

for the term of four years; Nikolas P. Kerest, of Vermont, to be United States Attorney for the District of Vermont for the term of four years; Gregory K. Harris, of Illinois, to be United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois for the term of four years; and Philip R. Sellinger, of New Jersey, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey for the term of four years?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I just want to thank my colleague Senator COTTON and my chairman Senator DURBIN for the way in which that resolved itself. For a minute, we actually feel like a Senate here.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 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.

Ms. SMITH. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 MAGNUS NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Magnus nomination?

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask for 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 483 Ex.]

#### YEAS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

#### NAYS—47

Barrasso	Burr	Crapo
Blackburn	Capito	Cruz
Blunt	Cassidy	Daines
Boozman	Cornyn	Ernst
Braun	Cramer	Fischer

Graham	Marshall	Scott (FL)
Grassley	McConnell	Scott (SC)
Hagerty	Moran	Shelby
Hawley	Murkowski	Sullivan
Hoeben	Paul	Thune
Hyde-Smith	Portman	Tillis
Inhofe	Risch	Toomey
Johnson	Romney	Tuberville
Kennedy	Rounds	Wicker
Lee	Rubio	Young
Lummis	Sasse	

#### NOT VOTING—3

Cotton	Lankford	Leahy
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). 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.

The majority leader.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

#### MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I move to discharge S.J. Res. 31 from the Foreign Relations Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the most common cause of famine and starvation is war. Saudi Arabia's air and naval blockade of Yemen has led to thousands and thousands of deaths in Yemen from lack of food and medicine. The United States should end all arms sales to the Saudis until they end their blockade of Yemen.

President Biden said he would change the Trump policy of supporting Saudi's war in Yemen, but it is not all that apparent that policy has changed.

Today, we challenge the Biden administration's sale of \$650 million worth of arms, including air-to-air missiles in Yemen.

Just 2 months ago, the Biden administration approved \$500 million worth of arms, including maintenance for attack helicopters that are used in Yemen.

Some want to differentiate offensive weapons from defensive weapons, but, really, even defensive weapons can be used to allow a country to absorb attacks in order to continue their offensive operations.

The real question is not an artificial designation of weapons as offensive or defensive but whether Congress is serious about using the leverage of arms sales or withholding arms sales to end the blockade in Yemen.

That the Biden administration continues to reward Saudi Arabia with weapons seems to indicate that President Biden is not really serious about withholding arms sale to end the war in Yemen.

Indeed, if this administration were serious about ending the Saudi blockade, they could do one thing, and this thing would end the war tomorrow, would end the blockade tomorrow. The Saudis, I think, would immediately stop the blockade if this administration would stop sending spare parts and stop fixing the planes.

Bruce Reidel of Brookings writes that "the Saudi air force would be grounded in short order" if we quit sending them spare parts, quit repairing their aircraft. We could stop this war if we really had the will to do it.

All America should be appalled at the humanitarian disaster caused by the Saudi blockade of Yemen. For years now, ships that would otherwise carry food, fuel, and medicine are turned away by the Saudi-led coalition, depriving the Yemeni people of the necessities to sustain civilization.

Yemen is one of the poorest countries on the planet. They have to import their food. The blockade is killing their children.

Saudi Arabia's intervention in the Yemeni civil war is a chilling example of the cruelty of warfare by starvation. According to the United Nations, in Yemen 5 million people are one step away from succumbing to famine and disease, and 10 million more are right behind them.

We can start the process of ending this crisis by enacting this resolution of disapproval.

The children of Yemen who survive Saudi's barbaric blockade will inevitably tell their sons and daughters of the horrors of their youth, and those sons and daughters will tell their sons and daughters. Through oral tradition, a thousand generation of Yemenis will know of the Crown Prince's ruthlessness, and they will also know that it was the Americans who sold the weapons to wage this murderous campaign.

The reports from Yemen are literally a nightmare. The Washington Post reported recently of a 3-year-old boy who cannot walk or speak, who weighs 10 pounds—a 3-year-old boy who weighs 10 pounds. The images are grotesque. His face is "skeletal." His arms and legs are as "thin as twigs." He weighs 10 pounds. His father says that he sometimes goes days without any food.

And we are complicit. We are arming the Saudis and allowing this to happen. Offensive, defensive—they shouldn't get any of our weapons. We should stop selling them any weapons until they stop starving the country of Yemen.

The New York Times tells the story of a mother who, after 3 days of failing to get a ride, carried her 8-month-old while walking 2 hours to reach medics to treat her child's acute malnutrition. But even after a week of treatment with enriched formula, the boy still lay motionless on his hospital bed.

Tens of thousands of children have already died from disease and malnutrition from this war, and we should not be complicit. We should not be aiding the Saudis.

International aid agencies, which also have to fight the Saudi blockade to provide assistance, put it this way:

The people of Yemen are not starving. They are being starved.

The Saudi's siege of Yemen is made possible because of American weaponry. The arsenal provided by the United States includes billions of dollars' worth of military aircraft and thousands of air-to-ground munitions.

Only weeks ago, the Biden administration approved a new \$650 million sale of 280 advanced medium air-to-air missiles and 596 missile launchers. As painful as it is to admit, the United States is an accessory to this Saudi savagery.

President Biden says the latest sale is merely to help defend Saudi territorial integrity, but the Commander in Chief's words do not match Saudi actions. According to William Hartung, the director of the Arms and Security Program for the Center for International Policy, "the air blockade is enforced by a threat to shoot down any aircraft, military or civilian, that enters Yemeni air space. . . . The provision of air-to-air missiles gives further credibility to this threat, dissuading any government or aid group from bringing in crucial medicines or flying patients in and out of Yemen."

These weapons are not purely defensive. They are used as a threat to any aircraft that brings aid into Yemen, and they are part of the blockade. They are part of the problem, and it is our leverage.

These weapons belong to the American people. They may be made by private companies, but they are owned by the American people because we commission these weapons, and we should not give them to countries that are starving children and committing, essentially, genocide in Yemen.

In other words, no weapon is exclusively defensive, and continuing arms sales means continued death and destruction in Yemen.

We must end America's complicity in Saudi Arabia's war on the Yemeni people. If you believe in humanitarianism, if you believe America is a force for good that serves as a model for other nations to emulate, if you believe that the crushing of the Yemeni people must be stopped, then you must vote for this resolution of disapproval.

We have a chance to tell the Crown Prince that American arms sales will end until he gives up his starvation campaign. We can end the Saudi blockade and bring relief to the long-suffering people of Yemen.

Should we fail to seize this opportunity, history will not let us forget that America, the last best hope for humanity, failed to protect defenseless civilians from the cruelty of a criminal regime.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I find myself in the somewhat uncomfortable and unusual position of agreeing with

Senator PAUL. And let me thank him and Senator LEE for their hard work in reclaiming Congress's congressional war powers, another very important issue. The understanding that it is Congress that has the constitutional responsibility to authorize war—not the President—should, in fact, transcend partisan disagreements.

On November 18, we introduced a congressional resolution of disapproval to block the sale of 280 air-to-air missiles, 596 missile launchers, and other weapons and support—totaling some \$650 million—to Saudi Arabia. That is what we will be voting on in a few minutes.

Let me be very clear. As the Saudi Government continues to wage its devastating war in Yemen and repress its own people, we should not be rewarding them with more arms sales. We should be demanding that they end the devastating war in Yemen, which has killed over 230,000 people in one of the very poorest countries on Earth. For more than 6 years, the Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen's civil war has been a key driver of the largest humanitarian disaster in the world—the largest.

According to UNICEF, four out of every five children in Yemen need humanitarian assistance—that is over 11 million children—400,000 children suffer from severe malnutrition; 1.7 million children have been displaced from their homes by violence from this war; and some 15 million people, more than half of whom are children, do not have access to safe water, sanitation, or hygiene.

United Nations humanitarian relief coordinator Martin Griffiths said in September: "The country's economy has reached new depths of collapse, and a third wave of the pandemic is threatening to crash the country's already fragile healthcare system."

According to Griffiths, millions of Yemenis are "a step away from starvation." In other words, this poor country is hell on Earth. It is the worst humanitarian disaster on a planet.

Under first the Obama administration and then the Trump administration, the United States was Saudi Arabia's partner in this horrific war. In 2019, Congress made history—and I am very proud of that, and we did this in a bipartisan way—by passing the first-ever War Powers Resolution through both Chambers of Congress, pressing then-President Trump to end this military support. It marked the first time that Congress invoked the War Powers Resolution of 1973 to direct the President to withdraw troops from an undeclared war.

Sadly, tragically, President Trump vetoed that resolution.

Many of us welcomed the Biden administration's announcement earlier this year that it would end U.S. support for offensive military operations led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen and name a special envoy to help bring this conflict to an end, but the crisis has only continued.

American defense contractors continue to service Saudi planes that are waging the war, and the U.S. military also continues to provide intelligence to the Saudi Armed Forces. And now, tonight, we are looking at a new \$650 million arms sale to the Saudi Armed Forces.

Now, I am aware that ending U.S. military support for Saudi Arabia's brutal assault will not alone end the multisided conflict in Yemen. The Houthis are launching bloody attacks on the central Yemeni city of Marib and increasing cross-border attacks on Saudi territory. Violence has also erupted between rival factions in the south of Yemen. A U.N. expert panel found that all parties to the conflict may have committed war crimes.

U.S. policy toward Saudi Arabia and this war should be clear: The United States must do everything in our power to bring this brutal and horrific war to an end. Exporting more missiles to Saudi Arabia does nothing but further this conflict and pour more gasoline on an already raging fire.

In my view, the United States must support an international observer mission along the Saudi-Yemeni border and spearhead generous international development efforts to rebuild Yemen. This aid should be focused on bolstering local humanitarian and development initiatives, like Yemen's Social Fund for Development.

We must also dramatically increase our diplomatic engagement to press Saudi Arabia, the Riyadh-based Republic of Yemen Government, and the Houthis to accept the U.N.'s roadmap as the basis for a compromise that ends foreign military intervention and allows Yemenis to come to an agreement. The war has gone on for too long, and it is time for the United States to be bold and to be decisive in bringing about peace.

I also think that it is long past time that we took a very hard look at our relationship with Saudi Arabia, a country whose government represents the very opposite of what we profess to believe in. Saudi Arabia is an extremely undemocratic country that is run by a hereditary, authoritarian monarchy, one of the wealthiest families in the world whose wealth is estimated to be over \$1.4 trillion.

At a time when children in Yemen are starving to death, when that impoverished country's healthcare system is collapsing, when the people of Gaza are suffering mass unemployment and environmental devastation, when people throughout that region lack clean drinking water, Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bought himself a \$500 million yacht, a \$300 million French chateau, and a \$450 million Leonardo da Vinci painting. Mass starvation in the region that he helped create, children do not have housing or drinking water, and this guy buys himself a \$450 million da Vinci painting.

According to Freedom House, a respected human rights organization:

Saudi Arabia's absolute monarchy restricts almost all political rights and civil liberties. No officials at the national level are elected. The regime relies on pervasive surveillance, the criminalization of dissent, appeals to sectarianism and ethnicity, and public spending supported by oil revenues to maintain power. Women and religious minorities face extensive discrimination in law and in practice.

Freedom House also notes that working conditions for the large migrant labor force are extremely exploitive.

Saudi Arabia is home to millions of migrant workers, many from African countries but also from Pakistan, India, and elsewhere. These workers constitute more than 80 percent of the private-sector workforce, often as laborers and other service workers. They are governed by an abusive system that gives their employers excessive power over their mobility and legal status in the country. As a result, these migrant workers are vulnerable to a wide range of abuses, from passport confiscation to delayed wages and forced labor.

According to Human Rights Watch, under the government headed by Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, "Saudi Arabia has experienced the worst period of oppression in its modern history."

Human Rights Watch reported earlier this year that "accounts have emerged of alleged torture of high-profile political detainees in Saudi prisons," including Saudi women's rights activists and others. The alleged torture included electric shocks, beatings, whippings, and sexual harassment.

And I think we all understand the nature of this government. Every Member of Congress and I hope every American knows—and our own intelligence services made this very clear—that Muhammad bin Salman himself ordered the murder and the dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 in retaliation for Khashoggi's criticisms of the Saudi regime. We all remember that terrible, terrible murder of a Washington Post columnist.

We also know that the Saudi regime has waged a campaign of harassment and attempted kidnapping against other critics, including on U.S. soil.

My simple question is: Why in the world would the United States reward such a regime which has caused such pain in Yemen with more weapons?

My friends, the answer is we should not. I urge my colleagues to support S.J. Res. 31.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the joint resolution of disapproval on the sale of air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia, which are being used to defend against armed drone attacks from the Houthis.

I think everybody in this body well knows that I carefully consider every arms sale that comes before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for review. Arms sales are a critical tool of foreign policy that can help bolster al-

liances while keeping Americans and our partners safe.

However, we have to ensure that our arms sales policies adhere to our core values, including respect for human rights and human dignity. It is for that very same reason that I, along with a series of my colleagues here, introduced the Safeguarding Human Rights in Arms Exports Act—or the SAFE-GUARD Act—to make the protection and promotion of human rights a core statutory principle in our arms sales export and monitoring process.

This legislation would enhance our collective oversight of all arms sales to countries that abuse human rights, and I hope it receives consideration in this body and in the House soon.

Now, my colleagues may well remember in 2019 and 2020, that when I truly believe an arms sale undermines our American values, our national security, or when 22 sales are notified under false "emergency" pretenses, for example, I will not hesitate to use the tools we have to stop those sales. In fact, that is exactly what we did in this body when I came to this floor and led that effort, in conjunction with others.

Beyond these extreme measures, the committee carefully consults with the State Department and others on the ground to fully understand how weapons will be used.

We have all known for years that there is no military solution to the devastating and tragic conflict in Yemen. Indeed, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed my bipartisan Saudi Arabia Accountability and Yemen Act in 2019, which would have halted certain arms sales, stopped refueling, imposed accountability on the people involved in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, and sought to end the suffering of the Yemeni people. Unfortunately, the full Senate failed to act.

Make no mistake, the Saudi-led coalition bears the brunt of the responsibility for the devastation in Yemen. Yet I, along with most Members of this body, have always supported the use of weapons systems in defense of civilian populations.

I wish to remind my colleagues that the Biden administration has largely suspended sales of many of the offensive weapons the Trump administration was all too happy to sell to the Saudis. However, there is no denying that the Houthis have been increasingly deploying more sophisticated weapons, particularly armed aerial drones, to target civilian populations in Saudi Arabia, and let's not also forget that we have 70,000 American citizens living in Saudi Arabia.

The weapons up for discussion today are being used in this context to defend against these aerial attacks. As air-to-air missiles, they are largely incapable of attacking civilian targets or infrastructure—a critical factor in my decision to support the sale.

While some have argued they could be used to support the Saudi blockade, the fact is that most humanitarian aid

is delivered via land and sea. Indeed, tragically, the Saudis have been perfectly capable of blocking the delivery of aid for many years, and in more recent years, the Houthis have also created abhorrent obstacles for the delivery of food, medical supplies, and other vital humanitarian aid, contributing to the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

While I believe the United States must continue pushing for a political solution to the crisis in Yemen—and I agree with several of the things said by my colleague Senator SANDERS—I also believe that we should continue supporting efforts to stop attacks on civilians. According to the State Department, there have been close to 400 Houthi attacks this year, many of which get past the Patriot missile defense system.

I know that many see this vote as an opportunity to voice dissatisfaction with Saudi Arabia over a variety of its policies, from Yemen to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, which we have not forgotten, to the harassment of American citizens and their family members.

So let me be clear that I completely agree with the need to push harder to hold Saudi leadership accountable for a variety of actions. I even offered a bill last month as an amendment to the NDAA to do just that, and I am hopeful we will see some of that language in a final product. But I also believe it is important that our security partners know that we will uphold our commitments and prioritize security arrangements that protect civilians.

For that reason, I will oppose efforts to stop this particular sale. I will continue to hold sales as I have—there are many other sales that have not moved forward that I have not permitted to get out of the committee—and continue my efforts to hold Saudi leadership accountable and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, fellow Senators, I rise to oppose the matter that is before us, and I want to rise in support of the sale of these particular weapons to the Saudis.

The Saudis are an ally of ours. As with many allies, they have items that we don't agree with, and those obviously have been highlighted here on the floor today. My colleague, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has laid out exactly why we need to see that the sale goes through.

There have been 240-plus drone missiles to strike Saudi targets this year. The latest one was just yesterday. These are Houthi rebel drones that come out of Yemen. They are provided to them by the Iranians. This thing would be over if the Iranians would back away and get out of this.

I agree that we need to press for a solution here. What is going on in Yemen

is one of—not the but close to it—one of the worst humanitarian crises on the planet today. In fact, what is going on there, it is going to get worse as this year goes on. As the Senator from New Jersey indicated, the Houthis have been really unhelpful in getting humanitarian supplies to the people of Yemen, who badly need it.

The Saudis, obviously, need the weaponry that is included in this sale. There are a lot of American citizens in Saudi Arabia, and we should support our allies when they are doing defensive things like this to defend themselves, to defend Americans who are present in their country. We all hope that this will reach a resolution in the near future.

The Iranians are the ones who are stoking this fire. The Houthis are not helpful to us. But we need to help the Saudis defend themselves. So I would urge a “no” vote on this matter before us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this year, a disastrous retreat from Afghanistan gave our allies and partners reason to doubt that the United States could be counted on. Today, some of our colleagues want to double down on that mistake by blocking defensive support to yet another important partner.

Saudi Arabia is literally surrounded by violent threats conceived, funded, and orchestrated by Iran. To the north, they have got Iran-backed terrorists sowing violence in Iraq and Syria. To the east, they have a gulf filled with the flags of Iran's own increasingly belligerent navy. To the south, the Saudis have Iran-backed Houthi terrorists strangling Yemen and lobbying rockets, missiles, and armed drones over their border.

To be sure, this violence and the plight of the Yemeni people have only worsened since the Biden administration removed the Houthis from the terrorist list and imposed new restrictions on our support to the Saudi-led coalition.

Around the world, from time to time, we all have legitimate concerns about the behavior of our partners, but we are in a better position to influence their conduct if they trust in our partnership. So our colleagues don't get to vent their moral outrage in a vacuum without accounting for what comes next.

A vote to block the sale of defensive military systems to Saudi Arabia would undermine one of our most important regional partners, but there is even more at stake. Whether we help or not, our Arab partners will still be under siege tomorrow. They still need military capabilities to defend themselves. And we know that Russia and China will happily sell them advanced weapons systems. The importance of so-called great power competition is a matter of general consensus. So we

should be wary of turning our backs on longtime partners and of pushing them into the arms of our adversaries.

So here is what our colleagues' resolution would actually do. It would give the world yet another reason to doubt the resolve of the United States, and it would give our biggest adversaries a new foothold to exert their influence over a rapidly changing and important region.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask that all remaining time be yielded back.

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

#### VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for 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.

The result was announced—yeas 30, nays 67, as follows:

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD).

[Rollcall Vote No. 484 Leg.]

#### YEAS—30

Baldwin	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Lee	Schatz
Brown	Lujan	Schumer
Cantwell	Markey	Smith
Casey	Merkley	Stabenow
Duckworth	Murray	Tester
Durbin	Ossoff	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Padilla	Warnock
Heinrich	Paul	Warren
Hirono	Peters	Wyden

#### NAYS—67

Barrasso	Graham	Reed
Bennet	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blumenthal	Hassan	Rosen
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Johnson	Shaheen
Carper	Kelly	Shelby
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sinema
Collins	King	Sullivan
Cooms	Klobuchar	Thune
Cornyn	Lummis	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Toomey
Cramer	Marshall	Tuberville
Crapo	McConnell	Warner
Cruz	Menendez	Whitehouse
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Feinstein	Murphy	
Fischer	Portman	

#### NOT VOTING—3

Cotton	Lankford	Leahy
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The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The Senator from Washington.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I can say with confidence to the senior Senator from Kentucky, who spoke this morning on childcare, that as a former preschool teacher, we can rest assured that we are not at risk of a toddler takeover in the U.S. Senate.

But seriously, I have never heard so much misinformation in such a short time from one person. It is not at all clear to me that the senior Senator from Kentucky read the bill—the Build Back Better bill.

So I want to set some facts straight. Under our bill, working parents will have way more options and pay way less to send their child to a high-quality childcare provider they choose. It is the same with pre-K. Parents of 3- and 4-year-olds will have more options to send their kids to quality preschool for free. We are talking about parents saving thousands of dollars a year on childcare and pre-K, which are huge financial burdens to families right now.

It is also, by the way, a great deal for our States who, by the way, are already working with the Federal Government on childcare, and 44 States already have some form of publicly funded pre-K. So this plan is not some new outlandish idea. And, finally, religious providers and family-based providers are absolutely eligible.

So this isn't a radical plan. It is a practical solution to, again, a huge financial barrier that parents are facing today. It is not a toddler takeover. It is giving parents more choices and more affordability. Though I would actually prefer toddlers on the Senate floor to what I saw today.

And it is not far-left propaganda because I can't emphasize this enough: This is not a political question for parents. To them, the question is, Can I choose the provider I actually like or do I have to go to this cheaper one just because I can't afford the one I really want to send my kids to; or is it worth me going back to work if I have to pay as much for rent or mortgage or college tuition as I do to send my child to a provider that I trust; or how long am I going to be on this wait list, and what do I do in the meantime?

What Democrats want to do is make sure there are more affordable options out there for parents. What Senate Republicans want to do is nothing but watch the prices keep rising.

And here is the thing. I have seen again and again, when someone says you can't do something, it is because they are afraid that you will. It is because they are afraid that we will. Senate Republicans are shaking in their boots because we are really doing something that helps working parents with a big part of their costs.