 12 noon and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. FISCHER).

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

##### 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 Justin Reed Walker, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

Mitch McConnell, Martha McSally, Rick Scott, John Thune, Lindsey Graham, Rand Paul, John Kennedy, John Cornyn, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Patrick J. Toomey, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, John Boozman, Richard C. Shelby.

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 Justin Reed Walker, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, 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 Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine), 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. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 332 Ex.]

#### YEAS—50

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rounds
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	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	Murkowski	Wicker
Daines	Paul	Young
Enzi	Perdue	

#### NAYS—39

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

#### NOT VOTING—11

Booker	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Carper	Isakson	Warren
Coons	Kaine	Whitehouse
Harris	Moran	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 39.

The motion is agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Justin Reed Walker, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

##### UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, we are rapidly approaching the 1-year mark since President Trump and the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of Mexico signed a new trade agreement to strengthen our economies.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, will replace NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, and continue to guide trade with our northern and southern neighbors in the future.

It is estimated by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that the number of jobs in the United States that have been created directly as a result of trade with Mexico ranges around the 5 million figure, with another 8 million from binational with Canada, so this is no small matter.

Since NAFTA was enacted in 1994, a lot has changed. The way we communicate and the way we shop and even go about our daily lives rely heavily on technology that didn't exist 25 years ago.

Make no mistake—NAFTA has been a huge benefit to our country, and

Texas has arguably benefited more than any other State. In 2018, Texas exported nearly \$110 billion in goods to Mexico, and we imported \$107 billion worth of goods from Mexico.

When you consider actions being taken by China to counter our interests all over the world, our reliance on North American partners has become increasingly important. That only underscores the need to ratify the USMCA and strengthen our trading relationship to ensure we are not left behind as the global economy continues to evolve.

The USMCA is the most significant update to U.S. trade policy in a generation and will propel our growing economy into the 21st century. It takes into account businesses and practices that didn't exist when NAFTA was created, such as 2-day shipping, online micro-retailers, and digital products like eBooks and music. It also requires Canada and Mexico to raise their de minimis shipment value levels, meaning additional classes of shipments can enter all three countries with expedited entry procedures. That is a big win for small and medium-sized businesses, which often lack the resources to pay customs duties and taxes.

The USMCA prohibits restrictions on the cross-border movement of data. It increases goods market access. It supports small businesses. It boosts digital trade and safeguards intellectual property and supports agriculture. It also keeps jobs here at home.

In short, this trade agreement is a big win for the American people. Some even argue that the USMCA is more important than restoring our normalized trading relationship with China.

Earlier this year, the International Trade Commission provided insight into what we could expect to see once the USMCA is ratified. Within 6 years, they say, we are looking at 176,000 new American jobs and an increase in the gross domestic product by more than \$68 billion. That is a bigger impact than the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

The USMCA is expected to have a positive impact on every industry sector in the U.S. economy. We can look forward to a more than \$43 billion increase in exports and more than \$31 billion in imports. That is great news for North American workers, farmers, ranchers, and business men and women who will reap the benefits of this agreement.

When I am meeting with my constituents back home or here in Washington, one of the most common questions I get asked is, "When is the USMCA going to pass?"

Mexico has already ratified the agreement, and Canada is waiting for us to move before acting. The agreement has broad support in the Senate, and clearly the President is on board as well. So the only holdup in the entire process is the House of Representatives.

Up until about a month ago, I told my constituents that I thought the

prospects for passage sometime this year were looking pretty good. House Democrats did have some concerns, but Speaker PELOSI was reportedly working in good faith with the administration to work through them. There were indications of progress and productive conversations with Mexico and Canada to address their concerns as well.

It looked as though we were moving along a path to a deal, but then the House blew up all plans for a productive year in Congress. They marched headlong into impeachment and tossed aside important legislation. Forget working on a trade deal that will benefit every sector of the economy; House Democrats are too busy conducting secret hearings in an effort to force the President—someone they despise—out of office.

Whether they intend to allow the USMCA to receive a vote in the House is unknown, but I sincerely hope that House Democrats have enough good sense to avoid blowing up a vital trade deal over political disagreements with the President. As we all know, the closer you get to an election, the more challenging legislating actually becomes, and the clock is ticking away. It is a shame that the House continues to put politics ahead of good policy that will benefit the entire American people.

The USMCA is good for the economy, good for business, good for workers, and it sure is good for Texas. It is time for the House to quit playing games so we can ratify this trade agreement without further delay.

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

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2625

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, it has been 2½ weeks since the President announced he was abruptly withdrawing U.S. forces from Syria—betraying our Kurdish allies and derailing the international fight against ISIS in Syria.

In the course of one tweet, this President blindsided our allies in the region—yes, the Kurds—but the Israelis and others as well. He blindsided our diplomats and blindsided our military from the top brass down to our forces who serve on the ground. Frankly, the

only one who seemed to know that this was coming was the Turkish President, Mr. Erdogan.

As a result, brave men and women who have fought alongside the United States are now at risk of being slaughtered by Turkish forces. Already, Kurdish fighters and unarmed civilians have been killed by Turkish armed groups—militias. Already, hundreds of ISIS detainees have escaped from prison, and ISIS is being given the space and time to regroup.

Simply put, we may be witnessing one of the most significant counterterrorism setbacks in recent history.

With nowhere else to turn, the Kurds have aligned themselves with the Assad regime. That is good news for one of history's most brutal dictators—a man who gases his own people. It is also good news for his allies in Iran.

No one has, perhaps, benefited more from this disaster than Vladimir Putin. Just this week, Russia and Turkey agreed to a new joint strategy in Syria, green-lighting Russian and Syrian forces to clear the border region of any of our remaining Kurdish allies and, unfortunately, expanding Russia's footprint in the Middle East.

The truth is that I believe the President's sudden withdrawal from Syria without his having a plan and without there being serious consideration for our Kurdish allies is a disaster that may haunt our foreign policy for decades to come.

If this is how the United States treats its allies, how will anyone trust the United States on a going-forward basis?

Frankly, I fear most of the damage may have already been done. No tweet, no press conference, and no personal assurance from Erdogan or anyone else can rebuild the years of trust and progress that have been destroyed. The least we can do—and perhaps, unfortunately, the most we can do—is to make sure those Kurdish allies who served alongside U.S. forces as translators and in other military support roles are not left to die in Syria.

That is why I have introduced the Syrian Allies Protection Act. This legislation is similar to programs in the past which have granted special immigration visas to Iraqi and Afghan nationals who have served alongside U.S. forces. The truth is these Kurdish allies and their families are now at risk because of their work with U.S. forces. They are threatened not only by the Turkish incursion but also by freed ISIS fighters and Assad regime forces.

This legislation would provide permanent American residence to Syrian nationals who have worked for the U.S. Armed Forces for at least 6 months, who have obtained a favorable recommendation from a general or a flag officer in the chain of command, and who have passed a thorough background check and screening.

The legislation also directs the administration to evacuate eligible individuals to safety. If their lives are at