

request. Leader McCONNELL and Senate Republicans must drop the cynical and political games and instead work with Democrats to find common ground and reach a compromise.

If Republican leadership lets the 20 Members of their caucus who barely want to provide any more relief and allows them to dictate their party's agenda, it will block the path to a compromise, and Republicans will have to answer to the American people.

Our country still does not have a strong grasp on COVID-19. America continues to lead the world in the number of confirmed cases by far—over 6.5 million. Nearly 200,000 Americans have died. Yet, unthinkable, it was reported that in one of his interviews with Bob Woodward, President Trump said that “nothing more could have been done” to combat the coronavirus. “Nothing more could have been done”—that is what President Trump said. Of the many lies the President has told about COVID-19, this is one of the most monumental and one of the most galling.

There were so many vital things the President could have done to fight COVID-19 and protect our country. In the early days of the virus, hospitals, medical centers, and essential workers were short on PPE, ventilators, swabs, masks, and gloves. President Trump never mobilized the resources of the Federal Government, never fully invoked the Defense Production Act, and never set up a national clearing house to get resources where they needed to go.

It has been 7 months and President Trump still doesn't have a national testing strategy. There has never been a national plan for contact tracing. The President took months before he even encouraged Americans to wear a mask. This is an entire universe of actions that President Trump could have taken to help slow the spread of the virus and save American lives and American jobs, but he didn't. He never took strong action, never took responsibility. It is what it is.

In many cases, it would have been better, actually, if the President did nothing instead of what he did. It would have been better if the President never downplayed the virus, never called it a hoax, never pushed quack medicines, never speculated about injecting bleach, and never held rallies.

Every week—every week—brings new evidence that his administration is totally unequipped to right the ship, especially the Department of Health and Human Services. Over the weekend, there were numerous reports that political appointees at HHS have been interfering with CDC's report on COVID-19, trying to delay, edit out, or halt the release of facts that would have been politically embarrassing to the President. This is not the first time the administration has tried to hide reports and facts that would better inform the American people.

Meanwhile, as that is happening, President Trump has pressured HHS to

“slow the testing down.” He has overstated the benefits of certain treatments and pressured the FDA to approve them and accused FDA officials of holding back a vaccine, and too many people within HHS are trying to suppress the science.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services, Alex Azar, has not only failed to push back against these outrageous moves by President Trump, but he has been almost entirely silent about the chaos and mismanagement in his own agency.

In Trump's administration, the most important skill is the ability to stand up to the President and resist political influence—more so in an agency like HHS than others, where the health of Americans is at stake.

It has become abundantly clear that the leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services has allowed perhaps the most important Federal agency right now to become subservient to the President's daily whims.

So, today, I am calling on Secretary Azar to resign immediately. We need a Secretary of Health and Human Services who will look out for the American people, not President Trump's political interests.

WILDFIRES

Madam President, now on another topic, wildfires: For the last several weeks, much of the American West has been ravaged by a historic wave of wildfires. At least 35 people have been killed. Thousands of homes have been destroyed. Over 5 million acres of land have been incinerated, roughly the size of Rhode Island and Connecticut combined. The sky glows with ghastly shades of red and orange.

It is impossible to have a serious conversation about these wildfires without talking about climate change. We know that climate change contributes to the frequency of these fires. We know it accelerates their destructive power. Six of the 20 largest fires in California history have happened this year alone. Heat waves and dry air make these disasters more likely.

These past few years have been some of the hottest and driest on record, but at a press conference yesterday with FEMA and California State officials, President Trump brushed aside any possibility that climate change had an effect, suggesting idiotically that the planet will “start getting cooler; you just watch.”

This is just like what he did with COVID. He tries to deny it, and he makes it worse. He encourages people to ignore it, and the problem grows.

When the head of the California Natural Resources Agency told the President that science disagreed with him, the President said: “I don't think science knows.” This exchange where the President said “It'll start getting cooler; you just watch,” when he was upbraided by a scientific expert and says “I don't think science knows” captures everything you need to know

about President Trump's grasp of basic scientific facts—and especially the science of climate change.

Without a shred of evidence or knowledge, President Trump said that our planet will just “start getting cooler.” It is just like his attitude toward this pandemic, which he promised would magically disappear.

You would think the situation would be better here in Congress, but, regrettably, the Republican Senate doesn't seem to take the threat of climate change seriously either. The Republican majority has had 6 years in charge of the Senate to show that they want to make progress on climate change but have done next to nothing—next to nothing—to curb emissions or protect our environment from the damaging effects of a warming planet.

The only time Republicans ever brought up climate change legislation was when Leader McCONNELL scheduled a sham vote on a climate bill so his own Members could vote against it. That is right. The only climate bill Leader McCONNELL has brought to the floor is a bill he wanted his Members to vote against.

Democrats, on the other hand, believe protecting our planet is a moral obligation. Senate Democrats created the first-ever Senate special committee to study the climate crisis. We have committed to creating clean energy jobs and building resiliency in any infrastructure bill.

I have introduced legislation called Clean Cars for America that would make all vehicles on the road carbon-neutral by 2040, and we have committed to creating at least 10 million new clean energy jobs and dedicating 40 percent of climate funding to environmental justice and the disadvantaged and communities of color.

Just last week, I joined with Senator MARKEY and many grassroots organizations to introduce the THRIVE resolution, calling for millions of new jobs in renewable energy and making new investments in Black, Hispanic, and indigenous communities so that clean air, clean water, and clean energy are not privileges for the wealthy few but abundant for all.

This is about protecting our planet so that our kids and grandkids can live in a world with clean air, clean water, and the same kinds of opportunities we grew up with.

Republicans have had 6 years in the Senate to show they are serious about the defining crisis of our time, something that, over the years, will be even worse than COVID—much worse—and they have failed to take any action, just like they did on COVID: no action. Democrats would not make the same mistake again. We will not delay on climate the way Republicans have delayed on COVID and not done what is needed.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON SCARSI NOMINATION

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

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

Mr. GARDNER. 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 West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 83, nays 12, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 170 Ex.]

YEAS—83

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

NAYS—12

Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Schatz
Booker	Markey	Schumer
Cantwell	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Capito	Cramer	Sanders
Coons	Harris	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

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 Stanley Blumenfeld, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Mitch McConnell, Martha McSally, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, John Boozman, Marco Rubio, Richard Burr, Mike Crapo, Roger F. Wicker, Rob Portman, Lamar Alexander, John Thune, Steve Daines, James Lankford.

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 Stanley Blumenfeld, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 89, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 171 Ex.]

YEAS—89

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

NAYS—6

Blumenthal	Hirono	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Markey	Warren

NOT VOTING—5

Capito	Cramer	Sanders
Coons	Harris	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 89, the nays are 6.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Stanley Blumenfeld, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

FILIBUSTER

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, last week, Leader MCCONNELL called up a bill to the floor of the U.S. Senate. It was a coronavirus relief bill, which included a number of components that both sides had agreed needed to be in any coronavirus relief bill. It was a targeted bill. It was a fiscally responsible bill, and it was a bill that was rooted in reality. In other words, there was a belief that it could be signed into law if, in fact, it was passed by the Congress.

So, when it was called up, obviously, we talked about the features in the bill, many of which are things, as I said, enjoyed bipartisan support. When I said it was fiscally responsible, it actually repurposed funds from the previous coronavirus relief bill, from the CARES Act, that had not yet been spent. So it took some of those dollars, repurposed them, used them in another way, which I think would be a fiscally responsible way in which to approach the whole issue of how we spend taxpayer dollars on any issue, including a crisis. So there was a repurposing that I think, again, represents a fiscally responsible approach to doing this.

It also addressed the issue of people who were unemployed. It had a provision in there that allowed people to continue to receive unemployment insurance above and beyond what their States offered in terms of the benefits—\$300 above that on a per-week basis, which, on average, represents about an 85-percent wage replacement. So it was about an 85-percent wage replacement in terms of an unemployment benefit. It also included bipartisan improvements and bipartisan amendments and modifications to the PPP program, things which both sides had agreed upon. That program has been very successful but needed to be expanded and reauthorized, so it included those changes—again, bipartisan changes.

It included significant funding for both elementary and secondary education—about \$70 billion there to help our schools open safely and another \$30 billion to \$35 billion for colleges and universities for the same purpose; to help them be able to open safely—again, a bipartisan priority.

Those are just a few of the things that were included. It also included, of course, additional funding for vaccines, therapies, testing, all things that we think are vitally important if we are going to defeat the virus.

Those were all components that were included in the bill last week that was brought up to the floor by the majority