

NOMINATIONS

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, fellow Senators, I rise today to urge an affirmative vote on all three of the next appointments that are up.

The first one is Nicholas Burns to be Ambassador to China; and next is Mr. Toloui, who is up for Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs; and also Mr. Hussain, who is up for Ambassador for International Religious Freedom. The Foreign Relations Committee has looked at all three of these very closely.

Let me spend just a moment with Mr. Burns. I have known Mr. Burns since his postings in Europe many, many years ago. If you are looking for a bipartisan person to put in the position, this is your guy. When I knew him, he was working for an administration, a Republican administration.

He has done an outstanding job, has an outstanding reputation amongst the cadre of Ambassadors, and I would urge that we confirm him and have him in place in China. This is a tough posting, as we all know, at the current time. We have got a lot of issues that exist between us and China, and certainly Ambassador Burns is the one to carry our water there.

The other two I can tell you that, without hesitation, both have been scrubbed by the committee and been asked the questions that are appropriate for both of these positions. We feel very comfortable in recommending them to the body.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know we are about to go to the vote. Frankly, with what my distinguished colleague just said, I don't know why these aren't all voice votes.

But I understand Senator MENENDEZ is on his way here and wishes to speak. Otherwise, I would move that it be a voice vote. But out of respect for him and his committee, I will 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. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, while we are waiting for the Senator who wishes to speak, I would note that I appreciate those who worked very hard, including my friends on the floor, on the National Defense Act. Yesterday, that passed with a pretty overwhelming majority, and I voted for it. But as I have noted, that does not provide money; that provides an authorization.

Right now, if we go on continuing resolutions, the Department of Defense will see a multibillion-dollar cut in what is available for them, as will non-defense matters.

So I would urge Senators to work with our leaders and get the appropriations bills done. They could all be done in an omnibus by the end of January, the 1st of February. I would urge Senators to do that. Otherwise, there is going to be a dramatic cut in defense and nondefense matters.

I yield to the senior Senator from New Jersey.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the following nominations, en bloc, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of R. Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China; Ramin Toloui, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs); and Rashad Hussain, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for the nominations of Ambassador Nicholas Burns to be Ambassador to China, Mr. Ramin Toloui to be an Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, and Mr. Rashad Hussain to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

These are a superb group of highly qualified nominees, deserving of the positions for which they have been nominated, and I will speak briefly about them.

Ambassador Burns is an outstanding public servant, one of the Nation's best, and I am pleased to support his nomination as the next Ambassador to China. He has a long and distinguished record in public service, including as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs under the Bush administration and U.S. Ambassador to NATO.

If there is a place that we need an Ambassador, it is China. We have spent so much time, both in committee and on the floor, hearing about the challenges of China, but we don't have a U.S. Ambassador to help us meet those challenges.

It is no secret that the China of today is challenging the United States and destabilizing the international community in almost every dimension of power—political, diplomatic, economic, military, and even cultural. That is why Ambassador Burns' experiences and skill will be crucial as he confronts the monumental task ahead of him.

I am also pleased to be supporting Mr. Ramin Toloui's nomination to be the Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs at the State De-

partment. His experience and skill set, including as a former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Finance, where he represented the United States in forums like the G7 and the G20, will be necessary in order to be an effective Assistant Secretary, especially one who will play such a critical role in our economic diplomacy vis-a-vis China and as we must reinvigorate the instruments of our economic diplomacy at home. I believe Mr. Toloui represents the importance of getting our economic statecraft right.

Lastly, I am also pleased to support Mr. Rashad Hussain to be our Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom. Throughout his impressive public service, Mr. Hussain has demonstrated his strong commitment to protecting the rights of religious and ethnic minorities, including as the U.S. Special Envoy for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, where he led efforts to counter anti-Semitism and protect Christian minorities in Muslim-majority countries.

Religious freedom, like every human right, is universal, but for many people around the world, this right is out of reach, and religious persecution is on the rise. That is why it is important that we confirm Mr. Hussain.

While it is positive news that we are confirming these three nominees today and a few more, I hope, in the next day, I am deeply concerned that we have more than 50 nominees who will remain pending on the Senate floor, having passed the committee, almost all of them by strong bipartisan votes, who are subject to delays and obstacles.

We are less safe when our national security Agencies are so short-staffed. We owe it to the American people to fix this problem so that we can be represented abroad.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. We yield back also.

Mr. MENENDEZ. We yield back any other time we had.

VOTE ON BURNS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Shall the Senate advise and consent to the Burns nomination?

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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. ERNST), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. FISCHER), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. LUMMIS), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 75, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 503 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Barrasso	Hassan	Risch
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Romney
Blunt	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Sasse
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Burr	Kennedy	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Klobuchar	Shelby
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Sullivan
Coons	McConnell	Tester
Cornyn	Menendez	Thune
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Tillis
Crapo	Moran	Toomey
Cruz	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Daines	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Warnock
Durbin	Ossoff	Warren
Feinstein	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Graham	Portman	Young

NAYS—18

Blackburn	Hoeven	Paul
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Hagerty	Lee	Tuberville
Hawley	Marshall	Wicker

NOT VOTING—7

Cassidy	Fischer	Rounds
Cramer	Johnson	
Ernst	Lummis	

The nomination was confirmed. (Mr. WHITEHOUSE assumed the Chair.)

VOTE ON TOLOUI NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Toloui nomination?

Mr. WARNER. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY).

The result was announced—yeas 76, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 504 Ex.]

YEAS—76

Baldwin	Cardin	Duckworth
Barrasso	Carper	Durbin
Bennet	Casey	Gillibrand
Blumenthal	Collins	Graham
Blunt	Coons	Grassley
Booker	Cornyn	Hassan
Brown	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Burr	Crapo	Hickenlooper
Cantwell	Cruz	Hirono
Capito	Daines	Hoeven

Hyde-Smith	Murray	Stabenow
Inhofe	Ossoff	Sullivan
Kaine	Padilla	Tester
Kelly	Paul	Thune
Kennedy	Peters	Tillis
King	Portman	Toomey
Klobuchar	Reed	Van Hollen
Lujan	Romney	Warner
Manchin	Rosen	Warnock
Markey	Rubio	Warren
McConnell	Sanders	Whitehouse
Menendez	Schatz	Wicker
Merkley	Schumer	Wyden
Moran	Shaheen	Young
Murkowski	Sinema	
Murphy	Smith	

NAYS—13

Blackburn	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Boozman	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Braun	Lee	Tuberville
Cotton	Marshall	
Hagerty	Sasse	

NOT VOTING—11

Cassidy	Fischer	Risch
Cramer	Johnson	Rounds
Ernst	Leahy	Shelby
Feinstein	Lummis	

The nomination was confirmed. (Mr. KING assumed the Chair.)

VOTE ON HUSSAIN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hussain nomination?

Mr. WARNER. 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.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 85, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 505 Ex.]

YEAS—85

Baldwin	Durbin	Menendez
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Merkley
Bennet	Graham	Moran
Blackburn	Grassley	Murkowski
Blumenthal	Hassan	Murphy
Blunt	Hawley	Murray
Booker	Heinrich	Ossoff
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Padilla
Brown	Hirono	Peters
Burr	Hoeven	Portman
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Reed
Capito	Inhofe	Romney
Cardin	Kaine	Rosen
Carper	Kelly	Rubio
Casey	Kennedy	Sanders
Collins	King	Sasse
Coons	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cornyn	Lankford	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lujan	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Manchin	Shaheen
Cruz	Markey	Sinema
Daines	Marshall	Smith
Duckworth	McConnell	Stabenow

Sullivan	Van Hollen	Wicker
Tester	Warner	Wyden
Thune	Warnock	Young
Tillis	Warren	
Toomey	Whitehouse	

NAYS—5

Braun	Paul	Tuberville
Hagerty	Shelby	

NOT VOTING—10

Cassidy	Fischer	Risch
Cramer	Johnson	Rounds
Ernst	Leahy	
Feinstein	Lummis	

The nomination was confirmed. (Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The Senator from Delaware.

ACCELERATING ACCESS TO CRITICAL THERAPIES FOR ALS ACT

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3537, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3537) to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to support research on, and expanded access to, investigational drugs for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. COONS. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read a third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 3537) was passed.

Mr. COONS. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The Senator from Washington.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor tonight because I want to remind our colleagues and the people of the United States of America that we did pass an infrastructure bill, and it was bipartisan.

But we are here tonight because the very people that it takes to implement that bill, the very people that work at the Department of Commerce, the very people who work at the Department of Transportation are being held up in not