

2755, a bill to require a report on the plan to secure the enduring defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

I thank the Democratic leader for his concerns about the defeat of ISIS. If there is one thing I hope we can all agree on, it is that Turkey is not our ally or friend right now. Turkey's invasion of Syria is benefiting ISIS, Iran, and Russia, and hurting our great ally, Israel.

The United States must stand up for our partners, the Kurds, who helped us fight ISIS. I am hopeful the ceasefire will last, keeping American soldiers and our partners, the Kurds, safe. Nobody wants our men and women in uniform involved in unnecessary, extended military conflicts.

Bringing our troops home is a goal we all share. In order to achieve that goal, we need to have a fuller understanding of the crisis in Syria and what got us there—with the hope our troops can finally come home.

I also agree that the President should always be clear with Congress on where all U.S. troops are located and the purpose of their deployment. Unfortunately, my colleague's proposal would produce a report that only tells a small part of the story.

In the name of transparency and a fuller understanding of how we got here, I am proposing a modification to my colleague's bill to require a report that includes information on President Obama's plan for Syria.

We didn't get here overnight. The Democratic leader knows that. He said himself it took us 5 years to get here. So I think we all would like to see what the strategy—or lack of strategy—was from the last administration that put us in this position today. Let's get all the facts on the table so lawmakers in Congress and Americans all across the country can have all the information we need to keep Americans and our allies safe.

Reserving the right to object, therefore, I ask that the Democratic leader modify his request to include my amendment, which is at the desk. I further ask that the amendment be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Democratic leader so modify his request?

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this is a diversion. We can all debate history. Maybe Bush was to blame. Maybe Obama was to blame. Who knows. Maybe Harry Truman was to

blame when they set up CENTO. That is something we can debate at a later time.

We have an immediate crisis. We need a report, and our Republican colleagues keep finding ways so they can object so the President doesn't have to answer. That is wrong. It risks the security of America, and it is not what we should be doing.

So I object, and I urge us to pass the amendment without the modification, which is still as valid as it was a few minutes ago.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard on the modification.

Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, reserving the right to object. I am disappointed in yet another political stunt from the Democratic leader. It is clear this is nothing but a political attack on the President.

President Trump's goal is to bring American troops home and keep our partners, the Kurds, safe and our ally, Israel, secure. The Democratic leader is requesting information from President Trump but refuses to join me in asking for information about the sequence of events and the strategy under President Obama that led us to this point.

This is sad, but it is not surprising. It is just another charade in a long list of political games. Americans deserve a safe Israel and a safe Syria, so I stand today to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if they are worried about an attack, it is not on this President or a previous President. That is the political stunt here, I would say to my friend in Florida. He knows what he is doing. He is trying to stop this from happening. The attack we are worried about is an attack by ISIS on the United States.

Whether you are a Democrat, Republican, liberal, or conservative, the country needs a plan. All of the diversion, all of the games will not prevent the American people from seeing that we need that, and it is our job as Senators to push the administration to do it.

So I would have hoped we could have passed this amendment without the diversionary, partisan proposal made by the Senator from Florida. I am sorry we haven't been able to move the amendment. It is so wrong for the safety of this country.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant 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 question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Philpott Wilson nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), 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 Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 351 Ex.]

YEAS—88

Alexander	Fischer	Reed
Baldwin	Gardner	Risch
Barrasso	Graham	Roberts
Bennet	Grassley	Romney
Blackburn	Hassan	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hawley	Rounds
Blunt	Heinrich	Rubio
Boozman	Hoeven	Sasse
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Brown	Inhofe	Schumer
Burr	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cantwell	Jones	Scott (SC)
Capito	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	Kennedy	Shelby
Casey	King	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	McConnell	McSally
Cotton	Cotton	Thune
Cramer	Menendez	Tillis
Crapo	Merkley	Toomey
Cruz	Moran	Udall
Daines	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Enzi	Paul	Wicker
Ernst	Peters	Young
Feinstein	Portman	

NAYS—3

Gillibrand	Hirono	Markey
		NOT VOTING—9
Booker	Isakson	Sanders
Cardin	Klobuchar	Warren
Harris	Perdue	Wyden

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William Joseph Nardini, of Connecticut, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1994

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to offer a path forward on the SECURE Act—the way that I think we could actually do some legislating around here and pass a constructive bill.

A little brief history, I think, is in order and helpful for context. About 3 years ago, the Senate Finance Committee passed a reasonably similar legislation out of committee unanimously. It was never considered on the Senate floor. The House took up some of these ideas and passed their own legislation.

My own view is that most of the substance of this legislation is very constructive. Most of what it does is it makes it easier for middle-class families to save for their retirement. That is constructive. However, the bill that came over from the House is different from the bill that came out of the Senate Finance Committee and was never considered on the Senate floor. The House bill dropped a number of provisions that had bipartisan support. They added some provisions that had never been vetted by anybody on the Senate side, at least not in a procedural way.

There is a proper way to resolve these kinds of differences, and that is to put this bill on the Senate floor, open it up for amendments, and allow the Senate to work its will. The Senate will almost certainly pass some version—probably very similar to the House bill—and then we can iron out whatever little differences there are.

This is the way we legislate. That is what I am suggesting we do today. To do otherwise would be to treat this body as just a rubberstamp for the House, and that is not the purpose of having two legislative bodies.

I should also note that our Democratic colleagues have frequently criticized Republican leadership and the Republican majority for not legislating. Sometimes they have a point. The minority leader has said that the Senate is a legislative graveyard. He has criticized Leader McCONNELL for not putting bills on the floor and at one point Senator SCHUMER said:

We want to debate these other issues. . . . We are not saying our Republican friends are going to think exactly as we do, but let's have a debate and vote.

I couldn't agree more. I think we should have a debate. I think we should have a series of votes. I think we could bang this out in a day, at the end of which we would pass the SECURE Act, preferably after considering amendments from both sides. That is what I am proposing. In fact, we have been proposing this for weeks.

We have shared with our Democratic colleagues several amendments that the Republican Senators would like to offer. One is mine. I have other colleagues who would like to offer them. We have been asking our Democratic colleagues for their list of amend-

ments. What things would they like to do? What amendments would they like to consider? We have restricted our amendments to those which affect the Tax Code. We have suggested that they do likewise.

Amazingly, to me, we haven't heard a single suggestion yet from our Democratic colleagues. It is amazing because I have heard plenty of criticism about our Tax Code from our Democratic friends, including criticism about the limitation we put on State and local tax deductions. I know there are Democratic colleagues who would like to extend the electric vehicle credit. There are some who have proposed new taxes on wealth. Chairman WYDEN has a proposal to put a tax on unrealized market-to-market gains on assets. There is a long list of ideas we have heard from the other side.

This is the opportunity to have some votes and find out whether there is support and to what extent there is support for these things. On our side, we are willing to vote. Every Republican Senator is in favor of this proposal that I am going to suggest in a few moments, whereby we would have specific amendments on our side and allow the Democrats to have an equal number on their side. I don't know what could be more reasonable than this approach.

Quickly, my amendment fixes a technical drafting error in our tax reform. It is called the QIP. It is the acronym that is used for it. It stands for "qualified improvement property."

Here is the problem. Due to a drafting error, businesses are now forced to recognize the cost of improvements over a long period of time rather than to expense them in the years in which the expenses occurred. It was a drafting error. Everybody acknowledges it was a drafting error and was unintended.

Thirteen of my Democratic colleagues are cosponsors of my legislation to fix this, and every Republican Senator supports fixing this error. Those are 66 Senators right there. I am not asking for a guaranteed outcome. I am just asking for a vote. Let's have a vote on it. I have other colleagues who would also like to have votes on their amendments. As I said, our proposal is that the Democrats pick an equal number of items that are important to them, and let's have votes on those. It would look a lot like legislating. It would be good to get back to legislating. In a moment, I am going to make a unanimous consent request to do exactly that.

Before I do, I yield the floor to my colleague from Texas, Senator CRUZ, for his thoughts on this.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for his leadership on this issue.

I think Senator TOOMEY's proposal is an eminently reasonable, commonsense proposal in that we take up the SECURE Act with an equal number of amendments from the Republicans and

the Democrats and that we vote on the amendments on the Senate floor.

Now, everyone expects, in a few minutes, we are going to see the Democrats stand up and object to that proposal and say: No, we don't want amendments. We are not willing to vote on amendments. We are going to see the Democrats hold the SECURE Act hostage because they are unwilling to vote on amendments. We are going to see the Democrats hold hostage bipartisan reform that would improve retirement savings and also hold hostage tax relief for Gold Star families that should have passed a long time ago. It is cynical for the Democrats to hold this hostage, but because they are afraid to vote, they are getting ready to object and say that Gold Star families don't get their tax relief. The Democrats are afraid to have a vote in this body, and they are willing to hold the Gold Star families hostage.

One of the proposals they are afraid to vote on is that of commonsense education reform that has bipartisan support. It concerns what are called 529 savings plans, which are immensely popular tax advantage savings plans. Over 18 million Americans use them right now. The vast majority of those who use 529 savings plans are middle-class Americans. What 529 savings plans allow is for parents and grandparents to save for the educational expenses of their kids.

In 2017, as part of the tax reform, I introduced an amendment to expand 529 savings plans not just to college but to K-12 education. The Senate took up that amendment, and it became the only amendment the Senate adopted on the floor of the Senate that added anything to the tax cut. It passed this body at about 1 o'clock in the morning, by a 50-50 vote, with the Vice President's having broken the tie.

It has become the most far-reaching and significant Federal school choice legislation that has ever been enacted, benefiting up to 50 million school kids across this country. That legislation is already done, and it is actually not what this fight is about. That fight was about expanding 529s to K-12 education. The American people won that fight, and the Democratic opposition lost that fight.

This amendment is, instead, a much more modest amendment that takes 529 savings plans and expands them to three groups of people.

No. 1, it allows the parents and grandparents of kids with disabilities to use 529s to save for educational therapies for kids with disabilities and to save for the additional assistance those kids with disabilities need. That is an eminently commonsense proposition.

No. 2, it allows homeschooling families to participate in 529 savings plans. In 2017, the Democrats cruelly carved out of 529s both kids with disabilities and homeschooling families. There is no reason kids with disabilities should