

Julie rapidly won the admiration, affection, and trust of the men and women under the Secretary's umbrella. She has championed the professionals who make this place go. She empowered them. She stuck up for them and made sure they were properly insulated from political pressure.

Everyone knows Julie puts this institution and its rules first. Staff trust her. Senators on both sides trust her. Leaders across other branches of government trust her. She plays everything down the middle with total integrity.

And amid all of this, she maintained the generous spirit that everyone admires. Whether she is delivering official Senate correspondence to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or the Secretary of State or checking in with a Senate employee on a birthday or during a tough personal time, everyone gets the same friendly "hello" and sincere kindness from Julie Adams.

Alas, it is customary to have a new Secretary of the Senate when there is a change in party control. Tomorrow is Julie's last day. I am really, really sorry to say good-bye to such a key player.

So on behalf of the whole Senate, I want to thank Julie's proud parents, Dr. Harold and Leah Adams; her siblings, John and Jessica; and her beloved canine companion Maggie for sharing this great friend and essential colleague with us for many years.

Julie, you made your family proud, you made me proud, and, most importantly, you have been a great credit to this institution. Thank you, sincerely, for your service.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

#### AGRICULTURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on Tuesday, the Senate confirmed Tom Vilsack as the Secretary of Agriculture. It is a role he is familiar with, having previously served as Agriculture Secretary under President Obama. I voted in support of his nomination because I believe he understands the issues facing farmers and ranchers and is sincere in his desire to work with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to support our Nation's agriculture producers.

Agriculture is the lifeblood of my home State of South Dakota, and fighting for farmers and ranchers is one of my top priorities here in the Senate. I am very pleased to, once again, serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee in this Congress, which gives me an important platform to advocate for South Dakota farmers and

ranchers and farmers and ranchers across the country.

One huge priority for me over the past year has been making sure agriculture producers have the support they need to weather this pandemic. During debate on the CARES Act—our largest coronavirus relief bill to date—I fought to make sure we included relief for farmers and ranchers, and I followed up by advocating for cattle producers with the Department of Agriculture to make sure they would receive funds.

I also worked to ensure that additional relief for farmers and ranchers was included in the COVID legislation that we passed in December. The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program that the USDA established to distribute funding, included in the CARES Act, has distributed billions in direct support to agriculture producers, which has been key in helping them weather this pandemic.

Now that Secretary Vilsack has been confirmed, I urge him to lift the Biden administration's freeze on part of this important program and distribute the additional funding from the December relief package as soon as possible. I also urge the Department of Agriculture to use its authority to provide assistance to agriculture processors like the biofuels industry.

During my meeting with Secretary Vilsack prior to his confirmation, we spent time discussing my Soil Health and Income Protection Program, which became law as part of the 2018 farm bill. That program, the SHIPP program, allows farmers to take their lowest performing croplands out of production for 3 to 5 years. This benefits the environment by increasing soil health and water quality, and it benefits farmers by providing them with a rental payment for the acres they have temporarily removed from production.

I will continue to urge Secretary Vilsack to expand farmers' access to SHIPP by holding another signup this year. I will also continue to urge him to address another priority I brought up in our meeting, and that is the November 1 haying and grazing date for cover crops on prevented plant acres, which is too late in the year for farmers in more northern States like South Dakota.

As I said, one of my top priorities has been making sure farmers and ranchers have the support they need during the pandemic. When it became clear that farmers and ranchers were largely missing out on the Paycheck Protection Program that Congress had set up to help small businesses weather the pandemic, Senator BALDWIN and I introduced legislation to allow more farmers and ranchers to access the program by allowing them to use their gross incomes rather than their net incomes to determine their loan awards. Our Paycheck Protection for Producers Act became law as part of the coronavirus relief bill that Congress passed in December.

Senator BALDWIN and I have continued to engage with the Treasury Department and the Small Business Administration to ensure that the Paycheck Protection Program is working properly for farmers and ranchers. For example, we recently led a bipartisan letter urging a broader implementation of our Paycheck Protection for Producers Act to ensure that farmers and ranchers who are organized as partnerships or limited liability companies are allowed to apply for Paycheck Protection Program loans by using this more favorable gross income formula, as was intended.

These issues are front of mind for agriculture producers in my State, and, last week, I had the opportunity to discuss many of them in person with representatives of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association, which represents and advocates for corn farmers in South Dakota. Another thing we spent a lot of time talking about was biofuels. In addition to helping to feed our Nation, corn and soybean farmers provide essential feedstocks for biofuels, like ethanol and biodiesel, which provide an important source of cleaner energy. I have long been an advocate for biofuels for their clean energy potential and the benefits they offer to the agriculture industry.

When I met with Secretary Vilsack, he committed to working with me to promote ethanol as a form of clean energy—a commitment he echoed at his confirmation hearing.

I recently introduced two bipartisan pieces of legislation to support the increased use of biofuels and emphasize their clean energy potential. The Adopt GREET Act, which I introduced with Senator KLOBUCHAR, would require the Environmental Protection Agency to update its greenhouse gas modeling for ethanol and biodiesel by using the U.S. Department of Energy's GREET model. A recent Harvard study found that ethanol is 46 percent cleaner than gasoline, with some technologies reducing life-cycle emissions by as much as 61 percent. These findings underscore how biofuels can reduce emissions in the near term using our Nation's existing vehicles. Currently, however, the EPA's modeling does not fully recognize the tremendous emissions-reducing potential of ethanol and other biofuels. The Adopt GREET Act would fix this problem and pave the way for increased biofuel use both here and abroad.

I also introduced a bill to advance long-stalled biofuel registrations with the EPA. Regulatory inaction has stifled the advancement of promising technologies, like ethanol derived from corn kernel fiber, even though some of these fuels are already being safely used in States like California. My bill would speed up the approval process for these innovative biofuels. This would allow biofuel producers to capitalize on the research and facility investments they have made and improve their operating margins while further lowering

emissions and helping our Nation's corn and soybean producers by reinforcing this essential market.

The pandemic has highlighted vulnerabilities in our Nation's food supply chain, especially when it comes to meat processing capacity. Too much of our Nation's processing capacity is concentrated in a handful of facilities, leaving our meat supply vulnerable if a problem like a coronavirus outbreak occurs at one of these plants.

I recently introduced the Strengthening Local Processing Act with Senator MERKLEY. Our legislation would help expand national meat processing capacity by providing new resources for smaller, more local meat processing operations. Spreading out and expanding our Nation's meat processing capacity over more plants will make our Nation's meat supply less vulnerable to interruption in situations like the coronavirus pandemic or natural disasters and provide livestock producers with more marketing options.

I am proud to represent South Dakota's farmers and ranchers here in Congress, and I will continue to do everything I can to ensure that all of our Nation's farmers and ranchers have the support they need to weather the rest of this pandemic and to continue feeding our Nation and the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

#### NOMINATION OF JENNIFER MULHERN GRANHOLM

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I am proud to stand today in support of Jennifer Granholm's nomination to be the next Secretary of Energy.

I have known Secretary-designate Granholm for many years, and I served in her administration while she was Governor. There is no question she is uniquely qualified to serve as Secretary of Energy. As the Governor of Michigan, she led our State through an economic crisis. She knows how to deal with multifaceted challenges and has a documented record of strong leadership.

During her confirmation hearing, Jennifer Granholm outlined three key missions that she wants to prioritize in her new role: one, strengthening national security, particularly on nuclear nonproliferation through the National Nuclear Security Administration; two, supporting the research and development at scientific research facilities all across our Nation; and, three, utilizing that research to create new, good-paying jobs for Americans. All of these issues are issues that Jennifer Granholm has been focused on throughout her entire career.

As Governor, she worked to support groundbreaking research that is conducted at Michigan's world-class institutions—research that is constantly leading to new discoveries that will change the world to create jobs and save lives. As Governor, Jennifer

Granholm secured bipartisan support to establish the 21st Century Jobs Fund, which leveraged funding to diversify Michigan's economy, create jobs in clean energy by attracting new business investments, and put Michigan on a better path.

Those are the kinds of actions and investments that I look forward to working closely with Secretary-designate Granholm on in the coming months and in the coming years, and it is clear that she also recognizes what must be done to advance our Nation's energy interests, because she has already achieved results in Michigan.

If we are going to build back better, we must do so in a sustainable, forward-thinking way that addresses climate change. That is something President Biden's administration is committed to doing, and I know Secretary Granholm is as well. I could not be more excited to say that we will have a fellow Michigander leading the Department of Energy, and I urge all of my colleagues to support her confirmation.

I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Jennifer Mulhern Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from West Virginia and I both be allowed to complete our remarks before moving to the rollcall vote.

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

#### NOMINATION OF JENNIFER MULHERN GRANHOLM

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, when Governor Granholm came before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee for her nomination hearing, she said she was committed to American energy dominance. She stated she understood the importance of having a broad energy mix and supporting energy innovation.

Now, I asked her if it was a good thing that the United States is the world's leading producer of oil and natural gas, and she said it was. I asked her if low energy prices and high-paying American energy jobs were good things, and she agreed that they were. And when I asked her if America exporting its energy influence around the globe was a good thing, she again affirmed that it was. She has demonstrated that she is dedicated to supporting carbon capture, nuclear power, and American uranium production.

For these reasons, she cleared our committee with broad bipartisan support and will soon be confirmed by the Senate. I expect we will work together

closely on these efforts when she leads the Department of Energy.

During her nomination hearing, Governor Granholm also said that she didn't want to see anyone lose their job or get left behind. Yet this is exactly what the Biden administration is doing to thousands of American energy workers.

On Inauguration Day, the President spoke of unity and bringing our Nation back together. Once he arrived at the White House, however, he threw that rhetoric out the window, picked up his pen, and started signing radical Executive orders.

His orders to ban oil, gas, and coal leasing on Federal lands and to kill the Keystone XL Pipeline will throw thousands of Americans out of work. These workers' livelihoods are being sacrificed in the name of the Biden agenda. Leaders in the administration are telling these oil rig and coal mine and pipeline workers that they can simply get new jobs building solar panels.

Actually, John Kerry said that the Biden administration policies will give these workers better choices. In 2019, the average salary of a solar panel technician was about \$30,000 a year less than the average salary of a worker in the gas, oil, and coal industry. So John Kerry flies around the world, private jet, but is asking American energy workers to each take \$30,000 a year less in income. And that is if these green energy jobs even exist.

To that point, the Washington Post Fact Checker took a look at what John Kerry had said, and they said he was offering "false hope with a misleading use of statistics."

Look, we have heard it all before. When President Biden was Vice President, the Obama administration promised thousands of green energy jobs—jobs that never materialized. Millions of taxpayer dollars were wasted on green energy companies that went belly-up.

Now the "Solyndra Syndrome" has returned. The Washington Post Fact Checker said it expects just a little over 10,000 new wind and solar jobs over the next 10 years.

In Wyoming alone, the long-term leasing ban would result in 33,000 workers losing their jobs. And where are these Wyoming workers supposed to go?

Hundreds of thousands more workers are going to lose their jobs in New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, and other States. How will they provide for their families?

The Biden ban won't just hurt workers; it is going to hurt kids too. A long-term leasing ban is going to eliminate hundreds of millions of dollars in State revenue—the dollars which go for essential services, for public schools, for roads, bridges, and hospitals. A long-term leasing ban is going to hurt teachers, students, and the communities they call home.

America needs all the energy—the oil, the gas, the coal, the uranium, the