

from having to suffer and perhaps not survive this second pandemic that will be caused by opportunistic litigation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). The clerk will call the roll. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian D. Montgomery, of Texas, to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

CORONAVIRUS

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I rise today to speak about the unprecedented crisis our Nation is facing. In a matter of just a few months, COVID-19 has completely changed our daily lives. This virus has forced us to close schools, shut down restaurants, cancel major events, and temporarily shutter businesses across our economy.

The sacrifices have been necessary for the sake of public health, to help "flatten the curve" so our medical facilities don't become overwhelmed, but they have also been disruptive, frustrating, and in some cases, scary.

Despite the emotional and economic toll this crisis has taken, we have seen countless acts of compassion, generosity, and selflessness all across the country. Americans have stepped up to help each other to fight this new threat.

I want to make sure the American people know that since the very beginning of this crisis, Nebraskans have been on the frontlines.

When 13 Americans were evacuated from a cruise ship in Japan in late February, they were taken to the National Quarantine Unit at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. As the Nation's only Federal quarantine unit, they were also trusted to care for Americans recovering from Ebola in 2014.

Beyond treating those exposed to or infected with coronavirus, UNMC is also working to test new treatments for this virus. In late February, the Na-

tional Institutes of Health announced that the country's first clinical trial for coronavirus therapy had begun at UNMC.

Our world-class medical center has been active from the very beginning of this crisis.

The Nebraska National Guard—our citizen soldiers—has also played an important role in our response. They have been deployed as distributors at food banks, as healthcare workers assisting with testing, and as drivers bringing ventilators to where they are most needed.

One of the first State Department evacuation flights out of China brought 57 Americans to Nebraska, where they were quarantined at Camp Ashland, a Nebraska National Guard training site.

It is easy to forget that these first evacuations happened just back in February. Since that time, we have relied on our amazing healthcare workers and first responders. These heroes have been working around the clock to keep all of us safe. They get up every day to fight this virus in hospitals and in clinics across this country. I can't imagine how hard it must be for them to see the effects of this new sickness day in and day out. Yet I know we are in good hands.

We have also relied on our food heroes, many from my home State, where one in four jobs is tied to production agriculture. If you raise cattle or grow soybeans, you can't stay inside and work from your couch. If you package beef or pork, you can't work from a laptop. Americans should be incredibly grateful for our essential workers throughout the food supply chain. They are working so that we can continue to put healthy, safe food on our tables.

Nebraskans and all Americans are making daily sacrifices to slow the spread of this virus. We have drastically reduced our contact with others, knowing that short-term sacrifice will lead to long-term public health. But despite our best efforts, over 8,000 Nebraskans have contracted the virus, and 96 have died since COVID-19 arrived in the United States. These people were loved by their families and by their communities. I grieve for their loved ones. These tragic losses underscore the seriousness of this virus. They demonstrate to all of us that we need to keep up the fight.

The changes we have made in our national life, while necessary, have been difficult. They have come at the cost of the economic security of many people in the heartland of this Nation. We are seeing record numbers of unemployment claims, and many people who have never faced unemployment before now find themselves out of work. More Nebraskans are now dealing with food insecurity due to unemployment and the effects of COVID-19.

I have been inspired by the work nonprofits across my State are doing to address this.

The local chapter of the Salvation Army in Hastings has started a mobile

food unit, which they drive from neighborhood to neighborhood, and they serve hot meals.

The Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership has begun to box up food and leave it on people's doorsteps. This has allowed them to reduce person-to-person contact while helping those who are in need.

The Food Bank of Lincoln, which serves Southeast Nebraska by acting as a distribution center for food pantries in 16 counties, has seen a huge surge in demand. They have been able to keep up with this demand in large part thanks to the innovation of a partnership of Lincoln business, philanthropy, and government leaders, who together formed the Lincoln COVID-19 Response Fund.

These are major problems, and there is no easy fix. Even so, it is our job in Congress to respond to this national crisis and do what we can to provide relief. That is why I was proud to support the CARES Act, the relief package this body passed unanimously at the end of March.

A big part of this legislation was the Paycheck Protection Program, which was designed to help America's small businesses keep their employees on payroll by offering forgivable loans.

Upon the creation of this program to provide relief, Nebraskans hit the ground running. By mid-April, the Paycheck Protection Program had provided nearly 25,000 loans worth just under \$3 billion to Nebraska's small businesses. This funding was enough to cover more than three-fourths of Nebraska's eligible payrolls—the highest percentage in the Nation.

I think it is important to note that none of this would have been possible without Nebraska's community banks and our credit unions. While some national banks hesitated, Nebraska's local institutions stepped up to provide these loans and make sure small businesses in their communities received assistance.

To our community banks and credit unions, Nebraskans applying for these loans are not just statistics halfway around the country. The people hurting are their friends, their families, and their neighbors. The people who need their help live just down the street.

One of these banks is Union Bank & Trust in Lincoln. This family-owned bank is not in the top 200 banks by assets nationally, but after the first 72 hours of the Paycheck Protection Program, they ranked second in the Nation for the number of loans approved. Like many other lending institutions, Union Bank & Trust accomplished this while adjusting to working from home for the first time. Their remarkable efforts and those of another Nebraska institution, Pinnacle Bank, were covered in a recent Washington Post story for leading the way nationally with this program.

It is good to see the Paycheck Protection Program working well in my State. I am pleased that Congress came

together to further fund this program so that more small businesses can receive assistance. The drive to support one another, help out, and deliver relief to others is something we are seeing all across my State.

Along with grief, we have seen resilience. Along with sadness, we have seen hope.

I read a story about young children in Omaha who wanted to visit their grandfather. They couldn't go into his nursing home, so they connected a microphone to a speaker inside so that they could talk to him and sing to him.

I have seen schools that stopped holding in-person classes weeks ago still serving their students.

On top of instituting remote learning, many are also offering free meals.

In Gering, teachers organized an impromptu drive-by parade through their students' neighborhoods.

In Hastings, Longfellow Elementary School has converted old newspaper vending machines into learning material dispensers. Students walk up to the dispenser for their grade level, and they take out their weekly learning packet, just as you would a newspaper.

In short, I have seen neighbors helping neighbors. I have seen Nebraskans helping Nebraskans.

Much remains uncertain about our future. We don't know how many more lives will be lost, how long we are going to have to wait for a vaccine, or how long it will take for Main Street to fully open for business once again. I think we may have a long and tough road ahead of us, but I take great pride in the way Nebraska has responded to these difficult circumstances.

The inspiring stories of kindness and humanity in my State don't come as a surprise to me.

I have seen our people respond to other disasters, including the widespread flooding that we faced just last year. I have seen Nebraskans respond the same way to COVID-19 as we did to that flood—by putting others first. It is just who we are.

Nebraskans will continue to adapt, to help others, and to lead the way in addressing and responding to this crisis. We will get through this, and we will come out stronger than ever before.

NOMINATION OF BRIAN D. MONTGOMERY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I will vote to oppose the nomination of Mr. Brian Montgomery to serve as Deputy Secretary for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. My vote today is not because I believe Mr. Montgomery is incapable of doing the job. Across multiple administrations, Mr. Montgomery has shown himself to be a dedicated public servant with an impressive understanding of the programs and policies he would oversee if confirmed. During prior administrations, Mr. Montgomery demonstrated his commitment to HUD's mission and helped respond to the early days of the financial crisis. And over the past year, Mr. Montgomery has done important work strengthening HUD's reverse mortgage program.

But I will vote against Mr. Montgomery's nomination today because, like too many people in this administration, over the last 2 years he has helped advance policies that will have devastating effects for millions of families. In addition to his role as Federal Housing Commissioner and Assistant Secretary for Housing, Mr. Montgomery began performing the duties of the Deputy Secretary at HUD nearly a year and a half ago. Since that time, he was involved in the decision to advance a revised disparate impact rule that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights wrote that it was very concerned would "impose substantial new obstacles for victims of discrimination" and "undermine the protections of the Fair Housing Act, thereby substantially undermining necessary civil rights protection in an area about which the Commission and its state advisory committees continue to receive compelling evidence of need for meaningful federal corrective action."

Mr. Montgomery also helped advance HUD's Housing Finance Reform Report, which would increase the cost of an FHA-backed loan for those who can least afford it, restructure FHA in a way that could undermine HUD funding, and restrict consumers' choice between an FHA and Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac-backed loan. But when confronted with questions about these issues that are critical to low- and moderate-income families, Mr. Montgomery offered little explanation.

Throughout Mr. Montgomery's time performing the duties of the Deputy Secretary—the No. 2 person at HUD—HUD's budget requests have repeatedly zeroed out critical housing and community development accounts, like the community developmental block grant, HOME investment partnerships, and public housing capital funds, while proposing to raise rents for the lowest income renters. When asked to justify these disastrous proposals, Mr. Montgomery again offered no explanation.

Our Nation is facing an affordable housing crisis and a crisis of equity across our housing system. Before COVID-19 hit, there was a nearly 30-point gap between the Black and White home ownership rates, and more than one in four renters paid more than half of their income for housing. With COVID-19's economic devastation disproportionately burdening the lowest income households and communities of color, these challenges will only grow.

We need leaders at HUD who will fight for our housing and community development programs and the families who depend on them. We need leaders at HUD who will push for progress and equality in our Nation's housing system, regardless of race, disability, or family status. We need leaders at HUD who will advance proposals that support, not further burden, the lowest income families. Mr. Montgomery has not shown us a record of fighting for those priorities, and that is why I cannot support his nomination today.

Mrs. FISCHER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Montgomery nomination?

Mrs. FISCHER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 61, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 86 Ex.]

YEAS—61

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

NAYS—32

Baldwin	Feinstein	Rosen
Bennet	Gillibrand	Schatz
Blumenthal	Harris	Schumer
Booker	Hassan	Shaheen
Brown	Heinrich	Smith
Cantwell	Hirono	Stabenow
Cardin	Kaine	Udall
Casey	Klobuchar	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Peters	Wyden
Durbin	Reed	

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander	Murray	Whitehouse
Leahy	Sanders	
Markey	Sasse	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:01 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

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 Troy D. Edgar, of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security.

Mitch McConnell, Jerry Moran, James Lankford, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, Steve Daines, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, Kevin Cramer, Cory Gardner, Shelley Moore Capito, Marsha Blackburn, John Cornyn, Tim Scott, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Crapo.

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 Troy D. Edgar, of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security, 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 Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), 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 or change their vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 87 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Barrasso	Burr	Cornyn
Blackburn	Capito	Cotton
Blunt	Carper	Cramer
Boozman	Cassidy	Crapo
Braun	Collins	Cruz

Daines	Kennedy
Duckworth	King
Enzi	Lankford
Ernst	Lee
Fischer	Loeffler
Gardner	Manchin
Graham	McConnell
Grassley	McSally
Hassan	Moran
Hawley	Murkowski
Hoeven	Paul
Hyde-Smith	Perdue
Inhofe	Peters
Johnson	Portman
Jones	Risch
Kaine	Roberts

NAYS—31

Baldwin	Feinstein	Schatz
Bennet	Gillibrand	Schumer
Blumenthal	Harris	Shaheen
Booker	Heinrich	Smith
Brown	Hirono	Stabenow
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Udall
Cardin	Menendez	Van Hollen
Casey	Merkley	Warren
Coons	Murphy	Wyden
Cortez Masto	Reed	
Durbin	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander	Murray	Whitehouse
Leahy	Sanders	
Markey	Sasse	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 62, the nays are 31.

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 Troy D. Edgar, of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the postcloture time on the Edgar nomination expire at 4:30 p.m. today. I further ask that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, we are back for our second week in the Senate after spending some time working remotely to help flatten the coronavirus curve. We are getting used to the temporary new normal—social distancing during hearings, floor votes, and meetings; masks; a lot of conference calls and Skype calls instead of in-person meetings; lots of hand washing and hand sanitizer; and as many staff working remotely as possible. We are committed to doing the essential work of the American people, and they are depending on us to do it in the safest way possible.

Responding to the coronavirus continues to be at the top of the agenda. Last week, we held a number of coronavirus-related hearings, including a hearing on coronavirus testing and a

hearing on the impact the pandemic has had on the airline industry.

When people think about what the Senate does, they tend to think about voting on bills and debating on the floor, but the truth is, committee work is some of the most important work we do here in Washington. Committees are where we review nominees' qualifications, hear from experts in various fields, develop legislation, and conduct essential oversight of government programs. The work we do in coronavirus-related committee hearings will inform any future coronavirus legislation we might consider.

This week, the Senate Banking Committee will be voting on the nomination of Brian D. Miller to be Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery at the Treasury Department. If he is confirmed by the full Senate, Mr. Miller will be an essential part of ensuring that the trillions we have provided for coronavirus relief are spent properly. The Banking Committee will also be holding an oversight hearing with key Federal financial regulators to learn about the steps they have taken to ensure the safety and soundness of our financial sector during this challenging time.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will be examining the issue of liability during the COVID pandemic and discussing ways to prevent frivolous lawsuits from damaging our economy once we reopen.

The Senate Commerce Committee, of which I am a member, will be holding a hearing looking at efforts to maintain and expand reliable high-speed broadband access during this time when so many Americans are relying on their internet for work, school, and connections with friends and family.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will be hearing directly from the leaders of our fight against the coronavirus—Drs. Fauci, Redfield, and Hahn, and Admiral Giroir. Senators will be talking to these experts about what we need to do to safely reopen our economy and our schools.

Another big part of our coronavirus response right now is monitoring the implementation of the funds we have already provided. We have delivered a tremendous amount of money to respond to the pandemic—equal to almost 50 percent of the entire Federal budget for 2020—and it is important that any future funding be carefully targeted.

We are facing extraordinary circumstances, and they call for an extraordinary, bold response from Washington, but it is important to remember that every dollar of the trillions we provided for the pandemic is borrowed money, and our children and grandchildren are going to be paying for that borrowing. That doesn't mean we are not going to provide more money if necessary, but it does mean we need to make sure we are spending money wisely and well and only appropriating