

Fentanyl Act in order to, in one more way, protect Americans from the deadly scourge of these drugs coming from China, through Mexico, across our border and, unfortunately, into the bodies of those who are dying.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 585, Rachael S. Rollins, of Massachusetts, to be United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts for the term of four years.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie Hirono, Tammy Duckworth, Jon Tester, Patty Murray, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Mark R. Warner, Catherine Cortez Masto, Cory A. Booker, Tammy Baldwin, Bernard Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Gary C. Peters.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Rachael S. Rollins, of Massachusetts, to be United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts for the term of four years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 485 Leg.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Ernst	McConnell
Blackburn	Fischer	Moran
Blunt	Graham	Murkowski
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Braun	Hagerty	Portman
Burr	Hawley	Risch
Capito	Hoeben	Romney
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Cornyn	Johnson	Sasse
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Shelby
Cruz	Lummis	Sullivan
Daines	Marshall	

Thune	Toomey	Wicker
Tillis	Tuberville	Young

(Mr. HICKENLOOPER assumed the Chair.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Senate being evenly divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rachael S. Rollins, of Massachusetts, to be United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts for the term of four years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Texas.

DEMOCRAT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to take just a few moments to go back to March of this year. After a very tough year fighting COVID-19, the American people had many reasons to be optimistic about the future. Millions of people were being vaccinated every day. The winter surge was fading away, and travel was slowly ramping up. Families were able to get back together who hadn't seen their loved ones, particularly those who were the most vulnerable to the virus. People were able to visit face-to-face and resume their lives, gradually discovering what I will call the new normal.

We knew the war against the virus was not over, but our communities were well-resourced to keep up the fight, thanks to the five bipartisan bills that were signed into law in 2020.

Yes, it is true. Just last year, we passed five bipartisan relief bills with broad bipartisan support—in some cases, unanimous consent support. My, how quickly things changed. After President Biden was sworn into office, our friends on the other side of the aisle began to view things quite differently. Where Republicans saw progress, Democrats saw, as one House Member put it, a “tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit [their] vision.” Democrats tried to capitalize on the pandemic to check items off their liberal wish list. They crafted a nearly \$2 trillion bill that included some of the far-left's highest priorities and tried to brand it as pandemic relief—backdoor funding for Planned Parenthood, a blank check for mismanaged union pension funds, money for “climate justice”—whatever that is. Less than 10 percent of the money for COVID-19 was directly related to the pandemic, and less than 1 percent supported vaccination efforts.

In addition to being wasteful and irresponsible, this level of spending has brought with it serious risks. Leading economists who are Democrats, like

Larry Summers and Steve Rattner, warn this level of spending could trigger inflation. Most of the young people who were not alive during the seventies, during the tremendous inflation in the country, have never experienced anything like that or even like what we are experiencing today. But Larry Summers presciently warned that this level of Federal spending could “set off [some] inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation.” Still, our Democratic colleagues couldn't be persuaded to change course.

They moved forward with their nearly \$2 trillion spending bill, and lo and behold, guess what happened. Well, Larry Summers was right, and the Federal Reserve that called inflation transitory was wrong. We are now experiencing inflation at a level we have not seen in a generation, exactly as Larry Summers predicted.

In October, inflation hit a 31-year high. Consumer prices jumped 6.2 percent compared with a year ago, making this the highest inflation rate we have seen since 1990. If you were to ask the average Texan if they were surprised by this news, they would say: Not at all.

Month after month, families have adjusted their budgets as prices ticked up. They are now paying more for everything from gasoline to groceries, from cars to Christmas gifts.

And our Democratic colleagues seem to think the only solution is to add more fuel to the fire. They put together a second partisan spending spree, which will cost approximately \$5 trillion. That has already passed the House of Representatives.

Taxpayers will be disappointed by what they get for so much money: tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires—that is in the House bill—cuts to healthcare for low-income and uninsured patients, special favors for organized labor and union bosses, and taxpayer-subsidized electric vehicles for the well-off.

Our colleagues have worked diligently, I must confess, on this bill all year, and this is what they have come up with. Meanwhile, they have ignored some of the most basic responsibilities of governing.

So far, the Senate has not passed any regular appropriations bills. There are 12 of them that routinely we pass. They are deliberated in the Appropriations Committee, voted on, on a bipartisan basis, and ultimately come to the floor and pass as part of the most basic function of governing.

We haven't done that this year. Our colleagues have delayed the National Defense Authorization Act, and we are just 1 week away from a deadline that Secretary Yellen has given us for a potential debt crisis. Our colleagues have failed to do the bare minimum.

Why on Earth are they pouring every ounce of their time and energy into this damaging partisan spending spree when they can't even cover the fundamentals of governing?

One thing is for sure: It is not because of a lack of opportunities to advance bipartisan legislation.

In fact, over the last year, I have been proud to work with a number of our Democratic colleagues on legislation to address some of our biggest challenges, so it is not impossible. For example, Senator WARNER, the Senator from Virginia, and I have partnered on the CHIPS for America Act, which became law earlier this year, and now we are working together to provide the funds to fund the programs that the bill created.

Then there is Senator SINEMA, the senior Senator from Arizona. She and I teamed up on legislation to deal with the humanitarian crisis and security crisis at our border and to make sure that migrants are treated fairly and humanely.

Senator PADILLA, the junior Senator from California, and I have worked together on legislation to make big investments in infrastructure projects across the country without increasing the deficit by a dime.

Earlier this year, State and local governments received huge sums of COVID-19 relief money—more than they could use—and they found themselves with more cash than they did eligible expenses. So the idea behind our bill was pretty simple: give State and local leaders more flexibility to invest in the most critical projects for their communities—largely, infrastructure and disaster relief.

In some places, this still means pandemic-related expenses. We don't require them to do anything; we just merely give them an option. Cities can continue to use Federal dollars to expand hospital bed capacities, increase staffing, or support vaccination campaigns.

The flexibility granted by this bill wouldn't interfere with any plans to bolster the fight against the virus. It simply gives States and local governments the ability to invest excess funding in infrastructure projects: constructing bridges, extending railways, modernizing ports, expanding broadband. This particular bill includes a long list of qualifying expenses.

State and local leaders know their communities best, and they should be able to use excess COVID-19 relief funds in a way that makes the most sense for their State and their community.

Senator PADILLA and I were happy to work with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make changes to the bill to gain bipartisan support. We added additional qualifying infrastructure projects to ensure unique but no less important infrastructure projects in some States were eligible. And we placed a cap, working with the White House, on the amount of funding that could be used because of the White House's concerns that it would take away from necessary COVID-19 expenses.

In October, this bill passed the Senate with unanimous support. Now,

nothing passes this Senate with unanimous support without a lot of hard work and a lot of input from a lot of people on both sides of the aisle. At a time when something as simple as K-12 curricula are controversial, the full Senate supported this legislation. Local officials, highway safety groups, and the transportation infrastructure construction industry all support this commonsense legislation.

Leaders from three dozen organizations representing these groups sent a letter to House leaders earlier this week encouraging the bill's passage. As they said, providing State and local leaders with flexible resources is the surest way to see that our Nation's preparedness and responsivity continue. And it is important to note that this money had already gone out the door, so all of these projects, all of this new infrastructure, can be funded without increasing the deficit by a dime.

As I said, all 100 Senators supported this legislation, and the bill currently has more than 120 bipartisan cosponsors in the House. So we would encourage our House colleagues to delay no longer and take up and pass this commonsense, bipartisan bill.

So my point is, even in times when we seem irreparably polarized, where some colleagues decide it is my way or the highway when it comes to trying to pass legislation in a 50-50 Senate—which is, admittedly, very hard to do—the truth of the matter is there are real opportunities to address some of the biggest challenges facing our country in a bipartisan way.

But none of these opportunities are contained in the Democrats' partisan spending bill. This legislation would, as Larry Summers predicted, continue to fuel the red-hot inflation that is already burning the American people. It will harm our energy security. It will give massive tax breaks to the wealthy while increasing taxes on the middle class. It cuts funding to our safety-net hospitals that provide charity care and care for Medicaid patients. And it will drive our national debt to unimaginable heights.

It will also hand the government control of decisions that should be made by families on everything from childcare to healthcare—basically hand those decisions to the Federal Government. This is not the type of legislation that should be on our Senate's agenda at all, let alone at the top of the list.

There are plenty of opportunities to work together to notch big bipartisan wins for the American people. It is a shame, though, that our colleagues across the aisle have chosen not to do that and that this partisan spending spree has prevented real progress from being made in so many other areas.

I yield the floor.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO SARA HOTTMAN

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, few things are harder in this job than when you have to say goodbye to a member of your team. With all of the time we spend together, it is impossible not to grow close to the men and women who make up that team. The team members become our colleagues, our friends, our families.

I am here on the floor today to recognize and bid farewell to a valued and integral member of my Senate family who, after more than 5 years, is leaving to start the next chapter of her career. She is my State communications director, Sara Hottman.

During her time on Team Merkley, Sara has not only helped communicate my message to the people back home in Oregon about the work I am doing on their behalf here in DC, but she has used her well-connected ear to the ground to help keep me in the loop on issues evolving back home.

I have come to depend on her to keep me on the right track. She never shies away from delivering hard truths when they are needed. She has used her vast experience in all different facets of the communications world—as a reporter, as the communications director for a municipality, as head of strategic communications for the Oregon Zoo—to help deliver our message to the people of the State. It doesn't hurt that in her spare time, Sara is a prolific kickboxer. So when she tells me something, I listen. She has been a real leader in our team, including participation in our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee.

She has done an amazing job time and time again putting together State events. We have traveled all across our sizable State for events that included press conferences to announce policies; press conferences to hear from stakeholders in our State—for example, roundtables with nurses and medical professionals who are on the frontlines fighting the pandemic. Our events included townhalls—a gathering with community leaders in every county every year, followed by a public townhall with people who will ask any question they want. Our events included tours of State disasters. She expertly organized every event, ensuring media exposure and successfully striving to bring together a wide variety of expert and local voices to ensure that I was always learning more insights and perspectives on the issues that face us.

At the end of the day, as we prepared to overnight somewhere around the State in preparation for another long day, she always knew the perfect local watering hole for the team to post up at to reminisce on how things had gone and to recover in preparation for the day that followed.

When something went off the rails unexpectedly, she found a way to turn