

The bill clerk read the nomination of Stephen Hahn, of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Stephen Hahn, of Texas, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Roger F. Wicker, James Lankford, John Boozman, James E. Risch, John Barrasso, John Thune, Roy Blunt, Lamar Alexander, Mike Braun, Shelley Moore Capito.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 452.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Aurelia Skipwith, of Indiana, to be Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Aurelia Skipwith, of Indiana, to be Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, James E. Risch, John Barrasso, John Thune, Roy Blunt, Lamar Alexander, Mike Braun, Shelley Moore Capito.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

The Senator for Louisiana.

5G

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last week, of course, was Thanksgiving, a day that we all set aside in America to count our blessings. As we do that, we always say to ourselves: Gee, we really ought to be thankful every day of the year for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us.

I know I say that to myself. So I thought today, for a few minutes, I would mention two things that I am especially thankful for, even though this isn't Thanksgiving, but it is another day that the Lord has blessed us with.

The first thing—and there are many things that I am thankful for, but the first thing I am thankful for that I want to mention today is the many public servants who care for and protect American taxpayer money.

I want to highlight one in particular: the Chairman of our FCC, Mr. Ajit Pai. Let me explain why I am thankful for this public servant—one among many who get up every day and work hard to protect taxpayer money. About 2 weeks ago, the Chairman of the FCC, over many obstacles, announced that he was going to hold a public auction for the C-band.

Why is that important?

We all have a cell phone now, and many of us have iPads and computers. The internet has changed our world and changed our lives. It has made it more complicated, of course, but on balance, I think the internet has been good for our lives.

We are about to move into a new phase of telecommunications called 5G. It stands for fifth generation. It is really an extraordinarily fast internet. It can carry huge amounts of data. The ingenuity of the American people takes my breath away.

I am pretty impressed with 4G, and 5G is going to be 100 times faster. It is going to make things possible like telemedicine, where a specialist in a field of surgery through robotics and now an incredibly fast internet can operate on a sick patient 1,000 miles away and save his or her life, thanks to 5G. We will be able to hook up all of our devices through 5G, saving time. It will give us more precious time to spend with our family. There will be driverless cars. Maybe I will not see them in my lifetime, but our assistants and our pages in the Senate will see them in their lifetime.

I could go on, but the point is, to make 5G possible, a lot of people have to work together. So 5G is made possible through the airwaves. When internet devices talk to each other, data in the form of radio waves—the scientists call them electromagnetic radiation—these radio waves go through the airwaves from one device to another.

We have all sorts of different airwaves. It is called spectrum. We have airwaves for radios and TVs. Well, 5G can be used in a number of different

airwaves or different parts of the spectrum. But one part of the spectrum, one part of the airwaves, is just perfect for 5G. It is called the C-band. That part of the airwaves is able to carry these 5G radio waves in a manner that can cover a huge geographical area but also carry lots of data.

It is called the C-band, and it is perfect for 5G. It is perfect. It is not too hot, not too cold. It is just right.

Some swamp creatures, both in government and out, came that close—that close—to getting control of the C-band, which is owned by the American people. Led by three foreign satellite companies, they had almost convinced the powers that be to give them the C-band—just give it to them—and let them decide who is going to get to use that C-band for 5G.

Oh, and, by the way, in picking the telecommunication companies that would get to use the C-band that was going to be given to them for free by the powers that be, these foreign companies were going to get to keep the money—about \$60 billion. That is just the upfront money—\$60 billion. That would build 7,000 miles of interstate in this country.

Not only would the companies get the \$60 billion, they would get to decide who could use the C-band, and they were that close. But the Chairman of the FCC stopped it. He is going to recommend next week—and I hope the rest of the FCC goes along with it. I am going to be there to watch. He recommended and is going to recommend that we have a public auction.

Doing a public auction is nothing new for the FCC. The FCC auctions off different airwaves all the time. In fact, the FCC in the last 25 years has held right around 100—I think it is 93—public auctions where anybody who wants to, any company that wants to—competition, moral good—can come in and bid on that part of the airwaves.

The good people at the FCC have brought in to the American taxpayer about \$123 billion in the last 25 years by auctioning off these airwaves and giving everybody a fair chance in a fully transparent way in front of God and country. That is the way it ought to be.

But a lot of swamp creatures were pushing hard for this private sale. The American taxpayer not only would have lost \$60 billion, they would have lost control of the C-band, which, according to the Communications Act, doesn't belong to me, doesn't belong to the businesses; it belongs to the American people.

We can't let our guard down. I have learned in my short 3 years here that those swamp creatures—if they can't get in the front door, they are going to try the side door, and if they can't make it through the side door, they are going to try the back door. We have a lot of money at stake here, so we have to remain vigilant.

I want to thank Ajit Pai for standing up. He made the right people mad.

That is easy to talk about, but it is hard to do. It takes courage, and he did it, and I wanted to single him out.

The second thing I want to say I am thankful for, among so many things, is this: I am so thankful for our neighbors to the North—Canada. I have visited Canada so many times. I am so proud to call them friends. There are 37 million people in Canada, some of the finest people that God ever put breath in.

We have fought together in wars. We have fought for freedom that we all take for granted. We trade with each other. I mean, the country is just a wonderful country with extraordinarily friendly, decent, and God-fearing people.

Our leaders squabble sometimes. That is just the way life is. Sometimes good friends have disagreements. We are having a few little disagreements right now. But on this beautiful Thursday, I just wanted to come and say how thankful I am that Canada is our friend and how honored I am to call them friends and how grateful I am for all 37 million of the fine men, women, and children in that great country.

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

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

WORLD BANK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to discuss two issues: one dealing with the World Bank and another one dealing with the Department of Defense's inability to get clean audits.

Today the World Bank is releasing its country partnership framework with China. Reportedly, this includes \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion of loans to China per year and \$800 million to \$1 billion in private sector investment.

Keep in mind that the World Bank was created to help economic development in the world's poorest countries. China is now the world's second largest economy after the United States. Also, the United States is the World Bank's largest contributor. I think many Americans would question why so many American tax dollars are going to support low-interest loans in China.

In China, there is a large and growing body of evidence of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, including mass internment camps. Reports indicate that these camps are centers for social control and political indoctrination. Chinese authorities reportedly mistreat or even torture detainees, while requiring them to engage in forced labor and to renounce their religion and their culture. Yet the World Bank has supported a program called Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project in Xinjiang Province.

This is wording very close to what the Chinese Communist Party

euphemistically calls its internment camps. Plus, one reporter has uncovered documents that these schools purchased barbed wire, tear gas, and body armor using other funds—and, of course, funds are fungible.

Institutions like the World Bank have a great responsibility to further assess critical human rights risk and religious freedom, such as those exhibited in Xinjiang in any region where it lends money.

The World Bank's own social framework standards state that when assessing social risk and impacts, the Bank must assess threats to human security and impacts on the health, safety, and well-being of workers and project-affected communities. The Bank and other such institutions cannot adequately assess a project's full impact without monitoring and examining reports of widespread human rights abuses in any local area.

On November 16, the New York Times published leaked Chinese records indicating a coordinated effort going back years, directed by General Secretary Xi, to detain hundreds of thousands of Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslims in internment camps and to unleash the tools of "dictatorship" on the Xinjiang Muslim population. Given these repeated reports about repression in Xinjiang that date back even years, it is hard to see how any project in that region could meet the Bank's social framework standards. There needs to be a periodic internal review of risk assessment mechanisms to ensure that they are appropriately calibrated to capture changing risk profiles.

I question whether the Bank's oversight processes are adequate, given its own assessments saw no issue with these intern camps that go by the professional name of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project—and I am referring particularly to those in Xinjiang Province.

In a statement on August 29, the World Bank stated that it had conducted supervision missions twice a year since the project started and that these missions included a review of social safeguards and a monitoring and evaluation review. The World Bank found "no evidence from subsequent reviews that funds were diverted, misused, or used for activities not in line with project objectives or World Bank policies and procedures."

However, just last month, the Bank raised the environmental and social risk ratings from moderate—the second lowest level—to substantial and then to high—the highest level. It is very disappointing that very little happened in upgrading the risk assessments on this project until after congressional attention, even with an internal whistleblower raising the matter. This seems like a failed process to me when routine audits and a whistleblower complaint do not catch anything, despite increasingly concerning reports in the media about mistreatment and abuse.

I have written a letter to the Bank President, Malpass, asking questions about these systemic concerns. Moreover, I questioned why a country like China, whose economy has far surpassed the threshold at which it is supposed to graduate from rural bank funding, is now and forever still taking loans.

The World Bank was created for a very worthwhile purpose—to help poor countries that cannot, on their own efforts, assess capital markets.

Both China and Russia today have well surpassed the World Bank's graduation threshold and have access to capital markets. Yet American taxpayers are called on to do more. Yet China then continues to borrow, on average, \$2 billion a year from the World Bank, making it one of the Bank's top borrowers—the second largest economy in the world and one of the Bank's top borrowers.

Countries like China or Russia that have seen the most economic progress should not seek to maintain access to the Bank's preferential lending rates and technical support. Moreover, these are our two major geopolitical foes.

I have previously highlighted China's intellectual property theft and foreign influence activities at American universities as just an example of other things I looked at in the case of China.

Russia's illegal occupation of territory in Georgia and Ukraine and its "active measures" against democracies, including the U.S. democracy, make it effectively an outlawed state. Meanwhile, China does substantial foreign lending of its own, which it uses as a tool of geopolitical influence over other countries.

Now, just think, through the World Bank, they get U.S. taxpayer dollars, and then the country is still so rich that they can lend to many other nations around the world to increase the geopolitical influence of China, and that country's lending does not follow international development finance standards, nor does China disclose the amounts or terms for loans that it offers.

Through the Belt and Road Initiative in China—this initiative is a process where they invest in other countries to have Chinese influence in these other countries—this Belt and Road Initiative in China has raised concerns about debt sustainability in recipient countries. They can invest money in these countries, and then they have an agreement that if the loan isn't paid, then China takes over, enhancing their influence—a lot of it for military purposes.

A March 2018 report from the Center for Global Development assessed the current debt vulnerabilities of the countries I just referred to, identified as potential Belt and Road Initiative borrowers. Out of the 23 countries determined to be vulnerable to debt distress, the center identified 8 countries "where Belt and Road Initiative appears to create the potential for debt