

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on a completely different matter, yesterday, under oath, General McKenzie and General Milley both confirmed they also agreed with the commander on the ground. They agreed we should keep 2,500 troops in Afghanistan. These top generals gave President Biden exactly the advice the President told the American people he had not received.

To be very clear, the Commander in Chief gets to make the final decision, no matter what the advisers suggest. But he needs to own his decision.

The President publicly misstating what advice he got from his top generals is corrosive to the civil-military dynamic that keeps America safe.

The military did their job. They gave their best military advice. It was rejected. So they saluted and executed the order of the Commander in Chief. That is the way it is supposed to work. But having rejected their advice, the President doesn't get to claim he never received it, nor does he get to claim, as he has since tried to pretend, that the only alternative to his botched retreat was sending 10,000 soldiers back to Afghanistan.

That is a false choice. We have heard directly from the two senior military officers in the chain of command, as well as the President's principal military adviser, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Everyone with an ounce of common sense knows President Biden's botched retreat was not the extraordinary success the President claimed. As General Milley acknowledged, it is more accurate to describe the withdrawal as a strategic failure.

We have now heard confirmation from our top military officers that the terrorist threat in Afghanistan is already growing. And relying on over-the-horizon counterterrorism leaves us with much less ability to do anything at all about it.

What a debacle. We face a greater terrorist threat from Afghanistan than we did before we withdrew, we have less intelligence about that growing threat, and we have fewer tools with which to combat it. This administration gave our enemies in Afghanistan everything they wanted and got less than nothing in return.

So, Mr. President, I know some of my colleagues want to unilaterally declare an end to the War on Terrorism. Ah, if only it were that easy. But the terrorists aren't through with us.

I hope my Democratic colleagues will think twice before they compound the failures in Afghanistan by trying to narrow or repeal the 2001 authorization for the use of military force. I, for one, will strenuously oppose any further efforts by the Democratic administration or this Democratic Congress to take away any more tools or authorities that our military servicemembers and intelligence professionals need to keep our country safe from our enemies.

At some point we will have a different administration that will better

understand how to protect America for the long term. At this rate, they will need all the tools they can possibly get.

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 and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jessica Lewis, of Ohio, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON LEWIS NOMINATION

Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lewis nomination?

Mr. SASSE. I request 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The result was announced—yeas 70, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 390 Ex.]

YEAS—70

Baldwin	Hagerty	Padilla
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Portman
Booker	Hickenlooper	Reed
Brown	Hirono	Risch
Burr	Inhofe	Romney
Cantwell	Kaine	Rosen
Capito	Kelly	Rounds
Cardin	King	Rubio
Carper	Klobuchar	Sanders
Casey	Leahy	Schatz
Collins	Lee	Schumer
Coons	Lujan	Shaheen
Cornyn	Manchin	Sinema
Cortez Masto	Markey	Smith
Cramer	McConnell	Stabenow
Duckworth	Menendez	Tester
Durbin	Merkley	Tillis
Feinstein	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Fischer	Murphy	Warner
Gillibrand	Murray	
Graham	Ossoff	

Warnock	Whitehouse	Wyden
Warren	Wicker	Young

NAYS—27

Barrasso	Grassley	Paul
Blackburn	Hawley	Sasse
Boozman	Hoeben	Scott (FL)
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Lankford	Thune
Daines	Lummis	Toomey
Ernst	Marshall	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—3

Blunt	Crapo	Moran
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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 action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert T. Anderson, of Washington, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, in a few moments, I am going to make a unanimous consent request in regard to Dilawar Syed to be the Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Let me give you a little bit of background on Mr. Syed's nomination and why I am using this unusual process to advance the nomination to the floor for floor consideration.

We all know the tremendous need at the Small Business Administration as a result of COVID-19. We worked together, Democrats and Republicans, and created many new programs to help small businesses. We created the Paycheck Protection Program, both the first—and we modified it—and then a second round. We created the Economic Injury Disaster Loan and Loan Advance Program and the Targeted Grant Program.

We provided for the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program, we established the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and the list goes on and on and on. All this created new programs and responsibilities for the Small Business Administration. And we did this together, Democrats and Republicans, in order to advance the needs for small businesses during COVID-19.

Over \$1 trillion of funds were administered by the Small Business Administration as a result of our initiatives. And our constituents had tremendous needs. Tens of millions of small businesses have benefited from what we did to help them through COVID-19.

I know that every one of our offices has gotten numerous inquiries from small businesses as to how these programs were stood up, whether they could qualify, concerns about their applications being filed promptly, the

lack of funds, the need to replenish funds—the list goes on and on and on. That put tremendous demand on the Small Business Administration, and we were pretty tough on the Small Business Administration to get these programs up and running because we knew how desperate it was for our small business community.

Now, the Deputy Administrator's job is to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Agency. That is the position we are talking about for Mr. Syed—the Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Over 5 months ago, the Small Business Committee, under my leadership as chair, had a hearing on Mr. Syed's appointment, and we discovered during that nomination process that he is extremely well qualified to assume these responsibilities. He has spent decades building and developing and scaling successful small businesses, as well as his advocacy for underserved small businesses.

The hearing, I thought, went extremely well and that we would have no difficulty advancing his nomination to the floor of the U.S. Senate. But after his hearing, my Republican colleagues requested information from the Small Business Administration about his loans that he took out as a small business owner. It was a reasonable request. On June 8, I helped arrange to supply that information to the members of the committee, and they reviewed his small business loan applications, Mr. Syed's small business applications.

There was one thing that was pretty unusual about that in that even though he was qualified to receive forgivable 7(a) loans under the Paycheck Protection Program, he decided to repay the loans because he said he didn't need the government to pay on a forgivable loan. He took exemplary action, and after the review, I believe all my colleagues were satisfied that his arrangements with the SBA were exemplary.

Next, the Republicans decided to move to a different target. They accused Mr. Syed of being anti-Israel biased, which was completely, completely unfounded.

The American Jewish Committee wrote our committee to say:

The unsupported accusations that somehow Jewish businesses or those with ties to Israel may not fare as well under Syed's leadership in the Small Business Administration has no factual grounding. Indeed, he has specifically disavowed support for the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, which seeks the dissolution of Israel. . . . AJC rejects the charge.

They go on to say it is un-American, the charges that have been made, and I agree.

My colleagues had the right to ask questions for the record, and they did. Mr. Syed responded to those questions for the record, again repeating the fact that he has been against the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement and that he has worked with companies in Israel and, in fact, visited Israel in order to promote the relationships.

Again, we thought, now, at last, we will be able to move Mr. Syed's nomination. But now the Republicans found a new reason to block his nomination. Committee Republicans announced that they would withhold a quorum on the vote because Planned Parenthood affiliates received loans under the Paycheck Protection Program.

As one of the negotiators of the CARES Act—and this was Democrats and Republicans again working together; negotiated this with Senator RUBIO, Senator COLLINS, and Senator SHAHEEN. Let me explain to my colleagues how nonprofits are treated under the Paycheck Protection Program.

When the SBA considers whether or not a business qualifies as a small business, it considers affiliation. Generally, affiliations exist when one business controls or has the power to control another or when a third party controls or has the power to control both businesses. Control may arise with ownership, management, or other relationships or interactions between the parties.

The CARES Act requires that nonprofits eligible for PPP loans abide by the same affiliation rules that are applicable to small businesses.

The fact is that the Planned Parenthood Federation of America does not exercise control over its member organizations because it does not have common management. Each member organization is its own independent, not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization with its own independent board of directors that is solely responsible for the hiring and retention of its CEO. Planned Parenthood Federation does not have the power to remove CEOs or directors of its individual member organizations.

This type of federated structure is common in the nonprofit world and is the reason why nonprofits such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs also qualify for PPP loans.

The SBA must apply its affiliation rules in a uniform way, and it is wrong to ask the SBA to do otherwise for political or ideological reasons. There is no reason why Planned Parenthood should be singled out for receiving PPP loans, which I must remind my colleagues were created to help keep Americans in their jobs during the pandemic. That is the reason for it. That is why we included nonprofits.

The partisan, unnecessary, and unconscionable inaction of our Republican colleagues shows no concern for the millions of small businesses still relying on SBA support to survive COVID-19 and rebuild their future and that would benefit greatly by having a confirmed Deputy Administrator to work on the day-to-day operations at the SBA.

One last point, if I might. The Small Business Committee reported out Mr. Syed's nomination by a bipartisan vote, but due to a technicality, another vote was required, and the Republican

members at this time decided to block the quorum.

As a matter of fairness, as a matter of the needs of the small business community in our States, as a matter of the integrity of this body to have a process that has some degree of respect for the nominees who go through the nomination process, I am going to make a UC request that the nomination be put on our calendar, like any other reported nominee, subject to the action of this body.

Before I make that unanimous consent request, with Senator PAUL's indulgence, I know that Senator PADILLA would like to make a comment. If he would be willing to allow Senator PADILLA to speak next, and then I will make my unanimous consent request.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I want to join Chairman CARDIN in calling attention to the unacceptable obstruction by our Republican colleagues who are doing nothing other than playing political games with the confirmation process.

Dilawar Syed is an outstanding and highly qualified nominee to serve as Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration. Mr. Syed brings decades of experience as a business leader and entrepreneur in a number of fields. He is a dedicated public servant who helped guide President Obama's support of Asian-American small business owners in the wake of the great recession, and he has served as the founding chair of the California Entrepreneurship Task Force.

He has earned support from business groups and on both sides of the aisle. Notably, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce enthusiastically announced their support for his nomination, citing his very impressive background.

In June of this year, two of our Republican colleagues joined the Democratic members of the Small Business Committee and voted to send Mr. Syed's nomination to the full Senate for confirmation. But, today, Republicans are refusing to allow the Senate to vote on his nomination. In so doing, they are also obstructing the work of the SBA itself—work that has never been more critical.

As the U.S. Chamber of Commerce wrote back in April, "It is essential for SBA's senior leadership team to be in place to deliver on the agency's COVID-19 small business emergency relief responsibilities." Again, critical.

Mr. Syed is ready to serve with dedication and skill as the SBA pursues its mission of supporting economic growth for entrepreneurs and working families. He is also ready to make history as the highest ranking Muslim official in any Presidential administration, and our Nation's hard-working small business owners urgently need his leadership.

My Republican colleagues who are playing these political games to obstruct this nomination are also blocking resources needed by their own constituents.

Let's end this, and I urge the Senate to swiftly confirm Mr. Syed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be discharged from further consideration of PN231, the nomination of Dilawar Syed to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration; that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to its consideration; that there be 1 hour for debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this motion is an attempt to get around the ruling that the SBA has that Planned Parenthood is, indeed, a small business. This would allow illegal funding of Planned Parenthood affiliates through the Paycheck Protection Program.

Let's be very clear. Planned Parenthood is not a small business; Planned Parenthood is a big business. This is not my allegation; this is a ruling from the Small Business Administration. The Small Business Administration ruled in May of 2020 that Planned Parenthood was a big business, not a small business, and ineligible for the PPP program. The program was intended for small businesses. The current ruling from the Small Business Administration is, they are ineligible because they are a big business.

This program was intended to support small businesses across the country that were forced to lock down during COVID-19. However, the Small Business Administration, despite having previously ruled that they were ineligible, that they were a big business, has now unlawfully approved nearly \$100 million in taxpayer funds to Planned Parenthood. On June 30 alone, the Small Business Administration approved four new loans to Planned Parenthood despite a clear determination by the Small Business Administration that these entities are ineligible. So we have a great contradiction here. They say they are ineligible. That is the existing rule from the Small Business Administration. Yet they are still giving them money.

This nomination is for the position of Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration, which is re-

sponsible for the Agency's day-to-day operations and involved in all policy decisions, including the PPP program.

The Biden administration has continued to obstruct congressional oversight of the illegal Planned Parenthood loans, and the nominee has refused to provide to the committee a commitment that he would take action to recover the funds that are being disbursed illegally.

The Republican members of the Small Business Committee have continued to make it clear that we will not allow a vote on this nominee to occur until the Small Business Administration takes action to recover the illegally disbursed funds to the big business known as Planned Parenthood.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA).

Objection is heard.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, let me just repeat a comment. I know Senator HIRONO is on the floor, and I want to give her an opportunity to speak on this, but let me make this clear.

The affiliate rules that are used by the Small Business Administration are exactly the same for a for-profit or a nonprofit, and there are lots of small businesses that have a big name next to them that are eligible for the programs under the Small Business Administration before COVID-19 and after COVID-19. The affiliation rules have been in the SBA for a long time, and I read them into the RECORD earlier in my comments.

What they cannot do is pick and choose who they like and don't like. That is not how you administer a program.

So, in the nonprofit world, I gave the example of the YMCAs—a pretty big name but, the truth of the matter is, they are all independently operated, and the national YMCA cannot discharge the CEO of a local YMCA. So we judge the qualifications based upon the local activities. The same is true for a lot of affiliates on for-profit companies: big chains that are independently owned and not controlled. They can qualify for these funds.

I can tell you a lot of organizations that are related in the faith community to an umbrella, but they are not controlled, so, therefore, the affiliate rules allow them to apply independently for these funds as long as they can qualify.

We knew that developing this program. We didn't want to change the affiliate rules because that would have been wrong.

So what my colleague is requesting is just—would be illegal for the administration to say that we are not going to select a particular group because we don't particularly agree with what they are doing or how they operate. That is not how the rules work. That is not what you are allowed to do.

So I regret that my colleague has raised these objections. I think it di-

minishes our credibility to tell our administrators to administer these programs fairly for all constituencies. And to deny Small Businesses of America a confirmed Deputy Administrator during these extremely challenging times for small businesses does not hurt Mr. Syed; it hurts the small business community.

I thank Mr. Syed for his willingness to serve, and I hope we can find a path forward because this debate has nothing to do with his qualifications or why he should be confirmed.

With that, I will yield the floor.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of Dilawar Syed's nomination to serve as Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

I have a letter of support from the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus that I would ask unanimous consent to have printed into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021.

Hon. BEN CARDIN,

Hon. RAND PAUL,

U.S. Senate, Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR CARDIN AND RANKING MEMBER PAUL: As members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), which is comprised of 76 members of Congress, we write to strongly endorse the swift confirmation of Dilawar Syed, who has been nominated to serve as Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). He has decades of experience in business, entrepreneurship, and public service, making him extremely well-qualified for this position.

AAPI small businesses have been especially hard hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, according to a report by the New York Federal Reserve, the Asian American community not only experienced the largest drop in entrepreneurship during the pandemic, but while other communities of color saw a rebound in entrepreneurship as the pandemic continued, that rebound had yet to happen for AAPIs. Mr. Syed has a long history working with all communities, but has particularly strong ties to the AAPI community, having served as a Commissioner on the White House Commission on AAPIs. At this pivotal moment for AAPI small businesses, having Mr. Syed's background represented at SBA is critical.

Mr. Syed, an immigrant who has embodied the values of hard work and ingenuity, has built and scaled businesses with major impacts in technology, healthcare, and business services. He has shown incredible prowess as an entrepreneur in business growth and development. For example, as President of Freshworks, a customer service software company, Mr. Syed grew the company from a few dozen customers to thousands of small and medium businesses across the U.S. During his tenure as Commissioner on the White House Commission on AAPIs, Mr. Syed actively worked to connect entrepreneurs in underserved regions to the SBA and Department of Commerce. From serving as the founding chair of the California Entrepreneurship Task Force to spearheading rapid response engagement during the COVID-19

pandemic with the state's most vulnerable small businesses to increase awareness of critical programs like the SBA's Paycheck Protection Program, Mr. Syed has consistently helped empower and uplift our nation's small businesses.

Mr. Syed's nomination has the support of more than 150 civic, government, higher education and business leaders and organizations, including endorsements from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Black Chambers, National Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship, Small Business Roundtable, Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, and many others. Upon confirmation, Mr. Syed would become the highest-ranking Muslim American in the Biden administration to date, as well as one of the highest-ranking AAPIs.

However, we are disappointed to see the treatment Mr. Syed has received from those on the Committee that have held up his confirmation vote, based on false accusations, anti-Muslim sentiment, and efforts to hamstring Committee business unless specific conditions on unrelated matters are met. Since June 16, the Committee has made three different attempts to consider Mr. Syed's nomination, but each time certain members have challenged the proceedings or blocked them from moving forward. On two separate occasions, these members even boycotted the proceedings—denying Mr. Syed fair consideration. Targeting nominees like Mr. Syed for their faith, ethnicity, or place of birth, furthers the perpetual foreigner stereotype to which AAPIs are constantly subjected. We stand firmly against the use of these typecasting misconceptions. These tactics have been rejected by leading civil rights and faith-based organizations and have no place in our government or our nation. There is no question that Mr. Syed is uniquely well suited and highly qualified for this role, and small business owners and entrepreneurs across the country deserve this standard of leadership at SBA. Continuing to block his nomination is a disservice to these business owners and entrepreneurs.

The Deputy Administrator role has traditionally been focused on managing execution of SBA's programmatic mission and day-to-day operations, which includes bringing desperately needed relief to struggling small businesses and entrepreneurs across the nation. This position has been left vacant for over three years and continuing to do so prevents the agency from having a fully staffed senior leadership team at a time when the SBA's importance in our nation's economic recovery is at an all-time high.

Mr. Syed's impressive background both in public service and the private sector in business and entrepreneurship along with his leadership in the AAPI community will undoubtedly be assets in his role as SBA's Deputy Administrator. We are confident that Dilawar Syed is the perfect fit for this role and we urge the Committee to promptly move forward with his confirmation.

Sincerely,

Judy Chu, Member of Congress, CAPAC Chair; Grace Meng, Member of Congress, CAPAC First Vice-Chair; Kaiiali'i Kahele, Member of Congress, CAPAC Freshman Representative; Mazie K. Hirono, U.S. Senator; Mark Takano, Member of Congress, CAPAC Second Vice-Chair; Ami Bera, M.D., Member of Congress; Tammy Duckworth, U.S. Senator; Ted W. Lieu, Member of Congress, CAPAC Whip; Al Green, Member of Congress; Pramila Jayapal, Member of Congress; Jan Schakowsky, Member of Congress; Ro Khanna, Member of Congress; Dina Titus, Member of Congress; Barbara Lee, Member of Congress; Norma Torres, Member of Congress.

Ms. HIRONO. In the midst of the pandemic, what is normally a very bipartisan small business committee, Republicans are blocking Mr. Syed's nomination. This is particularly egregious behavior by Republicans on the committee because Mr. Syed is exceptionally qualified to hold this position and is widely supported by business groups and communities across the country.

In fact, let me read a paragraph from the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus letter that I just mentioned.

I am reading from the letter:

Mr. Syed's nomination has the support of more than 150 civic, government, higher education and business leaders and organizations, including endorsements from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Black Chambers, National Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship, Small Business Roundtable, Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, and many others. Upon confirmation, Mr. Syed would become the highest ranking Muslim American in the Biden administration to date, as well as one of the highest ranking AAPIs.

Republicans have continued to block this nomination for months. Earlier this summer, they disputed the results of a meeting the committee had to advance the nomination. Since then, they have refused to show up for three other meetings, including one we held last week, denying the necessary quorum for a vote to be taken.

The reasons for blocking Mr. Syed's nomination have changed over time. First, they were concerned about SBA loans his company received during the pandemic, even though these loans were lawful and fully repaid before he was nominated. Then they insinuated he was somehow anti-Jewish and anti-Israel—note the groups that I read that have supported him—despite his widespread support in these communities. And now, they are concerned about lawful SBA loans to Planned Parenthood Health Centers, something that Mr. Syed certainly had no control over.

Throughout the last several months, Mr. Syed has repeatedly made himself available to address any concerns my colleagues might have about his background or qualifications, things that clearly matter in his ability to do the job.

It boggles the mind that Republicans are blocking someone who is the very picture of the American dream: an entrepreneur, a job creator who was born in Pakistan and educated in America, who understands firsthand the challenges businesses have faced during this pandemic. Mr. Syed would be an asset to SBA and the businesses they serve, our own constituents.

Every day that Republicans continue their obstruction, they are doing a disservice to these businesses who can least afford this uncertainty and turmoil in this moment.

Mr. Syed deserves fair consideration.

Republican efforts to block not just this nomination but so many others for the simple reason that they want to

slow the process so that this administration can have people in place who can actually do the job to help the American people—enough is enough.

I just say to the Republicans: You know, put your votes where your mouths are. You say you support small businesses; you say you support this, that, and the other thing; and yet you will not let this administration get on with their job to do what is necessary to help small businesses, to help our communities, in the midst of an ongoing pandemic. It boggles the mind. I say: Act like the Senators you are, who were sent here to do your job, and let's get on with this nomination.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Let me thank Senator HIRONO for her comments, and I also thank Senator PADILLA for his comments.

I have never gone through something like this before, where the Republicans are breaking a quorum after they have already voted a nominee for reasons unrelated to the nominee. It makes no sense, and the reasons that they are using makes no sense at all, since they are asking the SBA to violate the law.

We are going to continue. As chair of the committee, I am going to continue to look at every conceivable way that we can get Mr. Syed confirmed. I think he is an extraordinary person who will serve our Nation with great distinction, and I know our small business community needs a confirmed Deputy Administrator.

You know, what surprises me is that our Republican colleagues talk about their support for small businesses, and I said we worked on COVID together to create these programs. President Trump never filled the position of Deputy Administrator so this position has been vacant for a long time.

We need this position. The small business community needs this position. So it is my hope that we will find a path forward as quickly as possible to get this nomination confirmed. I am confident that we will get a strong bipartisan vote for Mr. Syed's nomination and confirmation. Republicans tell me they think he is well qualified.

So let's stop using these parliamentary procedures to obstruct. Let's get on with the business of the Senate.

I would suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday's Senate Armed Services Committee hearing gave us disturbing new information on the President's Afghanistan debacle. Thanks to yesterday's