

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Harris	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

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 bill 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 Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pat Roberts, James M. Inhofe, Chuck Grassley, Richard C. Shelby, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Cory Gardner, James Lankford, Mike Braun, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, John Thune.

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 Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 361 Ex.]

YEAS—65

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

NAYS—30

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Cantwell
Bennet	Brown	Cardin

Casey	Kaine	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Smith
Duckworth	Markey	Stabenow
Durbin	Merkley	Tester
Feinstein	Murray	Udall
Gillibrand	Peters	Van Hollen
Heinrich	Reed	Whitehouse
Hirono	Schatz	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Booker	Klobuchar	Warren
Harris	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 65, the nays are 30.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Adrian Zuckerman, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Romania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, with respect to the Lagoa nomination, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, I can tell the Senate this morning that there is no higher priority for Senate Finance Democrats than the well-being of healthcare patients in this country and how strongly we feel about their having a right to good quality, affordable healthcare coverage.

Right now, too many of those folks are getting ripped off by an insurance lobbyist's dream—taxpayer-funded junk insurance—or by Big Pharma, which is always, always looking to engage in price gouging for one reason: They can get away with it. Take insulin. Insulin prices are up thirteenfold in recent years. The drug is not 13 times better. It is the same insulin that has been around for decades. But the reason the pharmaceutical companies do it is because they can get away with it.

This morning, I am going to take a few minutes and talk about what this really means for patients because I can tell you, this fall, there are a lot of families across this country who would rather be prepping for holidays than worrying about their healthcare. Unfortunately, the Trump administration is refusing to provide that kind of security for our patients.

To begin, let me tell you about a youngster in Oregon named Jasper. Jasper is 3, full of energy and love, and a big fan of playtime with cars and trucks and trains. He was born, however, with huge medical challenges—cystic fibrosis, cardiac and pancreatic problems, hearing loss. He needs a variety of treatments multiple times a day. It is so hard on Jasper's family. It is so

hard on Jasper. And, of course, the costs of Jasper's care are in the stratosphere. The family is fortunate to have health insurance through a parent's employer. They know how absolutely vital it is to have what they consider to be a lifeline—the protection of the Affordable Care Act.

At the heart of the Affordable Care Act are bedrock, ironclad protections for people like them—no discrimination by insurance companies against preexisting conditions. That was something we used to have some support for from the other side of the aisle. I know about that because I wrote a bipartisan bill that had airtight, loophole-free protection against what essentially was discrimination against those with preexisting conditions, and we got it into the Affordable Care Act.

Yet now we see the other side of the aisle trying to unravel those protections. They are trying to unravel the protection that we see for patients with respect to big expenses. Our approach has no annual or lifetime limits on coverage, no coverage denials that dragged people into bureaucratic nightmares, has young people covered on their parents' plan until age 26, and lots more. Those protections saved people's lives and made healthcare affordable for millions of Americans.

Unfortunately, with the support of my colleagues here on the other side in the Senate, the Trump administration wants to eliminate those protections that are so important to Jasper and families like his. My colleagues on the other side are standing by and basically doing nothing while the administration and Republican-led States are out there maneuvering in the courts to get the entire Affordable Care Act wiped out.

The so-called Texas case, which is an absurd lawsuit based on an absurd argument—an argument that wouldn't pass the smell test in a middle class school mock trial—somehow rightwing, ideological judges have kept it alive. Because this lawsuit keeps hanging around, tens of millions of Americans might lose their healthcare with hardly any warning and no fallback options to protect them.

Now Republicans have claimed they have fix-it bills they could pass in the event their allies took down the Affordable Care Act. They do read like they were written by the lawyers and the lobbyists on the payroll of the big insurance companies. If insurance companies can hike up the cost of treating a preexisting condition so high that it becomes unaffordable, it is no different from being denied coverage at the outset.

While the Texas case moves forward, the Trump administration is continuing to allow junk insurance scam artists to defraud Americans into buying worthless plans that aren't worth really the paper they are written on and certainly don't cover the healthcare Americans need.

I want to be very specific about it. This is an insurance lobbyist's dream.

You have tax breaks for junk insurance. That is on every insurance lobbyist's wish list for the holidays. I think it is federally funded fraud, plain and simple, but unfortunately it has the support of a lot of Republicans here in the Congress.

It is now the middle of the open enrollment period for health insurance on healthcare.gov. The Trump administration's support for junk plans has created a whole new burden for families across the country who are shopping for insurance.

I am particularly troubled by this because I remember what junk insurance used to be like. I was director of the senior citizens at home for almost 7 years before I was elected to the Congress, and those were the days when you could go around the country, whether it was Montana or Oregon or anywhere else, and fast-talking salesmen would sell 10, 15, sometimes 20 policies to supplement a senior's Medicare. They were called Medigap policies, and they were useless. Seniors should have saved that money to pay the rent and maybe make sure they had heat in their houses.

Finally, we got rid of those Medigap rip-off policies. When I came to the Congress, it was my top priority. We got it passed. It was a bipartisan proposal. But now junk plans are back. They are different from those Medigap rip-offs, but, much like what I battled when I was the head of the senior citizens in Oregon, they are still built around the same proposition. They are essentially worthless. They are an insurance lobbyist's dream. In the case of what we are dealing with—the administration gutting the Affordable Care Act—I think it is essentially Federal tax breaks for junk insurance, and that is why I think it is tantamount to federally funded fraud.

The Trump administration's support for junk plans has created a whole new burden for families across the country who are trying to shop for insurance that gives them real value. Those shoppers used to be able to trust that junk plans had actually been banned from the marketplace. Now those shoppers have to wade through Byzantine and manipulative marketing scams and incomprehensible insurance lingo to try to figure out if they are getting coverage that actually helps them or, as I have described too often, just worthless junk.

What is worse, the Trump administration actually redirects people looking for coverage from the healthcare.gov website to third-party brokers who can sell unsuspecting customers junk plans. I think it is astounding that the Trump administration has seen fit to heap another burden on vulnerable people. After we have called this administration out on it, they are not willing to do anything to correct it.

But unfortunately, since the beginning of the Trump administration—with the help of too many allies in the

Congress—it has been one attempt after another to take healthcare away from vulnerable Americans, from millions of vulnerable Americans, those like 3-year-old little Jasper and his family, that I started talking about at home in Oregon.

On a fundamental level, this is a debate about whether this country is going to go back to the days when healthcare was only for the healthy and wealthy. That was the way it worked, if the insurance companies could clobber somebody with a pre-existing condition. If you are healthy, it didn't matter. You did not have to worry. If you were wealthy, you just sat down and wrote out a check. That is the way it worked.

But when I came to the Senate, we put together a bipartisan bill, airtight, loophole-free protection for those with preexisting conditions. There are colleagues on the other side of the aisle who cosponsored my bill—and by the way, the President of the Senate knows who was the leader of that effort, one of his predecessors in the Utah delegation, the late Senator Bennet.

So this idea that we are just going to sit around and go back to the days when healthcare was for the healthy and wealthy, that is not acceptable to Finance Democrats that I have the honor to work with. It is not acceptable to any of us on this side, and it should not be acceptable to my colleagues in the Congress.

That is where Donald Trump wants to return to, the days when healthcare was for the healthy and wealthy. They have made it clear by working to eliminate preexisting condition protections in the Congress and the courts, by giving insurance lobbyists Federal tax breaks for junk insurance plans, and by seeking to slash health programs for the vulnerable.

I just want to make it clear that, on this side of the aisle, we are about patients. We are about protecting patients. We are about the proposition that in a country as strong and good and rich as ours—where we are going to spend \$3.5 trillion this year on healthcare, if you divide the number of Americans, like maybe 325 million into \$3.5 trillion, you could send every family of four in America a check for \$40,000. We are spending enough to take care of patients.

We ought to be doing more to protect, rather than turning back the clock on young people like Jasper and his family. I just wanted to make it clear, we will be on the floor talking about more patients in the days ahead and on the fight, a fight we are going to prosecute relentlessly, to protect those patients under the Affordable Care Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I was walking by and heard Senator WYDEN—I do not usually sit over here—Senator WYDEN was speaking about healthcare. It is just so clear to me some of the

things that this body could be doing to bring down the cost of healthcare and to expand the number of people that have health insurance. I know, in my State, I worked with, I know, a friend of the Presiding Officer, Governor Kasich, a Republican—I am a Democrat—on expanding Medicaid in Ohio. In fact, after the Affordable Care Act, we now have 900,000 more people that have insurance.

But what I liked about what Senator WYDEN was saying was some of the things we could do in the future. It is clear to me, if we allowed the government to negotiate drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries, directly with the drug companies the way we do at the Veterans Administration, it could make a huge difference in drug costs.

We, in this body, a large part is because the drug company lobby refuses to do it.

Mr. WYDEN. If my colleague would yield?

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

MR. WYDEN. My colleague has been an enormous champion for consumers, and I just want to ask my colleague, didn't he and finance Democrats try in the Finance Committee to get rid of the restrictions on negotiating to do exactly what he is saying?

Mr. BROWN. Yes, that is exactly right. It should be an easy process. We know how to do it at the Veterans Administration. The cost is 40 or 50 percent of what typically is the cost a patient pays.

The other thing we could do—and we were this close to getting it in the Affordable Care Act, is giving people the option, at age 50 or 55, to buy into Medicare because, as Senator WYDEN knows, we all have in our States—whether it is Utah or Oregon or Ohio, we have 58-year-olds that lose their jobs or 62-year-olds that lose their jobs, and they cannot really often find insurance, or it is not affordable if they can. If they had the option to buy in—rather in a neutral way we built it into the Affordable Care Act, but lost in the end. We fell one vote short. But it would have made a huge difference in people being able to get through that.

I will never forget, I had a townhall in Youngstown some years ago. A woman stood up and said, "I'm 62 years old. I hold two jobs. I never had health insurance. I just want to stay alive until I'm 65." She did not say I want to stay alive to raise my grandkids or to take a trip. It was to stay alive so I can get on Medicare and get insurance, and that just should not be in this country.

Mr. WYDEN. My understanding—and, again, I have listened to my colleague on the Finance Committee. He is a champion on not going back, but going forward with more Medicare-type choices. Like making that person who is really wondering if they are going to make it until 65 in order to get to Medicare, he would like—for example, say an older woman who has been a victim of age discrimination, did not have much money, he would like to

make them eligible for Medicare at 60 or 61 or something like that.

Mr. BROWN. Absolutely—I thank Senator WYDEN—absolutely. Just give them that option. It is something we ought to be able to do. We can do it in a cost-effective way. In the end, it means fewer trips to the emergency room. In the end, it means a healthy population of people at those 10 years when they are more likely to get sick and more likely to need Medicare, but are not likely to be eligible.

I thank Senator WYDEN.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

REMEMBERING NATHAN LANE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a Foreign Service Officer of the United States and a former Pearson Fellow in my office, who was tragically killed in an accident while serving his country abroad.

After serving in my office for a year-long fellowship, Nathan Lane was assigned to the Poland desk at the U.S. State Department here in Washington. Sadly, while on temporary duty in Poland, he was involved in a car accident. While he was initially hospitalized, his injuries proved too severe, and, surrounded by his loving family, he passed away on November 2.

Nathan was a committed public servant who joined the State Department in 2000 and served in nearly every corner of the globe. He and his wife Sara and, later, his son Peter travelled from Mexico, to Russia, to Belarus, to Vietnam, and finally to Kenya. After his assignment in Kenya, he had the “misfortune” to be assigned to my office through a Pearson Fellowship. Here, my team and I got to see his diligence and dedication every day firsthand.

During his time in my office, Nathan proved invaluable. His knowledge and expertise of foreign policy gave him a mastery of the portfolio, as revealed by his exceptionally researched policy papers on important international issues and matters that my team and I tackled in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Nathan’s understanding of the dynamics of foreign relations and his skills at compiling pertinent information allowed him to craft the soon-to-be-released report on China. This product of the Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and Cybersecurity Policy will be a comprehensive report on the activities of China in the Indo-Pacific region. Absent Nathan’s diligence and dedication, this report would not have been possible.

Additionally, Nathan drafted a resolution urging the formation of an unprecedented treaty alliance between the United States and Indo-Pacific nations to collectively guard against growing cyber threats. The Cyber League of Indo-Pacific States, or CLIPS, was Nathan’s brainchild. He was passionate about this idea and rightfully proud of this resolution, and my team and I are honored to carry on this torch.

Of course, Nathan contributed so much more than just policy expertise. His kind heart and curious nature made him a friend to my staff and me. He would readily help those around him, even with the smallest tasks, without a whisper of complaint and quickly fit in as one of the team.

Nathan had many passions beyond foreign policy. He loved chess, and every so often, we would catch him pulling up an ongoing game between times of busyness. He loved running, and it wasn’t uncommon for him to step away from his desk at a convenient time to go for a quick jog around Capitol Hill.

Perhaps his greatest passion, though, was baseball. Indeed, one of his most timeless contributions to our office was his membership of Coors & Corn, the joint softball team between Senator SASSE’s office and mine. We may not have won it all that year, but we certainly would not have stood a chance without Nathan. As we celebrate the World Series in Washington, Nathan was such a great Nats fan that, every time we cheer for that team, we will also be cheering for him.

He was one of a kind. He was cheerful, eager, and caring; his loss will be felt by all of us who knew him. I ask my colleagues to join me in praying for his family, his wife, and his son and commemorating the man who graced so many of us with his compassion.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2843

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019. This bill passed the House by a vote of 263 to 158, with 33 Republicans supporting it.

A week ago, along with every other Senate Democrat, I introduced the bill in the Senate. People on the frontlines helping these victims wrote this bill. This bill is not a Democratic bill. It is not a Republican bill. This bill is a survivors’ bill. It is written with the help of survivors who know what is needed in the real world.

The bill accomplishes two things. It preserves the advancements we made during the last reauthorization in 2013, and it includes certain meaningful improvements to the law. In particular, there are three key elements.

One, it expands jurisdiction over non-Native Americans for domestic violence offenses and crimes against children, elders, and law enforcement. Violence is a big problem on Tribal lands, and the best way to address it is to allow the Tribes themselves to pros-

ecute these crimes. Unfortunately, some, instead, want to circumvent the Tribal justice system that we know works, and this moves us in the wrong direction.

Secondly, the bill builds on existing antidiscrimination protections for the LGBT community. In the 2013 reauthorization, Congress declared that Federal grant recipients could use funds to train staff to recognize and combat discrimination against LGBT individuals. Unfortunately, the law wasn’t clear, and organizations are still uncertain if they can use funds for this purpose. This bill simply clarifies that intent. It is a small but very important change to help this at-risk community. There has been surprising resistance from some on the Republican side to include this modest language.

Third, our bill keeps guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. It does this by adding intimate partners and stalkers to the existing list of individuals who can be banned from possessing firearms. We know the presence of a firearm in a domestic violence situation increases the odds of a woman being killed by 500 percent. That is a major increase in risk. It only makes sense to take guns away from convicted domestic abusers who may use them to kill their spouses or partners.

There is simply no way to stop domestic violence, but I think we have a duty to do all we can, and this bill makes significant improvements in the law.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, no later than before the end of this year, the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2843 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the only amendments in order be two germane amendments per side; that the debate on the bill be limited to 1 hour and amendments limited to 30 minutes each, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote in relation to the amendments; that upon the disposition of the amendments, the bill, as amended, if amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage; and finally, that amendments and passage be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold, all with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I am reserving the right to object.

I am on the floor today to speak my piece about the Violence Against Women Act. I speak to this body not just as a Senator, but I speak to this body as a survivor of rape and as a survivor of domestic violence.