

couldn't provide one meaningful response or step, even in writing, and that is plainly alarming. It should be disqualifying.

This nomination, though, is dangerous on more than any single issue because it threatens the independence and political integrity of the FCC. The political independence and integrity of the FCC depend on its balance. Normally, nominations are paired politically to reflect the bipartisan balance of the agency. What we will have at the FCC now is potential gridlock.

One month ago, voters overwhelmingly elected a new President, and he has promised to close the homework gap, the digital divide, to reinstate net neutrality, and to renew our commitment to consumer protection. This nomination threatens all of those goals for a new administration. In fact, the Senate has traditionally moved these nominations in bipartisan pairs, which is lacking here. In fact, it is contradicted by this nomination.

I think the purpose of confirming this nominee, very simply, is to deadlock the Commission and undermine the President-elect's ability to achieve the mandate the American people have given him and his administration in going forward. That may be what the giant telecommunications industry wants. It may be what the media companies hope to achieve—an FCC that is absent or neutralized, an FCC that is gridlocked and dysfunctional. I hope it is not the result of this nomination if he is confirmed, but my fear is that it will be, and if it is, this body bears a responsibility.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this nominee for the sake of those 16 million students who are now lacking in having a connection to the internet. That connectivity is essential to their lives and their educational progress. I urge this body to vote against him because he is dangerous to an agency that is supposed to be independent and above politics.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Schwartz vote begin now, some 2 minutes early.

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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Stephen Sidney Schwartz, of Virginia,

to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

#### VOTE ON SCHWARTZ NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. WICKER. Madam 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 Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 256 Ex.]

#### YEAS—49

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Paul	

#### NAYS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	

#### NOT VOTING—4

Harris	Perdue
Loeffler	Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

#### VOTE ON SIMINGTON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time is expired.

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

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

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

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 257 Ex.]

#### YEAS—49

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Braun	Hawley	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Murkowski	
Enzi	Paul	

#### NAYS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Hassan	Reed	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Harris	Perdue	Whitehouse
Loeffler	Rounds	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. INHOFE. I ask to be recognized.

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

## UAE ARMS SALES

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we have a vote coming up—it could be the end of this week—that has to do with the arms sales to the United Arab Emirates. I strongly support this; however, some of my colleagues do not support it, and there is now a joint resolution of disapproval. I would hope that we would really stop and think about that because this is a very significant thing that we are talking about.

The agreement between Israel and UAE is one of the Abraham Accords. It is a very significant one. It is one that President Trump was able to get together with the two countries, Israel and UAE, and it is really a great thing. It is a major breakthrough in the Middle East.

He has done a lot of great things, the President has. I know he is controversial, but in terms of his energy policy, the military, and the economy he has been right on target.

So anyway, Arab-Israeli peace is not unprecedented, but the agreement between Israel and the UAE has moved further and faster than any other agreements that preceded it in the past.

It seems that the UAE and Israel are finding new areas of cooperation almost every day. They are now working together on security, pandemic response, education, and even media. This partnership is deep and reflects the growing acceptance of our friend Israel in the region.

Most importantly, it did not require Israel to do anything. They didn't have to give up anything. So this is a major, major achievement. Now is the time to take advantage of the gains that we have.

President Trump has treated Israel like a friend, and other countries have rushed in to that friendship. We have several other countries in Africa and in the Middle East who are joined in with Israel that have never been there before.

The sale ensures that Israel's qualitative military edge is not affected. We know this because the Israelis themselves have said this. Moreover, this sale deepens the UAE's partnership with the United States and prevents it from turning toward China and Russia.

Now, this is the problem that we have. If we don't do this, if we don't cooperate with these countries in the Middle East, then you are going to have China and Russia out there taking advantage of it.

The UAE is worthy of this sale because it is strongly aligned with the United States in the Middle East. It is a vital counterterrorism partner. The UAE has fought alongside our troops in Afghanistan and against ISIS. They have been our friend for a long time.

It is also vital to the U.S. efforts against Iran—both Iran's ambition of regional dominance and its support for terrorist proxies.

Voting down this sale would signal to our partners that even when they do

everything that we ask—fight alongside our soldiers, pursue shared interests in the region, and make meaningful peace with Israel—the United States won't have their backs. This is not the reputation that we want to gain.

The truth is, they are reliable, and we appreciate that. We are reliable, and the United States has long stood with its partner Israel against its adversary, the Iranian regime.

This sale to the UAE is consistent with that approach. Nobody here would support it if Israel were not on board, but they are on board. What is more, they will bolster our longstanding efforts to counter Iran's nefarious regional activities.

The UAE is a strong partner that already has cutting-edge technology from our F-16 activity. They have been using that fighter aircraft for a long period of time, and this sale of the F-35 fighter jet is a continuation of that partnership.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support the sale and to oppose the joint resolution of disapproval. A vote against the resolution is a vote for peace in the Middle East. A vote for this resolution is a vote to give Iran, China, and Russia more power and influence in that region, and it would make our world less safe. It would send a message, also, around the world that we don't support our friends. It is a very significant vote to take place for the successes we have had in the Middle East, and I encourage people to oppose the resolution of disapproval.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to echo what the chairman of the Armed Services Committee said with regard to this upcoming vote. It is, actually, a very important vote, and I think that when you look at the leadership of the UAE and what they have done, we are seeing major peace agreements between our traditional Gulf Arab allies and Israel. This is really significant. This is a whole different approach to addressing some of the long-term challenges with regard to the Middle East, and it is starting to work.

I think it is imperative that this body, particularly at this time, send a message of support to countries and leaders—the UAE, in particular, given this upcoming vote—that have taken risks. Leadership sometimes requires you to take risks, and we know that the history in the Middle East is sometimes—when you have countries and leaders who take risks with regard to peace with Israel, those leaders can actually have dire consequences. Look what happened in Egypt, after that peace agreement, with their leaders.

I think it is very important that we, as a body, in a bipartisan, strong way come down in support not just of the progress that has been made in the re-

gion but also the broader strategic realignment that is happening.

Why is that happening? Because we all recognize—the United States, Israel, our traditional Gulf Arab allies, our traditional Arab allies in the region—that the biggest challenge, the biggest threat in the region is the terrorist regime in Iran, which is the biggest challenge and biggest threat to peace and security in the region.

There has been enormous progress. The President and his team deserve a lot of the credit. Rebuilding our military deserves a lot of credit, which we have all done here. But we need to send a signal that policies that have been tried before, particularly policies that appease the largest state-sponsor of terrorism in the world, don't work. The policies of strength, the policies of standing together—Israel, United States, our traditional Arab allies—that is what is working, and that is what is bringing peace.

This vote that is going to happen soon is a lot more than just a vote on weapon sales. It is a vote on this body helping to cement the reorientation in the region toward peace and toward recognizing what the challenge is.

The challenge that we all face is the biggest terrorist regime in the world, which threatens the United States, threatens Israel, threatens the UAE, and threatens Saudi Arabia. That is why we need a strong vote in the way the chairman of the Armed Services Committee just talked about. I am fully supportive of where he is, and I am hopeful that this body will vote for continued peace and strength, particularly as it relates to the terrorist regime in Iran, and not send the wrong signal to our friends and allies, particularly when historic progress—yes, it has been historic progress—is being made in the region.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

## REMEMBERING CASSIE JOHNSON

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of one of West Virginia's finest.

Patrolwoman Cassie Johnson of the Charleston Police Department represented the very best of who we are as a statewide community. She was taken from us far too soon, on December 3, 2020, at the age of 28.

Cassie was the daughter of an ironworker. She shared her mother's steely resolve and iron constitution.

Being a police officer in the city she loved and grew up in was a dream come true for Cassie. She was sworn in by Mayor Amy Goodwin in January 2019 and had previously worked as a city humane officer.

Cassie was born and raised in our State's capital. She could have gone anywhere, and she chose to stay and protect and serve the community that made her who she was.

She was truly a beautiful person in every way.