Suffice it to say, Lieutenant General Gibson has a tall order, but I have every confidence that she will perform her duties at the same exemplary standards she set over the course of her three-decade military career.

As Senior Intelligence Officer in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Lieutenant General Gibson supported U.S. national security objectives in Iraq, Afghanistan, East Africa, Korea, the Pacific, and across the Middle East. Since January 6, she has been working with retired Army LTG Russel Honoré on a comprehensive review of the Capitol's security.

So given her background and given what she has done recently, I know she is ready to hit the ground running. Lieutenant General Gibson is ready to go, and her responsibility to ensure a safe working environment for Senators, visitors, Capitol employees, staff, and reporters she will take with the utmost of gravity and competence.

Joining her in the Office of Sergeant at Arms will be Kelly Fado, as Deputy Sergeant, and Jennifer Hemingway, as chief of staff, two trusted members of the Senate family.

This is a historic day in a second way. This will be the first time in the history of the Senate that the leadership of the Sergeant at Arms will be comprised entirely of women—another crack in the glass ceiling. And I cannot think of a better team than the one we have put together.

Congratulations to all three of them on officially starting their new roles today. And I know, Madam President, you are proud of that as well.

It is really a good day.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, next, another aspect of why this is a good day.

Tonight, the Senate will confirm Mayor Marty Walsh of Boston to serve as Secretary of Labor. The son of Irish immigrants, Mayor Walsh followed his father's footsteps in construction and joined the Laborers' Union Local 223 at age 21, eventually serving as its president before being elected mayor of Boston.

During his testimony here in the Senate, Mayor Walsh said it was by joining a union that his parents were able to climb up into the middle class and give their son a shot at a better life.

We have something in common. My grandfather came to the United States and became very involved with the labor movement. One day when he was 14, it was raining. He was looking for shelter. It was pouring. He had almost nowhere to live. He walked into the labor temple, where he heard Eugene V. Debs and Will and Ariel Durant give the annual address at that temple established by the A.F. of L. to teach the immigrants about the union movement. So we have that in common. Our grandfathers are immigrants—one from Ireland, one from Eastern Europe, but both joined the labor movement, and it helped their family move up.

The Department of Labor is in desperate need of a leader with Mayor Walsh's perspective. For the past 4 years under President Trump and Secretary Scalia, unfortunately, sadly, the Labor Department has too often sided with corporate America, not the working people of America, which it was formed to help. Once the Senate confirms Mayor Walsh, American workers will finally have one of their own leading the Department of Labor, someone from working America who will fight for working America.

I am proud to say that once Mayor Walsh is confirmed tonight, the Senate will have confirmed all 15 of President Biden's Cabinet Secretaries.

Under extraordinary circumstances, unusual responsibilities, a later than usual runoff election, an evenly divided Chamber, an insurrection, an impeachment trial, and the passage of historic Federal relief, the Senate has still stayed on track and confirmed President Biden's Cabinet faster than both of the last two administrations. Let me say that again. With everything else going on, the Senate has confirmed President Biden's Cabinet faster than during both of the prior two administrations, one a Democrat and one a Republican. Every single member of President Biden's Cabinet has received a bipartisan vote in favor of confirmation. I anticipate that the vote in favor of Mayor Walsh will stay true to form, completing an unblemished record of bipartisan confirmations to the Cabinet.

It is a tribute to President Biden and his team that they have chosen such a fine Cabinet and a tribute to the Senators here that we have moved in such a quick fashion despite so many other responsibilities being placed on our shoulders in these early days of this Congress.

Few Cabinets in history have begun their tenures with such daunting tasks: a once-in-a-century pandemic, an economy in the doldrums, global challenges like climate change and democratic decline. Thankfully, this Senate has made sure President Biden's Cabinet is in place and on the job as quickly as possible. We will continue the personnel business this week by installing the Deputy Director at OMB, the Surgeon General, the Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Deputy Secretaries at Energy and Treasury.

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, PPP. In addition to these nominees, the Senate has another important matter of legislative business on the agenda this week: an extension of the bipartisan Paycheck Protection Program, which is set to expire at the end of the month.

Since its inception, the Paycheck Protection Program has generated more than 7.8 million loans to keep America's businesses afloat during what has been the worst economic crisis in three-quarters of a century, since the Great Depression. With the help of the American Rescue Plan, our economy is finally turning the corner, but businesses are not out of the woods yet and are likely to need assistance for another few months as the country continues to recover.

Most borrowers are currently awaiting loan approvals at the Small Business Administration, and many more are still looking to apply. Working with the Biden administration, we made important changes to the PPP program to expand eligibility and access to nonprofits, to hard-hit independent venues, and to make it easier for the smallest, most underserved businesses to get relief, particularly microbusinesses, sole proprietors, and woman-owned and minority-owned businesses.

There is no reason—no reason—to let this program expire while there are still scores of applicants in line and billions of dollars left in the program. The House already passed the extension of the program by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, 415 to 3. A bipartisan group of Senators, including Senators CARDIN and COLLINS, SHAHEEN, MARSHALL, SULLIVAN, and MURKOWSKI, support identical legislation here in the Senate.

So we are not going to end this week without passing an extension. Again, the Senate must pass another extension of the Paycheck Protection Program before the end of the week and make sure the Nation's small businesses can have access to this very vital lifeline.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Martin Joseph Walsh, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Labor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the Senate Judiciary Committee has really been in business for a few weeks now, and I think we have begun this session addressing some of the relevant issues that I expect such a committee to address.

First, of course, was the appointment of Attorney General Merrick Garland. I thank Senator GRASSLEY for his cooperation on a bipartisan basis in bringing that nominee to the floor, where he received 70 Senate votes—bipartisan support for his leadership at the Department of Justice. We continue this week with two more of President Biden's appointments to the Department of Justice: Lisa Monaco and Vanita Gupta. They will be considered by the full Judiciary Committee on Thursday.

We will continue to fill vacancies in the administration as we are sent nominees and have that opportunity, but in addition to that, we have had hearings on several relevant topics and have another one starting tomorrow.

Christopher Wray, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was called before the committee for an oversight hearing. It is the first time in more than a calendar year that the head of the FBI was actually brought to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee, a committee that has the traditional oversight responsibility for his Agency. His testimony was important and timely. He talked about the Trump-inspired mob that attacked this Capitol and the rise of domestic terrorism in the United States. He identified it as one of the major threats to security in our country, and we are considering legislation to empower him and others in the administration to address this threat.

That does not take anything away from our efforts to staunch any inspired international terrorism, but we have learned, unfortunately, that in addition to looking across the ocean for threats of terrorism, in America today, we have to look across the street. Unfortunately, there are domestic terrorism groups. We saw them on parade January 6, and they are still at their work. They must be stopped to make sure that America is safe for everyone.

That was an important hearing. We followed it up last week with the first ever Senate hearing on the Equality Act. The Equality Act, which has been passed by the House of Representatives, has been sent to the Senate for consideration. Senator MERKLEY from Oregon is the lead sponsor.

Simply put, the bill is there to end discrimination against people because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. I thought it was a very powerful hearing. Most Americans are surprised to learn that although we now recognize marriage by people of the same gender, in many States, there is no protection against discrimination for those same people. It is a gross disparity in justice in this country, and I thought our witnesses brought that point through very clearly. I hope that we can gather bipartisan support for that measure quickly and bring it to the floor. It is long overdue.

Tomorrow we are having a hearing which is, unfortunately, very timely. I announced last week that this hearing on commonsense steps to reduce gun violence in America would be held this week. On the same day I announced that hearing, a gunman murdered eight people in a string of shootings near Atlanta, GA—one man, seven women, and six of the victims were Asian Americans. He committed these murders with a gun he had bought the same day. That day, children lost their parents, husbands lost their wives, and fear of trauma reverberated across America in the Asian-American community.

I know that the Presiding Officer and I reached out to people in our home State of Illinois to assure them that we are aware of this and are going to do everything we can to stop this type of discrimination and this terrible violence that followed.

According to the Gun Violence Archive, there have been 27 mass shootings in America this month—27 mass shootings this month—with a mass shooting defined as an incident where at least 4 victims are shot. Mass shootings, of course, make the biggest headlines, but day after day, week after week, the deadly toll of gun violence grows. Last weekend, 20 people were shot in our city of Chicago, 4 of them fatally. Across the Nation, every day, we lose on average 109 American lives to gunfire—suicide, domestic violence shootings, accidental shootings, and homicides—and another 200 Americans are injured by guns each day.

The numbers are sobering, and that is why tomorrow the Senate Judiciary Committee is going to address this issue. The subcommittee chairman, DICK BLUMENTHAL from Connecticut, will take over the full committee hearing after I make some opening remarks. I know he has a special feeling for this issue because of the tragedy in Newtown, CT, just a few years ago when a gunman went in and killed so many innocent children and their teachers at a grade school. It was one horrible event. It was an event that was so horrible, many of us said: That can make the difference. Politically, that is going to change America. It is going to result in things happening finally—commonsense, constitutional gun safety measures that will keep guns out of the hands of people who would misuse them.

Well, I would have lost that bet. Many others would have, too, because we failed to respond in a timely fashion. What stopped us from passing a bill in the U.S. Senate for background checks to make sure that convicted felons did not purchase guns legally in America and would be stopped because of roadblocks we put in their paths and that people who were mentally unstable would not have access to guns which they could use to hurt innocent people, as we have seen over and over again—what stopped that from happening? A rule in the U.S. Senate. It is called the filibuster, and what it says is, it takes more than a majority for the overwhelming majority of the American people to see gun safety in America. It takes 60 votes in a Senate evenly divided 50–50.

Well, we are hoping—we are just hoping—that maybe there is a sentiment, a bipartisan sentiment, that could reach 60 votes on thoughtful, commonsense gun control that will really say to people: Yes, you have your Second Amendment right to own a gun legally, responsibly, and to store it safely. You can use it for sporting, target practice, and self-defense if you wish. But we want to make certain that we eliminate as much as possible those who would misuse those firearms.

It is interesting. The overwhelming majority of firearm owners across the Nation believe that same thing. They don't argue with the premise that they want guns to be in the hands of people who will use them responsibly. Yet, despite this overwhelming majority sentiment, we can't get the bill through the U.S. Senate for the very reason I mentioned, the filibuster.

So when Senator MCCONNELL comes to the floor each day to defend the filibuster, the basic question you have to ask him is, If the Senate can work with the filibuster, show us. Show us. Show us that if we bring 45 or 50 votes to the floor, there are 10 Republicans who will join us and work with us to pass important legislation. That wouldn't be the only thing. There would be many other things.

I have heard speeches on the floor by so many Republicans about the situation on our southern border with immigration, and it truly is a challenge. I work on it because it is the matter that I have paid a lot of attention to in my career but also because it is subject matter in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Why is it that we have not addressed immigration reform in the United States? The filibuster, that is the reason. The filibuster has stopped us from passing measures like the Dream Act.

I introduced the Dream Act 20 years ago to say, if you are brought here to the United States as a child, raised in this country, you ought to have a path to legalization and citizenship so you can stay in the country you call home—a simple premise overwhelmingly supported by the American people.

Five times I brought the Dream Act to the floor of the Senate for passage: Let's make this a law. Five times it failed. Why? The filibuster rule. Each time I had a majority but not the necessary 60 votes. That is another example of where the filibuster has stepped in and stopped a majority of the Senate from passing a measure which was