

NOT VOTING—8

Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Isakson	Warren
Burr	Klobuchar	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 41. The motion is agreed to.

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 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 Jennifer Philpott Wilson, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle 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.

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 Jennifer Philpott Wilson, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, shall be brought to a close?

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 North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and 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 California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 347 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Cornyn	Hawley
Baldwin	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Barrasso	Cotton	Hoover
Blackburn	Cramer	Hyde-Smith
Blumenthal	Crapo	Inhofe
Blunt	Cruz	Johnson
Boozman	Daines	Jones
Braun	Duckworth	Kaine
Brown	Durbin	Kennedy
Cantwell	Enzi	King
Capito	Ernst	Lankford
Cardin	Feinstein	Leahy
Carper	Fischer	Lee
Casey	Gardner	Manchin
Cassidy	Graham	McConnell
Collins	Grassley	McSally
Coons	Hassan	Menendez

Merkley	Rosen	Sullivan
Moran	Rounds	Tester
Murkowski	Rubio	Thune
Murphy	Sasse	Tillis
Murray	Schatz	Toomey
Paul	Schumer	Udall
Perdue	Scott (FL)	Van Hollen
Peters	Scott (SC)	Warner
Portman	Shah	Whitehouse
Reed	Shelby	Wicker
Risch	Sinema	Wyden
Roberts	Smith	Young
Romney	Stabenow	

NAYS—3

Gillibrand	Hirono	Markey

NOT VOTING—8

Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Isakson	Warren
Burr	Klobuchar	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 89, the nays are 3. The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jennifer Philpott Wilson, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TAX REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thought it would be appropriate to come to the floor to celebrate the second anniversary of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

For years I heard from Texans who thought that the Tax Code was simply too complex, too burdensome, and that the Federal Government simply took too much of the fruits of their labor.

They were absolutely correct. Our Tax Code hadn't been reformed in more than three decades, and Republican and Democratic Presidents have long pointed out how America was at a competitive disadvantage relative to other countries because of our Tax Code.

Then, of course, there is the drag of high tax rates on our domestic economy—especially following the great recession during the Obama administration—which made jump-starting the economy a top priority last Congress.

The good news is that we delivered. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act lowered the individual tax rates across the board for every bracket. It increased the standard deduction, doubled the child tax credit, and made tax rates for businesses more competitive. Our goal was to make our Tax Code work for the American people, not the other way around.

I know there are a lot of naysayers who said it wouldn't work. Some of them are still saying that. But I think the results speak for themselves.

First, we saw waves of positive headlines announcing that companies big and small were using their tax savings to provide pay raises, pay bonuses, 401(k) match increases, and other benefits to their employees.

I made a point of asking my constituents in Texas about their experience

under the new Tax Code, and here is some of what I heard:

Tejas Office Products is a Hispanic-owned and operated family business in Houston. They were able to hire more workers in Southeast Texas and expand their business as a result of their tax savings from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

There is American Bank in Corpus Christi. They projected that they could lend an additional \$120 million over the next 5 years in the Coastal Bend, which was absolutely critical, especially following the natural disaster known as Hurricane Harvey.

Then there is Happy State Bank, my favorite name for a bank—Happy State Bank—in Amarillo, which increased wages for more than 600 of its 700 employees. It upped their starting minimum wage and increased their dollar-for-dollar retirement plan match from 6 percent to 7 percent, all of which was good news.

Well, it didn't take long for that good news in these anecdotal cases, for example, to translate into a much improved economy across the board, which helps everybody.

We have seen rapid and consistent job growth with more than 4.3 million new jobs since tax reform became law—4.3 million new jobs.

In September, the national unemployment rate fell to a 50-year low, and Texas unemployment remains below the national average at only 3.4 percent.

The thing I hear the most from employers and job creators in Texas is that they can't find enough qualified workers to fill the good jobs that exist. We have one of the tightest labor markets in decades.

Wages are going up as a result of competition for workers. The poverty rate has hit its lowest level since the turn of the century. American families are seeing more of their hard-earned dollars in each paycheck.

Despite evidence to the contrary, we are still hearing from some of the same old critics who say that tax reform was a flop. The Atlantic, for example, published a story last week with the title “The GOP Tax Cuts Didn't Work.” The author claims that tax reform didn't live up to the hype and that because our economy didn't grow as much as some of the estimates believed it would, consecutive, positive growth is absolutely worthless.

Well, that doesn't make any sense at all—not to mention the fact that economic growth has outpaced even the forecast of the Congressional Budget Office prior to tax reform.

This author also mentions that the Institute for Supply Management—or ISM—manufacturing index dipped in September. But the ISM manufacturing index is a survey of purchasing managers who may be swayed by sentiment as much as actual activity. We have seen this index at a similar level before, and the economy continued to grow.

In addition, the critic in this article points to declining exports as a factor in this, despite the fact that our trade deficit fell 4.7 percent in September.

The critics still refuse to admit the connection between increased consumer spending and Americans bringing home more in each paycheck. In other words, they are trying to cherry-pick the evidence and ignore any evidence that the American people have benefited from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

In fact, the critics—who I think are more concerned about an agenda than they are the economy or the welfare of the working American family—continue to try to paint a picture of doom and gloom of our Nation's economy to further that political agenda.

It was not that long ago when some were even highlighting that tax refunds were reduced because of tax reform. It is a bogus measurement of tax relief. We know that at the end of the day, the data showed the average refund check was not that different from the previous year. Wouldn't you want your tax refund to be lower because you were simply paying less withholding each month? That is an interest-free loan to the Federal Government.

Well, while we seem to have moved beyond that argument, we are now on to the next one. Our Democratic colleagues point out that some companies are using their savings for stock buybacks and try to portray this as a corporate blood thirst, claiming it hurts workers in the economy. But by repurchasing their own shares, companies are reinvesting in themselves and their shareholders. Many times, this is teachers or police officers or other first responders. Interfering with stock buybacks, as some of our friends across the aisle have recommended, would not only hurt our economy, but would do serious damage to the pension and retirement accounts of many working Texans and other Americans.

The message of these partisan critics is: The government can spend your money better and more wisely than you can. But Washington cannot even manage its own books and uses “smoke-and-mirrors” accounting measures that would make even Bernie Madoff blush. But that is only the start of the concerning proposals that we have heard from the folks on the left. Our colleague from Massachusetts said if she wins the Presidency, she will soak the American taxpayer even more in an attempt to fund her completely unworkable healthcare proposal.

The differences are pretty stark in the approach: pro-growth, job-creating, economy-growing policies or Big Government, even socialist policies. Those seem to be the two most obvious choices. I know what camp I am in, and I know what camp that Texans are in on this topic.

This constant effort to belittle the progress we have made because of tax reform reminds me of when NANCY

PELOSI compared the savings of the American people under tax reform to “crumbs.” She called them “crumbs.”

One Texan named Mark told me that his take-home pay increased \$302 a month. That may be crumbs to NANCY PELOSI, but Mark said it would cover his cable, his internet, and his auto insurance bills. He doesn't consider that crumbs.

Another gentleman named Gilbert told me that he and his wife are retired and living on pensions. When they saw a decrease in their Federal tax deduction that allows them to bring home an additional \$400 a month, they said at first they thought it was a mistake, until they learned it was true and, good news, \$400 a month more.

A retired Air Force colonel from Brownsville named David told me that the benefit seems like more than “crumbs” to him.

But I have no doubt that here in this hyper-politicized environment of Washington, DC, that pundits and folks on the left will continue to try to criticize tax reform and belittle the progress that we have made, but those Texans who are reaping the benefits of this law every day are proof positive that they are wrong and that the law is working as we intended.

Despite what I hear from folks on the left, this is an incredible time for our economy. We have made taxes simpler, fairer, and lower for hard-working American families. And we will keep working to remove the regulatory burdens that will help unleash the power of the free market. For more than 150 years, we have been the world's largest economy, and because of pro-growth policies like tax reform, that will only continue to get better.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Iowa.

VETERANS DAY

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, having worn our great Nation's colors in Operation Iraqi Freedom, veterans hold a special place in my heart. Some of my favorite moments in Iowa are centered on honoring our veterans and their families with the medals and the recognition they have earned. Oftentimes, these humble heroes don't want to step forward and receive the honor they are due.

Glenn McDole is a great example of this. Glenn served in World War II and faced some very, very dark days, being only 1 of the 11, out of a total of 150, who survived the Palawan massacre. Glenn was captured in 1941, and he came home to Iowa in 1945. It wasn't until the early 1980s that he started speaking about his military experience.

When he returned home from the war, he didn't skip a beat in his service. Glenn quickly joined the Iowa State Patrol and then the Polk County Sheriff's Office. Glenn lived a very full

life of service. Yet his heroic actions in uniform would go unnoticed for so many years.

I am so grateful that his family got in touch with my office, and we were able to track down the more than 13 medals that he should have received for his service. Presenting the medals to his family earlier this year in my office in Des Moines was truly a beautiful moment.

The medals presented to Glenn's family—and the number of other veterans and families across Iowa who have received these well-deserved recognitions—represent duty, honor, and sacrifice. It is the heroic stories of these very veterans, like Glenn, that truly inspire me to keep fighting for our veterans day in and day out.

As someone who commanded men and women overseas during Operation Iraqi Freedom and then served as the battalion commander of the largest battalion in the Iowa Army National Guard, I have a deep connection and appreciation for our veterans.

Just this past weekend, as I was wrapping up my 99-county tour in Iowa, I was able to spend some time with more of those Iowa veterans at my veterans' resource fair. We were sharing stories about those hard times. We were laughing about the good times. We talked about concerns they have with the VA and making sure they are getting the quality of care they have earned. We talked about the work we have done in the Senate to improve their well-being.

In just the past few years, under the Trump administration, we have been able to expand access to services through legislation like the VA MISSION Act, a bipartisan bill that I proudly helped to get signed into law. This important bill included a number of my priorities, like allowing qualified VA health providers to practice telemedicine across State lines and veterans to receive their care through telemedicine, including vital mental healthcare treatment, and doing it from the comfort of their own home.

President Trump just signed another one of my bills into law, the HAVEN Act, which protects the economic security and well-being of veterans and their families who rely on disability benefits and may be experiencing financial hardship.

I continue to press the VA to take a hard look at their hiring practices and to make sure the people treating and providing care to our veterans have a record of quality care, specifically by introducing the bipartisan Ensuring Quality Care for Our Veterans Act.

The legislation ensures that the VA is absolutely held accountable for how they help care for their veterans, and I am continuing to press them on that issue. We must work tirelessly to restore hope in the institutions that have asked so much of our Nation's heroes, plain and simple. Veterans must have reliable, quality mental and physical healthcare. There is no other option.