

upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the President's action.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

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 Joseph Dawson III, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Barrasso.

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 Joseph Dawson III, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina, 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 Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 269 Ex.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—39

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

NOT VOTING—5

Enzi	Harris	Perdue
Fischer	Loeffler	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 39.

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 Joseph Dawson III, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). The Senator from Iowa.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1762

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, much ink has been spilled the past few years over the threat of foreign influence in our politics. It is a topic I have spoken about many times on this floor. This issue has become highly politicized, but it requires bipartisan agreement to address.

It is increasingly clear that our adversaries will stop at nothing to influence political discourse in our country. We can all agree that there is a real need to improve our Nation's foreign influence laws. Fortunately, the Senate has a real opportunity today to finally do something about it.

In 1938, Congress passed the Foreign Agents Registration Act, referred to by the acronym "FARA." It did this in 1938 to expose Nazi propaganda and identify foreign attempts to influence policymakers and the American public. The bill was last updated in 1966. And it now requires those who lobby on behalf of foreign governments and interests to register their affiliations and activities with the Justice Department.

FARA reflects the fundamental principle that transparency brings accountability. Until recently, however, the law had been seldom used, and few on K Street paid much attention to the necessity of registering under this act if they were lobbying for a foreign country. Of course, that was not due to a lack of foreign influence efforts.

Given FARA's important transparency provisions, its lack of enforcement was shocking to me, and that is the problem that these several legislators sponsoring this legislation are trying to correct.

I first raised concerns about lackluster FARA enforcement in April 2015 when a former Clinton White House staffer and a lawyer for a Georgian political party failed to register as for-

eign agents. I also raised concerns about work for Ukrainians by Paul Manafort and the Podesta Group. I raised concerns when the firm behind the discredited Steele dossier failed to register for its lobbying work to repeal U.S. sanctions against Russia. I even subpoenaed Manafort to testify at a Judiciary Committee hearing on lax FARA enforcement. I praised Mueller for dusting off the law that had been ignored for so long.

I have conducted FARA oversight without regard to power, party, or privilege. Americans expect equal application of the law no matter which political party someone is affiliated with. I am an equal opportunity overseer. FARA ought to be better enforced and equally enforced. That is why my office worked thoroughly to expose holes in the existing FARA law and found ways to shore it up.

My bipartisan Foreign Agents Disclosure and Registration Enhancement Act is the product of years of oversight and policy work. The bill requires the Justice Department, for the first time, to craft a comprehensive FARA enforcement strategy and to release advisory opinions to promote transparency. It gives FARA investigators new tools, including civil investigative demand authority, to help identify violations.

The bill appropriately limits those in the Justice Department who can use this authority, and it provides essential due process protections. In fact, it is based on identical authorities in the False Claims Act, which I sponsored now 35 years ago, which for years has helped to root out waste, fraud, and abuse.

The bill also enhances penalties for FARA violations to deter future abuses. It requires foreign agents to immediately disclose their clients. That way, policymakers know the true sources and can make the most informed decisions.

Finally, it requires a review of the Lobbying Disclosure Act exemption to determine whether it has been abused to conceal foreign influence efforts.

Legitimate interests engaging in legitimate conduct shouldn't bear an unnecessary burden. That is why our bill strikes a real and right balance. But we must also ensure that FARA's exemptions haven't created loopholes for foreign governments to hide their true intentions.

I am pleased to have support from the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee and the chairman and vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee. We have bipartisan support on the Foreign Relations Committee, including from Senators SHAHEEN, RUBIO, MURPHY, and YOUNG, who have all worked to shine light on foreign influence, and we now have the signoff of the chairman of that committee, along with support from this administration. Groups like the Project on Government Oversight and another group that goes by the name of Issue One endorse the measure, saying

it “directly addresses structural weaknesses of FARA.”

This is a truly bipartisan bill with common ground where it is usually tough to find it. The Senate should send a clear signal today that it is serious about shining a light on foreign influence by passing this bill.

Before I make a UC request, I would like to ask one of the leaders in this area, Senator CORNYN, to make comments. Then I will make the UC request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, let me start by thanking Chairman GRASSLEY for his leadership on this. This has been a bipartisan endeavor, and we look forward to working with Senator MENENDEZ, the Senator from New Jersey, who says that he supports the spirit of what we are trying to do. I will let him speak for himself in describing it, but let me just tell you what brings me to this issue.

It is an experience we had in 2016 when we tried to pass the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act. This provided a carve-out in the doctrine of sovereign immunity that would allow Americans to sue foreign governments for financing terrorist attacks on American soil. If that sounds familiar, it is exactly what they believe happened on 9/11—that a foreign government financed a terrorist attack, taking the lives of their loved ones on 9/11.

When we tried to pass the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, I got called by a former colleague here in the Senate who happened to be representing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They were doing everything they could to prevent the passage of the bill. I know they were working the phones, trying to get anybody else they could get to object to the ultimate unanimous passage of the bill and the overruling of President Obama’s veto.

Next, we were met with not only lobbying but veterans who were enticed to come to Washington, DC, and stay at a local, pricey hotel to try to lobby Congress to make the argument that somehow this was hurtful to our veterans who had served in the military. It didn’t make any sense to me then, and it doesn’t make any sense to me now.

What I am suggesting is that our rivals around the world will use a number of creative ways to try to influence us by lobbying. That is why the Foreign Agents Registration Act that we are talking about here is so important.

We have even seen a recent report of a Chinese intelligence officer trying to influence a Member of the U.S. Congress. Fortunately, according to public reports, he got a defensive briefing, as you should under those circumstances, and was able to break off that relationship, according to published reports.

We know that the Communist Party of China is investing in things like the Confucius Institutes around our institutions of higher learning to try to in-

fluence the education of our next generation of leaders.

In other words, the Communist Party of China and other countries will stop at nothing to try to influence the policies that come out of this body and out of Congress and out of Washington, DC, and bend them in their favor.

So I am an enthusiastic supporter of what the Senator from Iowa is trying to do. I look forward to working for maybe even something better than what we are proposing right now, and I understand the Senator from New Jersey is committed to doing that.

This is a serious problem, and I will bet you there are a number of ways that foreign governments—not just China but other countries around the world—try to influence policies here in America, and we don’t even know they are doing it. Reforming the Foreign Agents Registration Act and the Lobbying Disclosure Act is so important to make sure that people have to file for full transparency when representing a foreign government.

I appreciate the leadership of my friend, the Senator from Iowa, and I look forward to working with our colleagues across the aisle to try to get this done.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have two sentences before I ask unanimous consent.

I think by passing the bill, this will give the Senate an opportunity to send a clear signal that it is serious about shining a light on foreign influence. Opposing it, in fact, would only help our foreign adversaries continue to hide what they are really doing.

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S. 1762 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, let me thank Senator GRASSLEY for his work on this issue, and I agree with him that our current foreign regime is in need of updating. I look forward to working with him and Senator CORNYN and with Senators WHITEHOUSE and SHAHEEN, who both came to speak to me about this, as well as with Chairman RISCH and the cosponsors of this legislation, on engaging in a comprehensive effort to do just that.

FARA, the Foreign Agents Registration Act, is perhaps the most critical tool we have for shining a light on foreign influence efforts in the United States. Its aim is to ensure that the public knows the source of foreign-directed efforts that are intended to influence American public opinion, policy, and laws.

I agree with the Senator that the past few years have demonstrated that

changes are sorely needed to FARA, but they also demonstrate that the statute may need more than a few tweaks.

And before we have determined exactly what the most needed reforms are, it seems shortsighted to provide additional enforcement tools before we have figured out what that regime should look like.

Indeed, adopting ad hoc changes rather than looking at more comprehensive reform could actually create more problems down the road. Many have noted that FARA’s definitions and requirements are broad and sow confusion over exactly when and under what circumstances an individual must register and report covered activities. There is no denying the nature of lobbying, influence efforts, and communication methods have dramatically changed since FARA was enacted in 1938 or even revised in 1966.

We live in a dramatically more interconnected and complex world today. Foreign influence efforts and disinformation have made their way into the top echelons of U.S. Government and this very body. It seems only prudent that we step back and examine whether there are blind spots in the current FARA regime.

There are a number of bills pending in both the House and the Senate that propose reforms to FARA. Some propose a new unit altogether for reviewing and enforcing FARA violations. Others propose additional disclosure and registration requirements, significant changes to the current FARA exemptions, or more electronic reporting. Yet none of those have been given thorough or, indeed, any consideration by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the committee of jurisdiction.

There are also a number of concerns about the current FARA regime, as well as how it has been applied, that deserve consideration. Some nonprofit organizations, for example, have raised serious concerns about how FARA could be applied to them and are seeking additional changes to this bill to ensure it is not weaponized.

And as other countries, such as Russia and Hungary, adopt their own versions of FARA laws and look to use them to crack down on civil society groups and nonprofits, we should be especially concerned about the signal that any potential weaponizing of FARA sends.

The past few years have shown how critical it is that we not adopt a patchwork approach but that we get it right.

The disturbing rise of foreign influence campaigns that use a variety of measures to mask who is the ultimate source or beneficiary should serve as an alarm bell for all of us. So before this body passes any tweaks or new tools and adds to the current patchwork of FARA regulations and exemptions, I think we should take a step back and take a comprehensive look, and we have not done that.

So, respectfully, these changes should not pass this body without careful consideration by the committee of jurisdiction. A committee markup is the appropriate vehicle for considering such changes to assess the ramifications of the changes in this bill and to see if other changes are warranted.

I stand ready and willing to work with Chairman RISCH, Senator GRASSLEY, and other colleagues to make any needed changes to FARA, but because of all of these concerns that I have, I would object today to passing this bill out of the Senate without first giving the committee the opportunity to consider it and other potential reforms.

I urge my colleagues to give us the opportunity to work through this together and ensure the Foreign Assets Registration Act is fit for the 21st century. And because of that, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Of course I am disappointed, but I know that Senator MENENDEZ is a serious legislator, and if what we have to do to do something in this area is work into the next Congress on this issue, I look forward to continuing to work for it.

The reason I am kind of disappointed is the fact that we had two Democratic bills and two Republican bills. I introduced my first bill in 2017, and it took a lot of work to put together the bill that I asked unanimous consent on, to work out the differences with several different approaches, and I thought that we had taken everything into consideration, particularly bringing together people from the Intelligence Committee and the Judiciary Committee that had interest in this legislation as well.

Maybe another reason I am disappointed out of that hard work that so many people put into this is the fact that on the part of particularly our Democratic colleagues, we have heard so much over the years, lecturing about foreign influence, and that is why I thought it would be easy to move forward today, and I am sorry it is not, but I look forward to January and starting over again and working with Senator MENENDEZ to get this job done. Hopefully, it will not take 3 years more to get something done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I look forward to working with the Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from Iowa. As I said, this is a very serious problem for the U.S. Government, and, thus, for the American people.

One of our greatest assets is also one of our greatest vulnerabilities. We are an open society. Our adversaries are not, and, thus, they use things like the internet for information warfare, whereas we see it as a valuable tool to do business, to stay in touch with our families, and to communicate with one another. Our adversaries are deter-

mined, and they are relentless, so I hope that just this little colloquy today will help alert more of our colleagues about the importance of our working together to address this. I look forward to being part of that process.

Nothing happens very quickly around this place. Sometimes you have to work on things for years to get them done.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, speaking of working hard to solve problems, my hope is that we are closing in on our ability to pass the next COVID-19 relief bill. As the Presiding Officer knows, we have been at this for a while.

It has been since March that we passed the CARES Act, and we have tried a number of times to try to pass additional relief for our small businesses and individuals, provide more resources to our frontline healthcare workers—make sure that they have the PPE, the testing and that the vaccine that is now here can be deployed in a way that as many Americans who can get the vaccine as possible will do so.

Again, we know that the intervening election has been a problem because some people saw benefits to not solving the problem, and that would somehow gain them advantage at the ballot box. And still, today, there are still disagreements over a handful of controversial provisions, but as we enter the final days of the 116th Congress, it is now time to break that stalemate.

There is no doubt in my mind that every Member of this body has a little different vision about what the next relief package should look like, but as the old saying goes, we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. The search for compromise—which is really part of our job description here—on some of the most controversial measures has left us emptyhanded, and it is time to set aside those pieces that we can't agree on and make progress on the ones we can.

First and foremost is funding for vaccine distribution that I alluded to a moment ago. Last week, the FDA approved the first COVID-19 vaccine, and the process of vaccinating our frontline healthcare workers is already underway. And there is a good chance that by this time next week, millions of doses of a second approved vaccine will be en route to hospitals across the country.

There is no question that the race to develop an effective COVID vaccine has been a success. It has really been nothing short of a miracle. Now it is critical we take additional actions to ensure the race to distribute the vaccine is successful as well.

We have been waiting and planning for a vaccine all year, but the funding Congress provided in the CARES Act to help execute the nationwide distribution project has run dry. While the cost of the vaccine itself is already covered, there are a host of other expenses that come with vaccinating tens of mil-

lions—maybe hundreds of millions—of people.

States are dipping into their other sources of funding to ensure they have the capabilities to carry out this widespread effort, but it takes specialized equipment from ultralow temperature freezers to store the vaccine, to masks and gloves and other PPE to protect those administering it, and it is easy to see that the costs add up quickly.

So the time for politicking and campaigning is over. Now is the time for us to solve this problem and ensure that this vaccine distribution program goes off without a hitch. This is the silver bullet we have been praying for and hoping for, and it would be shameful if our partisan dysfunction in Congress stood in the way of the success of Operation Warp Speed.

Second, we must support the men and women whose livelihoods have been upended by the pandemic. We all know that. We have done a lot, but we need to do more.

We didn't know in March how long this virus would last, how many lockdowns would ensue.

In April, as businesses closed doors to stop the spread of the virus, our nationwide unemployment rate skyrocketed to 14.7 percent. Tens of millions of Americans simply had no way to earn a paycheck, cover their bills, or even put food on their table. Many relied on the bolstered unemployment insurance benefits provided through the CARES Act, which helped cover bills and expenses until they were able to resume their jobs.

Fortunately, our economic engine did not remain stalled for long. That is not only due to what we have done here but what the Federal Reserve has done. And over the past several months, the unemployment rate has gradually ticked down and reached 6.7 percent in November.

I have no doubt that we will continue to rebuild our economy and put more people back to work who are eager to get back to work. But the reality is, it is going to take a while.

There are still workers with no way to earn a paycheck, and unless we take action, they are sure to face an even more dire economic strain in the days ahead. The day after Christmas—the day after Christmas—two key programs from the CARES Act expire, which will leave millions of Americans without the jobless benefits that they and their families need to survive. It would be a shame, it would be embarrassing and, frankly, just flat negligent on our part if we did not intervene to make sure that we establish a continuum of support for these folks who, through no fault of their own, find themselves without work.

These are the same people who, again, through no fault of their own, had the rug pulled out from under them earlier this year, and we can't leave them hanging. We have to help.

Third, we need to continue supporting our small businesses. Congress