

Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 72, nays 22, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 38 Ex.]

YEAS—72

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

NAYS—22

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Schatz
Blumenthal	Harris	Schumer
Booker	Heinrich	Smith
Brown	Hirono	Stabenow
Cantwell	Markey	Van Hollen
Cardin	Menendez	Wyden
Casey	Merkley	
Coons	Murray	

NOT VOTING—6

Bennet	Klobuchar	Udall
Graham	Sanders	Warren

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 72 and the nays are 22.

The motion is agreed to.

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 John Fitzgerald Kness, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat

Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

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 John Fitzgerald Kness, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 82, nays 12, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 39 Ex.]

YEAS—82

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

NAYS—12

Booker	Harris	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Stabenow
Cantwell	Markey	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

Bennet	Klobuchar	Udall
Graham	Sanders	Warren

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 82 and the nays are 12.

The motion is agreed to.

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 Philip M. Halpern, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

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 Philip M. Halpern, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, 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 South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 75, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 40 Ex.]

YEAS—75

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

NAYS—18

Baldwin	Duckworth	Merkley
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Murray
Booker	Harris	Rosen
Cantwell	Heinrich	Schatz
Casey	Hirono	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Bennet	Sanders	Warren
Graham	Tillis	
Klobuchar	Udall	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 75, the nays are 18. 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 Philip M. Halpern, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE 2020 ELECTION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor as the Democrats seem to be in complete disarray with the voting right now that is underway in New Hampshire. For all of their anger and for all of their outrage, they have failed to tap into all of the great things that I and the people of Wyoming see happening all across America. The Democratic primary voters in New Hampshire seem to be on the verge of nominating a Socialist for President of the United States. Any way you look at it, we have a strong, healthy, and growing economy, and a Socialist is now the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination for President.

Socialist policies would bankrupt our country. What is the Democrats' top priority? It seems to be a complete government takeover of healthcare in America. That means, for the 180 million Americans who get their health insurance through their jobs, each and every one of them would lose it. Also, to pay for it, taxes would go up. They would go up significantly. This would be a crushing blow to the economy.

The Democratic Party's sharp left turn has President Clinton's long-term strategist James Carville "scared to death."

On Friday, James Carville said: "We have candidates . . . talking about open borders."

He said: "They're talking about doing away with nuclear energy and fracking."

Then he added: "You've got BERNIE SANDERS talking about letting criminals and terrorists vote from jail cells."

During Friday's debate in New Hampshire—the one that was nationally broadcast—there was hardly a positive word from the Democrats about our country. Our booming economy continues to create jobs at a record pace—millions of jobs. In the last month alone, there were 225,000 new jobs. We have a 50-year low in unemployment in our country right now. It is a historical number. We have created opportunity for all Americans. Everyone is better off. Middle-class wages and blue-collar wages are way up. We have a middle-class and a blue-collar boom in this country. Americans realize it, and they have high hopes for the future.

Still, the 2020 Democrats seem to have nothing positive to say about our economy and our country—no positive ideas, no positive vision, no positive agenda for the American people. Clearly, when I listen to them, it is all about grandstanding, not about governing.

The Republicans, however, have a results-driven agenda. The economic renaissance that we are seeing is a direct result of Republican pro-growth policies. Tax and regulatory relief is what has mattered to this economy. Energy independence is what has mattered to this economy. Pro-worker and pro-farmer trade deals are what have made a difference for this economy. We remain focused on priority issues, like lowering the cost of healthcare, lowering the cost of prescription drugs, securing our border, and building and rebuilding our aging roads and bridges.

As the President said just last Tuesday night during the State of the Union Address, "The best is yet to come."

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

TAX REFORM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, since tax reform was enacted in December of 2017, our economy has grown and strengthened with American families' and businesses' seeing real benefits, and you just heard Senator BARRASSO say some of the same things about how the economy is booming.

Unemployment rates have dropped dramatically, with unemployment among Hispanic, Latino, and African-American workers at record lows. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, average hourly earnings have grown at a rate of 3 percent or higher for 16 consecutive months, with the largest wage gains being concentrated in the bottom quarter of the wage scale. We should duly note that production workers' wages are growing much faster than are the wages for the manager class. In short, lower income workers are seeing the highest wage growth.

Yet, instead of looking at the positive economic effects of tax reform, our Democratic colleagues insist that large corporations have received a massive giveaway and that only the wealthy have benefited. That is simply not true. Tax reform has addressed a number of issues that have been frequently highlighted by both political parties. In particular, tax reform has made enormous progress toward creating a more competitive environment for American companies. Before tax reform, the combined U.S. Federal and State corporate tax rate was the highest in the developed world—15 percentage points higher than the average of the other 35 advanced economies that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which we commonly refer to around here as OECD.

Over the last few years and before the tax bill, you heard of companies

going overseas. We had inversions, foreign acquisitions of U.S. companies, and the erosion of the U.S. tax base. These were all very significant problems that we addressed in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. With our worldwide tax system, companies were actually incentivized to store corporate profits in low-tax jurisdictions overseas rather than to reinvest them back here in the United States.

How can that help the U.S. economy?

We had perverse incentives to keep wealth out of this country. Ironically, even the Democrats highlighted these same issues in the lead-up to tax reform—a bipartisan recognition that we shouldn't have a tax system that encourages the storing of money overseas but rather one that brings that money and capital back to the United States to create jobs here. They are only partisan issues now, as it turns out, because tax reform was a Republican effort, but both sides of the aisle knew that these issues had to be addressed in order for U.S. companies to remain competitive and for the U.S. economy to continue leading the world.

Critics of tax reform complain that the 21-percent rate is too low, but with the average corporate tax rate of 21.7 percent among the OECD countries today, the United States is finally in line with its peers. In other words, we can be competitive.

As a result, U.S. companies are competitive, and investments in the United States are more attractive not only to foreign companies but to U.S. companies that used to store money overseas. After tax reform legislation passed in 2017, business investment rose by 6.4 percent in 2018.

While a weaker global economy, tariffs, and other factors subdued growth last year in 2019, business investment in 2018 and 2019 combined was still \$5.7 trillion, hitting record highs.

Capital expenditures of S&P 500 companies have risen by 17 percent since tax reform, and research and development expenditures of S&P 500 companies rose by 18 percent. All of this is showing that our law accomplished what we wanted it to accomplish. It is hardly, then, the anemic response to tax reform that the Democrat critics would have us believe.

Tax reform has changed our international tax rules to remove barriers that previously prevented companies from bringing foreign earnings home. In the seven quarters since enactment of tax reform, U.S. companies have brought back to the United States more than \$1 trillion of foreign earnings.

Obviously, U.S. companies are using these earnings to finance new capital expenditures, increase research and development, increase payrolls, pay down debt, and return cash to shareholders and retirement accounts. Companies are putting those earnings to work in this country, not leaving them abroad. That economic gain and the jobs created as a result of it are because of the 2017 tax cut legislation.