

You know, I am thinking of the hundreds of thousands of people in Oregon under evacuation orders, of the brave firefighters in California who are battling flames in the middle of a pandemic, of Nevadans whose skies are blanketed with hazardous smoke—everyone in the West who is pooling all of their efforts and resources to support one another from Washington to Oregon, to California, to Nevada—everywhere that we have seen.

I also want to honor the efforts of two courageous pilots who died in a crash over Caliente, NV, in July while dropping fire retardant on the Bishop Fire. David Blake Haynes and Scott Thomas lost their lives while protecting the people of Nevada, and I join all Nevadans in sharing my condolences with their families.

You know, Americans are up against the brutal reality of the climate crisis. Science tells us that climate change is making the West hotter and drier and contributing to wildfires. Scientists have been sending a consistent message about climate change for the past 30 years. In the entire Western United States, we have seen just some of the dire effects scientists have predicted. That is why we need Federal action to slow the very clear effects of climate change.

We have seen those effects in my home State of Nevada where, this year alone, almost a quarter million acres have burned so far. Since I have been in the Senate, over 2½ million acres in Nevada have burned in tragedies like the Poehville Fire, the South Sugarloaf Fire, the Range 2 Fire, and the Martin Fire, which was the State's largest fire in our country. That is why the entire Nevada delegation has worked so hard to get Nevada the resources it needs to prepare for these fires, combat them when they occur, and rebuild afterward.

We have helped get funds to the University of Nevada, Reno, for its ALERTWildfire Program, which uses state-of-the-art cameras to monitor the fires. We have requested that the Nevada Air National Guard get the tools it needs to combat these fires, including C-130J aircraft that could fight fires all over the West. Yet, inexplicably, this request was turned down earlier this year.

Along with my colleagues in the Senate, we have worked to pass a bill to create a permanent Forest Service contingency account so that Federal agencies aren't left empty-handed when they need the money the most.

Last summer, I convened the first of its kind wildfire summit in Nevada. I was honored to join our firefighters, our ranchers, our conservationists, our scientists, our power companies, and representatives of government agencies in thinking through new ways to coordinate and collaborate around how to address these wildfires.

There is so much that we can do working together—from developing innovative digital platforms to monitor

the fire to funding research, to restoring native plants, to helping neighborhoods plan for and adapt to fire seasons. We need to make our farms and landscapes more resilient. We need to preserve our national treasures and improve the health and well-being of those who live in our cities and rural areas alike because the truth is that it is not getting cooler.

Anyone in Los Angeles, which saw temperatures of 120 degrees Fahrenheit this month, or in Las Vegas, which hit 113 degrees in July, can tell you that. Taking climate seriously shouldn't be a partisan issue. This is about safeguarding property, protecting local economies, and saving lives—lives of first responders who have too much to do with too few resources and lives of civilians throughout Nevada and the West frightened by what they are seeing literally in their backyards.

So I plan to listen to what the scientists are telling us. I am listening to Nevadans in places like Winnemucca and Elko, where ranchers and local officials have lived through these fires. I am listening to Nevada's Tribal leaders, whose people have been stewards of the land for millennia, and to other communities of color that are among the hardest hit when disaster strikes. And, yes, I am listening to my colleagues who have devastating stories of what is happening to their own constituents in their States right now.

The climate crisis is all around us—from the wildfires we are seeing in the West to the hurricanes we are seeing right now in the South. It is time for us to take bipartisan action, address the climate crisis, and make sure we are doing what we do best: funding short-term and long-term policies and goals to address these issues.

I look forward to working with my colleagues around the States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote that has been scheduled for 11:45 begin immediately.

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

VOTE ON VALDERRAMA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Valderrama nomination?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS),

the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 182 Ex.]

YEAS—68

Alexander	Grassley	Reed
Baldwin	Hassan	Risch
Bennet	Heinrich	Roberts
Blumenthal	Hirono	Romney
Blunt	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Booker	Inhofe	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	Kennedy	Shelby
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cassidy	Leahy	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Tillis
Coons	Markey	Toomey
Cornyn	McConnell	Udall
Cortez Masto	McSally	Van Hollen
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wicker
Fischer	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	Young
Graham	Portman	

NAYS—26

Barrasso	Ernst	Perdue
Blackburn	Gardner	Rounds
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Cotton	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Loeffler	Thune
Enzi	Paul	

NOT VOTING—6

Burr	Harris	Sanders
Capito	Moran	Sinema

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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Iain D. Johnston, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

CORONAVIRUS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I don't think anyone would disagree if I said that 2020 has truly been a difficult year. No one could ever have expected what we have faced this year, and it has been a tough one for Tennesseans. We hear about it regularly. We know it is a tough one for constituents and for our citizens all across the country.

The months of lockdowns will constitute a defining moment for multiple generations of Americans. My kids and I were talking about how we think that, in years to come, our grandkids are going to talk about what they did during the COVID summer and how they went to school during the COVID pandemic.

Unfortunately, Congressional Democrats have decided not to let the opportunity that moment presents go to waste. Democrats are taking advantage of the American people's uncertainty and pain in an attempt to force them to lose faith in their government, in their fellow countrymen, and in themselves. We are hearing from people that this causes them concern because they want to see us work together; they want to see us address these issues that are causing heartache together.

I have to tell you, I think it was so unfortunate that last week, some of our friends across the aisle blocked yet another targeted relief package that would have brought billions of dollars in support to the American people. I think we have to realize that this was not a vote on final passage; this was a vote to end cloture and begin the debate on that package.

Basically, what our friends across the aisle said to the American people last week is this: We don't want to talk about this. We don't want to discuss it. We don't want to debate it.

That is unfortunate. If you look at the bill that the Senate Republicans proposed and brought forward on a cloture vote last week, it is hard to tease out exactly what the problem was with it. It included another round of paycheck protection plan funding. I will tell you, in Tennessee, a lot of our entertainment venues and a lot of our restaurants need this. They need that consideration to stay afloat.

There was funding for vaccine development. Is there anybody who does not think we need a vaccine for coronavirus? I haven't met people who think we don't need to be working on that. Everybody is saying: Let's get this to market as safely and quickly as is possible.

There was support for healthcare workers.

There was support for students and teachers who are still trying to adapt to online learning.

I was just doing a virtual townhall with one of our counties in Tennessee. One of their issues is, when will there be additional funding to help us with technology, because 30 percent of our students elected an e-learning format.

Do you know what? There was even money for the post office. Back in August, our friends across the aisle thought that was a crisis, but I guess it was their drama of the day because they voted against all of this funding.

They voted for weakening the economy, I guess, and they voted against the prospects of American workers. But what they were doing was strengthening the false premise that they are the only ones capable of sparking an economic recovery. This, of course, is demonstrably false.

This week, the Census Bureau released its annual report. I will tell you that the numbers prove that the Trump administration's pro-growth policies are working. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that we passed in 2017 is working.

It has spurred economic growth. It has spurred an economy like I have never seen in my lifetime.

In 2019, incomes grew at the highest pace ever recorded. Last year, the official poverty rate fell to an all-time record low of 10.5 percent. Think about that—10.5 percent. A decade ago, there were more people than ever on assistance. Between 2018 and 2019 alone, more than 4 million Americans rose out of poverty. Think about those numbers. That is a good thing. It was the largest reduction in poverty in over 50 years. The Black poverty rate fell below 20 percent for the first time in history, and child poverty also fell to a near 50-year low.

Our record on this is very clear: The Trump administration policies worked. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act worked. That is what the American people are wanting to get back to.

I encourage all of my colleagues in this Chamber to read that report and look at these stats, and everyone should remind themselves of the progress we have made as a nation on growing this economy over the last 4 years.

Politically, everybody talks about how this is a divided nation, but we have to come together and work under an umbrella of policies that will make life better for all Americans. For the life of me, I cannot fathom why my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would throw that opportunity away.

Our citizens want us to work on a relief package that is going to help them get back to work, help our children get back to school, and allow our communities, our schools, our governments, and our businesses to safely operate with liability protections.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

TRANSPORTATION

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I come to the floor this afternoon to talk about the importance of aviation and continuing to focus on the workforce employed in aviation. I want to speak about the importance of the thousands of workers, including pilots, flight attendants, gate agents, baggage handlers, mechanics, catering workers, and many others, who are feeling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I believe we should continue to address the very important issues of the health aspects of the pandemic and the economic impact of the pandemic, but while we are working on developing a vaccine and developing better therapeutics and testing and stopping the spread of this virus, we also need to keep in mind that we do need transportation.

Prior to the pandemic, the aviation industry supported nearly 11 million American jobs, put \$1.8 trillion to work in our economy, and contributed to about 5.2 percent of our GDP. In fact, civilian aviation is the seventh leading contributor of overall productivity. These are skilled, high-wage jobs that

are critical to our economy that cannot be easily replaced. Maintaining our aviation sector is vital to the long-term economic success of our country.

When the pandemic hit, we saw a 96-percent drop in air travel, which instantly jeopardized thousands of jobs in this sector. We worked very hard in the CARES Act to create the right balance of capital for the aviation sector to continue because it is essential. We also have workers who are essential to their jobs, so we must keep moving to solve these problems from the pandemic.

The Payroll Support Program, which was created in the CARES Act and is being administered through the Department of the Treasury, was designed to compensate aviation industry workers and preserve jobs in order to help protect the essential aspects of aviation and airline services. The program continues to cover the costs of keeping people employed and keeping this vital piece of transportation moving. This is critically important because, in just a very short period of time, September 30, this program is going to expire.

Congress needs to act to extend the program. It is important that we provide this support through the PSP program for the aviation workers who are so essential to continuing to deliver these services. Aviation not only helps people move around the country for personal reasons and essential business reasons, but it also delivers good medicine and essential mail services. The fact is that most people probably have forgotten how important airlines are to delivering the U.S. mail, but they are important.

The CARES Act included requirements to ensure that smaller markets continue to receive air service and its associated benefits. As you can see, many of the airlines, in the uncertainty of what is happening with the CARES Act extension, are now cutting services to those communities. Doing another CARES Act bill would help us to keep those services in these smaller communities. It was announced that as many as 50,000 airline jobs will be at risk if we don't continue the Payroll Support Program.

Now is not the time to be uncertain. Now is the time to give the airline sector the importance that it deserves by having airline workers continue to do their jobs. Every job lost means a worker earns less. It means the slowdown of the economy as a whole. It means that consumer spending, which is a big engine of our economy, will slow down, and 70 percent of our GDP comes from that consumer spending. So these programs are important.

If the Payroll Support Program is not extended, the cost for workers who will lose their jobs will simply be shifted to the States in the form of unemployment benefits, and since we aren't solving the problems of the States, the States also add to the GDP, so we are not helping the GDP unless we come to a resolution within the CARES Act.