

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Montenegro nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Ruth Bermudez Montenegro, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Montenegro nomination?

Mr. DURBIN. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 98 Ex.]

YEAS—55

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

NAYS—41

Barrasso	Ernst	Paul
Blackburn	Fischer	Portman
Blunt	Hagerty	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Wicker
Daines	Moran	

NOT VOTING—4

Casey	Shaheen
Manchin	Sullivan

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). 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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session. The Senator from Wyoming.

ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about

the need for more American energy. When Joe Biden was running for President, he made a lot of promises that seemed to be all to the liberal left. Now, to the hard-working people of my home State of Wyoming, these promises sounded more like direct threats to their lives and their livelihoods.

Joe Biden promised that, if elected, there would be “no more drilling on Federal lands.” “No more drilling,” he said, including offshore. He said “no ability for the oil industry to continue to drill, period.”

Joe Biden is known for his multiple gaffes, but these weren't gaffes. This was intentional. He said it again and again and again on the campaign trail.

Here is another one. He said:

I guarantee you we're going to end fossil fuels.

Joe Biden, on the campaign trail, guaranteeing they are going to end fossil fuels.

During one Democratic debate, Joe Biden was asked a specific question. He was asked if he would sacrifice “hundreds of thousands of blue collar jobs” right here in America to get rid of traditional energy.

Joe Biden said:

The answer is yes.

Yes, happy to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of blue-collar, good hard-working jobs of the American people. And today, the American people are living with the consequences of Joe Biden's decisions.

Joe Biden is already the most anti-American energy President in American history. His policies against American energy have resulted in much higher prices for American families. One in five American families this past year have had to cut their spending to pay their energy bills. They have had to change the way they drive, the way they eat, the way they shop. They have changed, and in many ways had to change, their dreams and their aspirations as their anxieties continued to increase as prices increased but wages didn't keep up.

Yes, prices have gone up in 12 of the 13 months since Joe Biden has taken office. This month, we have seen the highest gas prices ever. The Biden energy crisis is already the worst energy crisis in nearly half a century. So far, Joe Biden hasn't proposed a single solution, too busy blaming everyone other than himself.

Well, the Joe Biden blame game isn't working with the American people. The American people remember Joe Biden's campaign promises, and we have seen him wage war on American energy for 14 consecutive months.

When Joe Biden took office, the price of gas was \$2.38 a gallon. By the time Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, prices had already gone up to \$3.53 a gallon. Today, across the country, the average price is \$4.24.

The increase before Putin's invasion was a lot larger than the increase after Putin's invasion. Month after month after month, prices have gone up, and at the same time, Joe Biden has doubled down.

First, he shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline, shut down oil and gas leases on Federal lands, and he shut down exploration for energy in Alaska. Now his political appointees in the government are making it impossible to build gas pipelines. As a result, we are producing 1.3 million fewer barrels a day, in America, of oil than we were just before the pandemic. Lower supply, higher prices—that is the law of supply and demand.

So why is supply down? Well, the Biden administration hasn't held a single auction for oil and gas leases since Joe Biden has taken office. At this point in the Obama administration, there had been more than 30 of those auctions. After 14 months in office, there should have been more than 50; in Joe Biden's term, zero.

Courts have said that the President's Executive orders on Federal lands, they said, are illegal. That is the Federal courts. The President stubbornly refused to open up our Federal lands—ignoring the courts—failed to open up the lands to American energy production.

In Western States like my home State of Wyoming, this is devastating. Half of Wyoming is Federal land, and Wyoming is sitting on a treasure trove of American energy. We have it all—oil, gas, coal, uranium for nuclear power. We have wind. We have sunny areas as well. We have it all. We need it all. Joe Biden wants us to keep Wyoming energy in the ground.

The White House claims we don't need to drill more, explore more for energy because there are some leases that have not yet been used.

So why aren't they used? I mean, that is a legitimate question to ask. Well, half of them are waiting for Joe Biden's permission to drill. Just because you paid for a lease doesn't mean you have permission yet to explore for energy on that area. You have to ask permission of the Federal Government after you pay the Federal Government for the lease. It is like renting an apartment and saying: Well, they are not going to give you the key to move in yet.

The Biden administration has to know that, but they continue to try to mislead the American people to say they are not being used.

Many of the leases that are still available are tied up in court by environmental activists, and they can't explore for energy using those areas until the court cases are resolved. That is a normal ploy of the environmental extremist groups that are lined up with the Biden administration to try to keep American energy in the ground and keep American workers off the job.

So it seems that the percentage of leases being used that they can use is where you would want it to be, but there are more that need to be used, but Biden is tying them up.

American energy workers are doing their part. It is time for Democrats in Washington to start doing theirs. Instead, Democrats seem to be taking actions that are going to make this Biden energy crisis and high-energy prices even worse.

Last year, Joe Biden proposed more than a dozen tax increases on American energy. A bipartisan majority in this body—in the U.S. Senate—blocked the tax increases from ever becoming law. Now Democrats are trying to raise taxes on American energy again—again.

There is a bill in this Senate right now to raise taxes on American energy and then send out government checks. That is a bill that is going to make inflation worse. And, by the way, inflation is already at a 40-year high. People are suffering under the inflation like they haven't in a long, long time. Paychecks are not keeping up. People are feeling the pain.

I heard it at the grocery store in Casper, WY, on Sunday; heard it at the airport in Casper, WY, on Monday.

The Democrat's bill will do nothing to increase the supply of energy. In fact, higher taxes would only decrease the supply. Government checks would increase energy demand. You put the two together, it is an inflation nightmare.

Other Democrats have proposed a pause on the gas tax, saying that might actually lower the price a little bit—not much, a little bit. Oh, the ones who cosponsored this, they are all running for election this year, and the plan, of course, is to put the gas tax back in place right after the election.

The gas tax is what is used to pay for work on Federal roads and highways. It is called the highway trust fund. It is how we fund these. I chair the Environment and Public Works Committee, bipartisan work with Senator CARPER. We know how the funding goes to build the highways, the roads, and the infrastructure of this Nation. That is part of it. It is a gimmick.

Even Democratic economist Larry Summers called the idea—I called it a gimmick; he called it “goofy and gimmicky.” This is Larry Summers.

Other Democrats in the House are asking Joe Biden to declare a climate emergency. They want him to tighten his choke hold on American energy production. It is going to drive up prices even more. It is going to drive supply down and prices up. But not one of the ideas that the Democrats are proposing will actually bring down the cost of energy for American families who are struggling today under the inflation of Joe Biden and the Democrats' policies. Not one of their ideas would increase the supply of American energy. So the contrast could not be clearer.

The debate in this country today is a debate between the Biden blame game and American energy production. It is a debate between climate elitists and working families. It is a debate be-

tween Democratic gimmicks and Republican solutions.

The only solution, the real solution to the high energy prices is more supply, and the supply is more American energy. It is not going to Iran; it is not going to Venezuela; it is American energy supply. We have the resources. We have the expertise. We have the workers. We have the energy in the ground. The Biden administration and the Democrats will not let us get it out of the ground. The solution is for Joe Biden and the Democrats to get out of the way so we can get American energy out of the ground, and it can be used here at home in America.

Earlier this month, I sent a letter to the President, the morning after the State of the Union Address. I sent it along with every Republican who serves on the Energy Committee. I am the ranking member of that committee. We sent President Biden a to-do list, 10 action items that he could take today to restore American energy dominance—because we were energy dominant the day he came into office, and we are now energy dependent. That is how you get such an increase in gas prices and the pain at the pump for the American people.

Step 1 is to open up our Federal lands to energy production. The President ought to auction off leases right away, and he has a lot of catching up to do. He should also approve the 4,600 drilling permits that are today stuck in limbo and stop putting barriers to pipelines and infrastructure that are used to move oil and gas to market.

Our Nation is an energy superpower. It is time we began to act like that again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I just wanted to take a few moments to respond to some of the remarks made by my colleague from Wyoming.

I think we all saw a jump in big gas prices when Putin invaded Ukraine. Then this body called upon the President, in a bipartisan manner, to say that we don't want to import any Russian oil into the United States because we don't want our dollars going to Putin to help fund his war. That was the right thing to do. That also increases gas prices.

We also know that there are thousands of leases on public lands that are not being used today and drilled by oil companies that have those leases. In fact, the Senator from Massachusetts, the Presiding Officer, has said we should have a law saying use it or lose it. And I support that position because instead of using it, you see oil companies exploiting the current situation to have windfall profits and use those profits not to reinvest in war production but to engage in stock buybacks to help their CEOs while they keep the prices high.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, I am here today on the floor as we mark day 27 of Vladimir

Putin's unprovoked war against Ukraine.

Each day that the war grinds on, Putin's brutality exceeds the last. As his advances against major cities like Kyiv have slowed, his barbaric war crimes have mounted. Americans have seen the harrowing images of Russian strikes hitting schools, hospitals, maternity wards, and designated humanitarian quarters, indiscriminately killing children, women, and men.

The horror of each day is amplified by the fact that this is not a war of necessity. This is a war of choice, a war chosen by Vladimir Putin. And that choice grew out of Putin's fear of democracy, his fear of freedom of expression.

Just today, Putin's crony court sentenced Russian democracy activist Alexey Navalny to 9 years in a maximum security prison. First, they tried to poison Navalny; now they want to silence him with 9 more years in jail.

So you see the lengths to which Putin is willing to go to silence one man. You can imagine how he fears a democracy of 44 million Ukrainians on his border. He is scared of the example it sets to the Russians that he keeps under his authoritarian thumb. He wants to extinguish—snuff out—the flame of liberty in Ukraine before it catches fire in Russia.

So he started a war, a brutal war. Now, Vladimir Putin has shown the world who he really is: a scared tyrant who thinks he can snuff out democracy and freedom by brute force. But he is wrong. He can kill a lot of people, and he has; but whether it is a matter of weeks or many months, Putin will not be able to kill the aspirations of the people of Ukraine. We see proof of that fact every day in the defiant words and heroic actions of Ukrainians everywhere.

Amidst the horror, the blood, and the misery, we have seen amazing strength. The people of Ukraine are fighting for their homeland, for their freedom, and for the power to control their own destiny. Ukrainian men and women of all backgrounds and ages have joined in this cause, blocking the path of Russian tanks with their bodies, making Molotov cocktails, tending to the wounded, and taking up arms. Their courage speaks to the very best of the human spirit.

Like most Americans, I am deeply inspired by their resolve and their fortitude, and the whole world should learn from their determination because the stakes in this war go far beyond the borders of Ukraine. This is a fight for the future of democracy itself.

As President Zelenskyy said in his address to Congress last week:

Russia has attacked not just us, not just our land, not just our cities. It went on a brutal offensive against our values . . . against our freedom, against our right to live freely in our own country, choosing our own future—against our desire for happiness, against our national dreams—just like the same dreams you have, you Americans.

That was President Zelenskyy last week before Congress. He spoke of self-

determination. He spoke of individual liberty and freedom. Those are values enshrined in America's own founding documents.

So Putin is not just trying to take over Ukraine; he is, as President Zelenskyy said, trying to destroy the notions of democracy and freedom that we hold dear. Putin wants to see freedom fade and democracy fail, and he is not alone in that effort.

Just before the Winter Olympics in Beijing, Putin traveled to China and met with another autocratic leader, President Xi Jinping. Putin and Xi signed an agreement stating that relations between Russia and China had "no limits," "no limits." On that day, they formed a pact of autocracy. And, today, China's state-run media parrots Putin's lies as Russian tanks encircle Ukrainian towns.

President Xi is watching closely to see if Putin's model of autocracy by conquest might work in other places, might work in Asia. China has already violated its international obligations by stomping out freedoms in Hong Kong. Now, the Chinese Communist Party is eyeing their own democratic neighbor, Taiwan. As Beijing weighs the risks of trying to forcefully unite Taiwan with mainland China, its leaders are monitoring Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and they are watching closely how we and the world respond.

Mr. President, the good news is the United States has rallied our NATO allies and partners in Europe. Even partners beyond the West have responded with unity and resolve, including Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, and Singapore. One hundred forty-one countries voted at the United Nations to condemn Putin's war.

Support has come not only in words and votes but also in deeds and help. Last week, President Biden signed the \$14 billion emergency Ukraine legislation passed by the Senate and the House. The United States, our NATO partners, and others are supplying Ukrainians with the weapons they need to fight Putin's army. We are providing millions of Ukrainian refugees in Poland, Romania, and other neighboring countries with humanitarian assistance, and we are delivering aid to the millions more displaced within Ukraine itself.

The United States has also worked in concert with our allies to unleash sweeping, punishing sanctions at a speed the world has never seen; and these sanctions are aimed right at the heart of Russia's economy, at Vladimir Putin, and at his cronies. We have cut off Russia's financial system from the world. The ruble is in shambles. The ill-gotten gains of the oligarchs are being seized at this very moment.

The unity we see today among democracies in the face of Putin's aggression marks a double triumph. Not only does it allow us to form a united front against Putin, it also undermines his strategy of weakening democracies. He

has long conspired to erode support for NATO from within its member countries. He believes freedom means unending chaos, and he wants to see us bicker ourselves into oblivion. When NATO and our key democratic allies are divided, Putin and authoritarians can win. When we are united, we win.

When it comes to Putin and Russia, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have known this for years. Even when the former President attacked NATO and belittled our democratic partnerships, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle united to reaffirm our support for the alliance. In 2018, a bipartisan group of Senators reestablished the NATO Observer Group to keep an open line of communication with our NATO partners. I am proud to be a member of that group.

In 2019, the Senate passed a resolution reaffirming our support for NATO in the face of the former President's attacks. That same year, Speaker PELOSI invited NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg to address a joint meeting of Congress. She did that on behalf of a bipartisan group. That was the first-ever such address by a NATO Secretary General.

President Biden pledged that he would strengthen that tradition of unity, rebuild U.S. relations with our allies, and stand up for democracy, and that is what he has done. On day 1, he got to work repairing our tattered alliances after the beating they took during the last administration. He organized the first of two summits for democracy last December to rally global partners, and the Biden State Department organized dozens of diplomatic missions to countries around the world to foster democracy.

So let's be clear: This speedy, severe, and synchronized response from the United States and our partners did not come about by chance. It wasn't random. Our unity came from the deliberate strategy of this President and his administration. President Biden understands that there is a global contest between autocrats like Putin and Xi, who want democracy to die, and those like Zelenskyy, who want it to flourish; and he has shown that democratic unity is the strongest instrument we have against the forces of autocracy.

Mr. President, that unity was on full display in February when I traveled to the Munich Security Conference with a bipartisan group of lawmakers from both the House and the Senate. We met in Munich on the eve of Putin's invasion. And because President Biden had the foresight to share our intelligence about Putin's intentions with the world, NATO, the European community, and members of the G-7 had time to prepare and coordinate our response. It allowed us to plan the rapid delivery of weapons and the imposition of unified, crushing sanctions—unity in action.

I hope we can maintain that unity of purpose here at home. There was, as the Presiding Officer knows, a time in

American life when politics stopped at the water's edge. I realize that era is for the most part over, but I hope—I hope this country is strong enough and wise enough to put aside our politics at least for the purpose of making common cause to support democracy and stand up against Putin, as long as it takes.

That unity will be tested. I already see divisions in Congress over the administration's response to this invasion. Sometimes Members of the Senate or the House will have an idea to help Ukraine or an idea to punish Putin that they want implemented immediately. I often have the same impulse. But let's be clear: The success of the President's strategy has been the rapid coordination of our steps with our allies, whenever possible. That is how we pack the biggest punch.

There are also some measures where the President has asked for immediate action and Congress has delayed. Five days ago, the House of Representatives passed a bill to strip Russia of its most-favored-nation trading status. It passed 424 to 8. When is the last time we saw a vote like that in the House of Representatives?

That bill is sitting right here in the Senate right now. We should and could pass it today. We should certainly pass it before President Biden leaves Wednesday—tomorrow—to meet with NATO allies and leaders from the European Union and G-7.

Sometimes around here, if the President announces a sanctions measure a day after somebody else thinks about it, he gets criticized for it being too late; but here, the Senate has been sitting for days on the House bill, and every day that goes by is another day that Russian producers and exporters make more money, make more dollars. Every day that goes by provides some relief to Putin's cronies and the Russian economy. So let's stand together in this Senate and act on that legislation now.

I also appeal to my colleagues—especially on the Republican side—to speak out against those here at home who are spreading Putin's propaganda. A case in point has been the fast-spreading lie that the United States and Ukraine have bio labs in Ukraine to help develop bioweapons. That is just flatout false, but that lie has been fueled in part by some in the rightwing media.

On March 3, the Kremlin circulated a memo to Russian media saying it is "essential" to feature Tucker Carlson, who has been spreading this kind of misinformation about Putin's war on his show. The lie about the so-called American and Ukrainian bioweapons labs was also picked up and peddled by China's state media.

So, Mr. President, all of us should stand up and speak out against this misinformation. American media figures can say what they want. That is their right. But so can we as Members of Congress, and I would argue we have a duty to make our voices heard and

join in the chorus of those calling out Russian lies across the globe.

Every day, we see thousands of Russians flood the streets, from St. Petersburg to Siberia, to protest Putin's war. The world witnessed Russian journalist Marina Ovsyannikova speak out against the invasion on live, state-sponsored TV, with a sign calling out Putin's lies.

These heroes are carrying on knowing full well the risk that they put themselves in, the risk that they will be thrown in jail or worse. The least we can do in Congress is to stand up to lies here at home that aid and abet Putin's propaganda machine.

Make no mistake, even in unity, there will be spirited debate here. We will have disagreements over how to best respond to Putin's aggression, but we should never ever disagree about who the true enemy is. Vladimir Putin is to blame for this attack on democracy. Vladimir Putin is to blame for death and destruction in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin is the enemy—not one another; not the other party; not the President.

There are plenty of things for us to fight about, but in the current battle for democracy and freedom in Ukraine and the larger fight for democracy and freedom around the world, the stakes are simply too high for us to fall back on partisan games. Let's come together. Let's stay together. And if we do, I am confident that democracy and justice will prevail.

To those countries and leaders around the world who stand on the sidelines, I say that neutrality in the face of evil is complicity. In the end, freedom and the dignity of the human spirit will prevail over subjugation and oppression every single time. They need to get on the right side of history.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, before I start my remarks in regard to the 2-year anniversary of the CARES Act, I just want to compliment my colleague from Maryland on his statements in regard to Mr. Putin's aggression in Ukraine.

Everything he said I totally concur in—the unity that President Biden has been able to instill not only among our traditional allies but the global community; the strength of our help to the Ukrainian people, the help that we have given in regard to humanitarian relief; and the sanctions that were led by the United States—but we now have global support for many of these sanctions, which are making a difference.

This is clearly a battle between good and evil, and I just really wanted to compliment my colleague from Maryland on his statement, one on which I hope all of us agree, and that we can move forward very quickly on the legislation you refer to that passed the House of Representatives that would make it clear that we will not do business with Russia as normal; that we

will revoke the favored nation status and normal trade relations; and that we will do what Mr. Zelenskyy has asked us to do, and that is to make it clear that the Magnitsky sanctions, which are individual sanctions imposed against the perpetrators, Mr. Putin and his enablers in Russia, will be maintained with reauthorization of the global Magnitsky statute.

I hope we will get to that as early as this week because I agree with my colleague that every day we delay it, in fact, is helping Mr. Putin. We need to make it clear and enact that statute, which, by the way, the Biden administration strongly encourages us to do.

CARES ACT

Mr. President, 2 years ago, the United States declared COVID-19 a national emergency. By then, it was clear that we were experiencing a once-in-a-century pandemic and that preventing the spread of this dangerous virus would require our Nation's greatest collective effort since World War II. Here in the U.S. Congress, we knew that this era-defining challenge would require unprecedented action from the Federal Government to confront the economic and public health crisis created by COVID-19.

The pandemic has waxed and waned in the 2 years since then, so opportunities for American families and small business owners to return to their normal lives have come in fits and starts. But one lesson that has remained true through these ups and downs and has been confirmed on multiple occasions through the pandemic is that the U.S. Federal Government can—it must—play a role in solving our Nation's longstanding, difficult, and intractable problems.

Let us remember those first few weeks of the pandemic. The vast majority of Americans did not know what to make of the Centers for Disease Control's January report of a novel virus, the coronavirus identified abroad. By mid-February, small business owners were already feeling the effects of reduced revenues. By the end of February, the U.S. economy was rapidly deepening into a recession. There were severe disruptions in domestic and global supply chains, leading to shortages in food and critical personal protective equipment, and the unemployment rate was increasing rapidly.

Congress had to act and act fast, so that is exactly what we did. We passed the CARES act—a bold, unprecedented, and comprehensive \$2.2 trillion COVID relief package that met the scale of the crisis we faced—and we did it without partisan rancor or political infighting. The bill passed the Senate 97 to 0. It is one of the greatest acts of bipartisanship I have witnessed during my career in politics.

The CARES Act provided funding to our public health infrastructure for testing, tracing, and vaccine development. It directed funds to State and local governments that were straining under the cost of the pandemic. It also

authorized the Treasury Department to get stimulus payments to American families and increased unemployment payments because we knew that millions of Americans would be unable to work as we came together to slow the spread of the virus.

The bill also provided hundreds of billions of dollars to support our Nation's small businesses. I was proud to lead bipartisan negotiations on the small business provisions of this bill on the Small Business Task Force, which included myself and Senators JEANNE SHAHEEN, MARCO RUBIO, and SUSAN COLLINS.

As we negotiated these provisions, we had several key facts in mind. First, small businesses have low profit margins and carry little in cash reserves, so they could only survive a few weeks of a closure without some form of support. Secondly, eventually, Americans unable to work would return to work, and it is much easier and quicker for small businesses to reopen with their existing staff instead of hiring new staff. Third, keeping small businesses in operation would make our eventual recovery come about more quickly and much more robustly. So we wanted to keep small businesses afloat. We wanted to keep their employees employed. We wanted to keep our economy moving forward.

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, which predates the pandemic, had already been approved to provide loans to small businesses harmed by COVID-19. So we knew that small businesses would have access to the long-term capital they needed to adapt their businesses and make other investments.

EIDL can meet small businesses' long-term capital needs, but we knew that we had to move quickly to meet the immediate capital needs of these businesses, so we created the EIDL Advance Grant Program to send \$10,000 grants to small businesses that applied for EIDL.

We knew how important it was to a recovery to keep employees on payroll, so we created the Paycheck Protection Program to provide small businesses with loans worth up to \$10 million to cover the cost of up to 8 weeks of payroll, and we made a promise to borrowers to forgive the loans as long as they used the funds for payroll or other allowable expenses.

We created a debt relief program to cover all costs associated with new and existing SBA loans for 6 months. We invested in the SBA entrepreneurship development programs to hire experts and increase capacity to help small businesses navigate the ups and downs of the pandemic.

In total, the CARES Act included more than \$375 billion in aid to small businesses. The aid could not have come soon enough. The initial \$349 billion in PPP funds were exhausted in less than 2 weeks. SBA approved more than 1.6 million loans in that time.

SBA's laudable efforts to deliver relief to small businesses also came with

disappointments and missed opportunities. Senator SHAHEEN and I fought to include a provision in the CARES Act that required SBA to issue guidance to the banks participating in PPP to prioritize loan applications for small businesses in underserved communities. We knew that those small businesses that had priority relationships with banks would be first in line, but we wanted the SBA to make sure that those that did not have those privileges would also be able to benefit by the PPP program.

We insisted on the inclusion of this provision because we knew that a program like PPP, which relied on financial institutions to make loans, ran the risk of worsening the existing inequities in our private capital market.

We simply could not allow small businesses in our most vulnerable communities to fall further behind. SBA failed to issue the guidance. So it was no surprise when organizations representing underserved small businesses sounded the alarm that women, minorities, small businesses in rural communities, and other underbanked borrowers were at risk of being frozen out of the program.

The SBA's inspector general would eventually report that the Agency's implementation of PPP did not fully align with the intent of Congress. With funds exhausted after less than 2 weeks, the prior administration requested additional funds for PPP—and only PPP—which would have neglected the equally important EIDL Program, which had also exhausted its funds by then.

It is important to keep in mind that since these programs were designed to work together, funding one without the other would not meet the needs of many small businesses.

Once again, Members of this Chamber worked with our colleagues across the Capitol to create a comprehensive COVID-19 relief package that we all could agree on, which passed the Senate, again, unanimously.

The bill provided an additional \$370 billion of funds to the SBA COVID-19 relief efforts, with \$310 billion for PPP, \$10 billion for the EIDL Advance Grant Program.

The bill also provided \$50 billion for the EIDL Program, which allowed the Agency to make more than \$350 billion in loans. And similar to the ways in which the CARES Act implemented lessons learned during a prior economic downturn, the second package implemented lessons learned during the first round of PPP.

Since the SBA did not issue the guidance as required by the CARES Act, Senate Democrats championed more prescriptive policies to make the PPP fairer and more equitable.

I remain proud that we were able to set aside \$60 billion of PPP funds to be distributed by credit unions, community development financial institutions, minority depository institutions, community banks, and other small

lenders that are better able to get funds to underserved and underbanked communities.

We wanted to make sure that those who needed it could get it, and I am proud that we were able to include that in that legislation.

Thanks to the set-aside, approximately 600 new, mostly nonbank, lenders that did not participate in phase 1, participated in phase 2 of the PPP program. We should take great pride in knowing that the set-aside worked.

According to the Government Accounting Office report issued in September of last year, banks made the vast majority of PPP loans during phase 1 of the program. As a result, the program favored larger small businesses. During phase 2, however, the Agency found that the share of loans to underserved businesses and communities "was proportionate to their representation in the overall small business community."

We succeeded in the second round. For example, 42 percent of the loans approved during phase 1 of PPP went to businesses with between 10 and 499 employees, but those businesses only accounted for 4 percent of all the businesses in the United States. We know that women-owned and minority-owned small businesses are less likely to have employees at all, and when they do, they have less employees, on average.

During phase 2, the share of loans to the larger of these businesses with 10 or more employees dropped to 17 percent. We achieved our objective.

And while only 9 percent of the PPP loans issued during phase 1 went to businesses located in counties where women-owned businesses accounted for a large share of all businesses, the number doubled to 18 percent during phase 2, which is in line with the share of small businesses nationwide owned by women.

Similarly, 36 percent of phase 1 loans went to small businesses in high-minority counties, and that number increased to 50 percent in phase 2.

In every example in underserved communities—minority-owned small businesses, women-owned small businesses—because we targeted the funds to mission lenders, because we were able to get the entrepreneurial services to small businesses that needed the help, we reached the underserved community.

I would like to take a moment to highlight the significance of these findings. The fact that women and minorities face historic and pervasive barriers to entrepreneurship is not new, and the primary barrier is their inability to access capital. But the GAO's report confirms that through the policies, the capital access gap is bridgeable. We can bridge this gap if we pass the right policies.

After the end of phase 2 of PPP on August 8, Congress negotiated the next round of COVID-19 relief, which was not finalized until December 22.

Negotiations may have taken much longer than any of us would have liked,

but we once again found common ground to pass the bipartisan Economic Aid Act, providing \$900 billion in COVID-19 relief, including an additional \$325 billion for small businesses. In this bill, my Democratic colleagues and I secured an additional \$30 billion set-aside for smaller lenders in addition to expanding eligibility to additional industries and nonprofits. The Economic Aid Act also provided eligible small businesses with an additional Second Draw PPP loan worth up to \$2 million.

The bill created new programs as well. The Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program was created to provide grants of up to \$10 million to live venues, independent movie theaters, and other cultural institutions that were shuttered as a result of COVID-19. And a new \$20 billion Targeted EIDL Advance Program was created to provide additional EIDL Advance grants to our Nation's most vulnerable small businesses that couldn't afford to take out a loan. They needed grants.

I would like to take a moment to speak on why the Targeted EIDL Advance Program was necessary.

Similar to how the Trump administration initially handled the PPP, hindering the program's utility, the administration's implementation of the EIDL Advance Program also made it less useful to small businesses. The CARES Act directed SBA to provide \$10,000 grants to all EIDL applicants, but the Trump administration only provided \$1,000 per employee up to 10 employees.

The Targeted EIDL Advance Program addressed the problem directly by targeting the program to the most vulnerable communities and providing small businesses in those communities with the remainder of the \$10,000 Congress intended them to receive. We corrected the mistake initially made.

It remains frustrating to know that our Federal response to the pandemic could have helped even more small businesses. So it was welcome relief when President Biden was inaugurated because I knew that America's underserved small businesses would have a champion administering phase 3 of PPP, and we in Congress would have a partner committed to ensuring that these programs helped as many small businesses as possible.

The administration hit the ground running. In February of 2021, President Biden instituted a 14-day priority period for PPP, during which the SBA only processed applications for small businesses with fewer than 20 employees.

The administration also changed the loan calculation formula for small proprietors and eliminated an exclusionary restriction that prevented small business owners with a prior non-felony conviction from obtaining a PPP loan for their businesses.

In addition to these administrative actions, President Biden also proposed and Congress enacted the American

Rescue Plan. The bold relief package created the Restaurant Revitalization Fund to provide grants to restaurants and bars that lost revenue due to COVID-19, added additional funds to the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program, added additional funds to the Targeted EIDL Advance Program, and provided \$350 billion to States and localities, which helped spur new State programs and replenish existing ones, like the RELIEF Act and the Maryland Strong Economic Recovery Initiative in my own home State, and created a new Community Navigator Program to get the SBA's entrepreneurial development resources in the communities that would benefit from them the most.

We had the Federal programs. Then we had the navigators to help small businesses get those funds. And we provided local funds through State and local governments so they could help small businesses. We really went through everything we could to help those that needed the help the most.

The significance of these actions—the passage of the bipartisan Economic Aid Act in December, the Biden administration's administrative steps, and the American Rescue Plan—cannot be overstated. They helped set our Nation on course for the most robust economic recovery in American history.

Phase 3 of PPP—January to May 31, 2021—had the most equitable loan approval shares, according to a report released in January of this year by economists Robert Fairlie and Frank Fossen. Fairlie and Fossen, both of whom have been following PPP and the pandemic's impact on small businesses closely for the past 2 years, cited the extraordinary increase in loan volume of Prestamos, a CDFI that targets Hispanic-owned small businesses, as an example of the success of the PPP under the Biden administration.

These numbers are impressive. During phase 1 of PPP, Prestamos ranked 4,274 among PPP lenders by volume. That was phase 1, where you really had to have an existing relationship if you were going to be able to get a PPP loan. In phase 2, where we did a better job of targeting, they ranked 325. In phase 3, they were among the top ranked PPP lenders by volume.

They wrote that the 14-day priority period in particular “helped to bring the PPP loans to disadvantaged small businesses.”

Thank you to the Biden administration and the Democrats in Congress.

The program hasn't only been good for small businesses; it has also supported small community banks. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis wrote that small business lending was a “key business line” for small community banks during the operation of the program and that the program will help smaller banks regain some of the ground they have lost through larger competitors in the small business loan market.

The Biden administration's implementation of the Shuttered Venue Op-

erators Grant Program has also been a resounding success. After awarding more than 12,800 initial grants worth more than \$11 billion at an average of more than 1 million per institution, the administration also awarded more than 8,700 supplemental grants worth more than \$3 billion.

I mention all of that because we know our shuttered venues would be out of business if it weren't for the shuttered loan program. It has kept them in business.

And the administration successfully provided more than 100,000 restaurants with the Restaurant Revitalization Fund grants, worth more than \$28 billion in grants.

I have seen firsthand the benefit of these grants as I have traveled in Maryland. On Small Business Friday, last year, I did a walking tour down Main Street in Annapolis. Every single restaurant owner I visited shared that they may not have survived without the Restaurant Revitalization Fund grant. All of these restaurants are more than just a place to grab a bite to eat. These are decades-old institutions owned by small business operators, and their closures would have been deeply felt by the community.

In the coming weeks, Congress must finish the job by replenishing the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. There are still hundreds of thousands of applicants waiting on funds. We have to finish the job for our restaurants, because if there are any lessons learned from the past 2 years, it is that when Congress comes together to produce thoughtful policies that address the system issues in our economy, it yields results.

After enduring the deepest economic contraction since 1947, the American economy grew at the fastest rate since 1984 with the first year of Joe Biden's administration.

We are back, but we still have pockets that need help.

In an ironic twist of history, the lessons we have learned and the expertise and capacity that we have built up within the SBA have now prepared us for what can only be described as an entrepreneurial renaissance underway in our communities. According to the Census Bureau, Americans registered 4.4 million new businesses in 2020—4.4 million new businesses—the highest total on record and a 24-percent increase over the prior year.

Remarkably, the surge is being driven by entrepreneurs in some of our most underserved communities, and our policies helped make that a reality. For example, data shows that between February 2020 and August 2021, the number of Black business owners increased by 38 percent.

Congress needs to take advantage of the entrepreneurial spirit that is surging throughout our communities by continuing to invest in our entrepreneurs, especially those in underserved communities. We have demonstrated that the historic structural

barriers that have inhibited the growth of small businesses in underserved communities are far from insurmountable.

Now is not the time to retreat. It is time for us to double down. In implementing lessons learned during the implementation of PPP, we should create a new direct loan program within SBA and further empower small businesses. We must build on the inroads that the SBA has made with underserved communities during the pandemic to get entrepreneurial development, business mentorship, and technical training into communities that would benefit from it the most. And we should continue to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that American small businesses have the tools they need to emerge from the COVID-19 stronger than ever.

The bottom line is our policies made a difference. We saved America's small businesses. We need to continue to work in the future to make sure the climate for small businesses is healthy so that our economy can continue to grow.

We know that small businesses are the growth engine of job growth in America. We know that they are where most innovation takes place in our economy.

Our policies during this pandemic helped save small businesses and now expand the opportunity for small businesses, but we need to continue to pay attention to these issues.

I hope we can do this in a bipartisan way. We need to replenish the funds for those that have not been able to get it under the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and we need to pay attention to small businesses in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

STRATEGIC DETERRENCE

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, earlier this month, the commanders of the U.S. Strategic Command and the U.S. Space Command, ADM Charles Richard and GEN James Dickinson, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee for their annual posture hearing.

The backdrop for their testimony was two twin challenges facing the United States and our allies: Putin's desire to recreate the Russian Empire, demonstrated most recently in his unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, and China's plan to massively expand their power, rolling back U.S. influence in the process.

Both of these American adversaries are expanding their nuclear arsenals to back up their ambitions.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces and with STRATCOM's headquarters in my State of Nebraska, I appreciated this chance to engage with Admiral Richard on such an important issue.

As the commander of STRATCOM, Admiral Richard has one of the highest pressure jobs in the world—overseeing America's nuclear forces. He knows

better than anyone how important our nuclear deterrent is to preventing war around the world, and he understands the threat posed by our adversaries' growing arsenals.

Admiral Richard told the Armed Services Committee that Putin's war in Ukraine is giving us "a very vivid real-world example of the importance of extended deterrence." What he meant by that is that, even though Putin has brought a major war back to Europe for the first time since the end of World War II and heartbreaking destruction to the people of Ukraine, nuclear deterrence, including the extended deterrence commitments that we provide our allies, has shielded NATO countries and discouraged the conflict's spread. More specifically, without our nuclear deterrent, our plans to protect American citizens and our allies would fall apart.

Take it straight from Admiral Richard. He said:

Every operational plan in the Department of Defense, and every other capability we have, rests on the assumption that strategic deterrence is holding, and in particular that nuclear deterrence is holding.

If strategic or nuclear deterrence fails, no other plan and no other capability in the Department of Defense is going to work as designed.

When people who care about a safe and secure America say that strategic deterrence, especially nuclear deterrence, is the bedrock of our national security, that is exactly what we mean because, at the end of the day, American strength is the only thing that tyrants like Putin actually respect.

Just as we need to reassess our approach to Putin in light of his invasion of Ukraine, we also need to rethink our approach to our nuclear deterrent. Barely 2 months ago, on January 3, the five members of the U.N. Security Council released a joint declaration on "Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races." Russia, of course, is one of those five members.

People who want our deterrence to continue aging while Russia and China modernize their own forces, including many members of the media, rushed to hail the joint statement as a long-awaited and revolutionary breakthrough. They seemed certain that we had turned a corner and that by signing this statement, we were ushering in a new and enduring era of world peace.

I was skeptical. I wrote an op-ed in National Review Online that responded to what I called the "delusional" parts of that statement and the wishful thinking that led the United States to sign our name next to those of Russia and China.

More than a month before Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, I wrote:

This would be a historic moment for international unity—or rather, it would be if it were true. China and Russia may have signed this document, but they do not intend to honor it.

They clearly did not.

Since then, Russia has put their deterrent on high alert, essentially

threatening to use their nukes against the other countries that signed that statement. I believe it was clear to anyone who had been paying attention that signing our names to a feel-good piece of paper wasn't actually going to change anything about Putin's behavior or the behavior of China.

While our deterrent remains effective, we are asking it to protect against a growing range of threats. Russia is continuing the deadliest war in Europe in nearly a century, and the Chinese Communist Party—well, they are hard at work expanding their own nuclear arsenal. And they are doing it at a pace we have never seen in world history.

I asked Admiral Richard about the U.S. intelligence community's estimate that China plans to potentially quadruple their nuclear arsenal by the year 2030. He told the committee:

Last fall, I formally reported to the Secretary of Defense the PRC's strategic breakout. Their expansion and modernization in 2021 alone is breathtaking. And the concern I expressed in my testimony last April has now become a reality.

China is attempting a rapid buildup of unprecedented scope and scale, and we have no reason to think they will stop once they reach the Pentagon's estimate. We have even less reason to think it will take China 8 more years to grow their stockpile to 1,000 deliverable warheads.

Admiral Richard agreed. In response to my questioning, he said:

Whatever the time estimate that the intelligence community gives you on anything from China, divide it by two and maybe by four and you will get closer to the right answer.

So, no, I don't know that we have any idea of [China's] endpoint and/or speed.

And as Admiral Richard pointed out at another point in the hearing, many observers have gotten too caught up on the "1,000 by 2030" figure.

Since the Pentagon released their report in November of last year, an unspoken assumption has developed that China will simply stop building nukes once they reach that point, whether that is in 2025 or 2030. But let me point out, the Chinese Communist Party has given us no reason to think that that might be the case.

In fact, given their ambitions to take Taiwan and develop a Chinese sphere of influence beyond Asia, I think it is very likely they will continue building far beyond that number.

And even as China works to expand its nuclear arsenal, ours is rapidly aging. The United States has not designed or built a new nuclear warhead since the end of the Cold War. We don't even have the ability to produce a new warhead right now, and we are the only nuclear power unable to do so. China and Russia can. The United Kingdom can. France can. And India and Pakistan can. Even North Korea can.

But here in the United States, we cannot. Instead, we have focused on extending the life of our current systems. This has pushed our deterrent far be-

yond its designed lifetime and made the need for modernization even more acute.

Admiral Richard went out of his way to stress this point during his testimony. He told the Senate Armed Services Committee:

Right now, I am executing my strategic deterrence mission under historic stress, crisis levels of deterrence, crisis deterrence dynamics that we've only seen a couple of times in our nation's history.

And I'm doing it with submarines built in the '80s and '90s, an air-launched cruise missile built in the '80s, intercontinental ballistic missiles built in the '70s, a bomber built in the '60s, part of our nuclear command and control that predates the internet, and a nuclear weapons complex that dates back to the Manhattan era.

We have ignored the need to modernize our deterrence for far too long. As Admiral Richard said at another point during his testimony: The nuclear force we have today is the absolute minimum we need to guarantee our security.

The world has only gotten more dangerous over the past decade, and the last few weeks in Ukraine are the latest evidence of that.

But Washington—well, Washington has spent that time procrastinating.

Our failure to make tough decisions has left Admiral Richard with a deterrent that simply hasn't kept up with those of our adversaries. The final piece of Admiral Richard's testimony I will read is this:

We have reached a point where we can no longer deter with the leftovers of the Cold War. We have life extended them to the maximum extent possible.

We must now start to recapitalize, re-manufacture those that require a very robust infrastructure . . . We're 10 years behind the point where we needed to start recapitalizing the infrastructure . . . And the consequence is we simply won't have the capabilities that we are going to have to have to deter the threat environment we're in.

We cannot keep kicking the can down the road. We are not in the 1990s or the 2000s anymore. The threat environment is changing, and we have no choice but to keep up. But our nuclear deterrent is sized based on the 2010 New START Treaty, written in a very different world, before Putin decided to behave like a war criminal and before China's unprecedented nuclear breakout.

To wrap up, I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to an exchange from the Foreign Relations Committee's hearings during the ratification process for the New START Treaty.

Responding to a question about whether the posture set by the treaty left the United States with nuclear forces beyond what we needed, the STRATCOM commander at the time, GEN Kevin Chilton, completely rejected that idea. He said instead:

I think the arsenal that we have is exactly what is needed today to provide the deterrent.

We need to think long and hard about if a deterrent designed around the

threats of 2010 is still what is needed for the very different and much more dangerous world we live in now.

I hope the administration will address that question in its upcoming Nuclear Posture Review. In fact, the upcoming fiscal year budget and various strategy documents we expect to be released soon, including the NPR, are a chance for the administration to show that they do understand the challenges that we face. Most fundamentally, that is the erosion of global stability and the increasingly challenging threat environment facing our country.

These documents are an opportunity for President Biden to propose a realistic plan to meet these threats. I hope that he will. The hard truth is that every day that we refuse to commit to the modernization schedule today's world needs is a day that Russia and China become greater threats. They get further ahead.

If we wait too long, we are going to wake up 5, 10, 20 years from now with no way to deter adversaries who did commit to modernization. That is not a position anyone wants to wind up in.

We need to act like adults and make difficult choices to prioritize our nuclear deterrent, the most fundamental part of our defense strategy. And we have to keep modernization on schedule in the FY2023 NDAA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and vote on Calendar No. 678, the nomination of Victoria Calvert, under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Calvert nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Victoria Marie Calvert, of Georgia, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Calvert nomination?

Ms. BALDWIN. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Ex.]

YEAS—50—

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

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Cramer	Lummis	Toomey
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Portman	

NOT VOTING—4

Casey	Shaheen
Manchin	Sullivan

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 actions.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.

RECOGNIZING IDAHO OLYMPIANS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, along with my colleagues Senator JIM RISCH and Representative MIKE SIMPSON, I congratulate three Idaho athletes who competed in the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing. I commend Andrew Blaser, Chase Josey, and Hilary Knight for their diligence and dedication that resulted in them representing our great State and country on this world stage.

Four-time Olympic medalist Hilary Knight, of Sun Valley, once again competed with distinction on the U.S. women's hockey team. The team earned a silver medal, and Hilary scored one of the team's two goals in the final game. In the 2022 Olympic Games, she scored her 12th career Olympic goals, becoming the second leading scorer in U.S. Olympics Women's Hockey history. With 15 career

Olympic assists, Hilary also ranks second in most career assists. She played in her 22nd career Olympic Game, giving her the record for the most Olympic Games played in U.S. women's hockey history. This follows her earning a gold medal in the XXIII Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang; a silver medal in the XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi; and a silver medal in the XXI Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

Two-time Olympian Chase Josey, of Hailey, earned seventh place in the snowboard halfpipe. Chase completed two frontside double cork 1080s and a cab double cork 1260 in his third run of the 2022 Olympics, earning 79.50 points. He earned sixth place in the halfpipe in the XXIII Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang and was fifth at the 2021 world championships.

Nick Blaser, of Meridian, who ranked 28th in the world, competed in his first Olympic games on the U.S. Olympic Skeleton Team. With three competitors, the team was characterized as "small but mighty." Nick, who came in 21st place at the 2022 Olympics, was a top pole vaulter and hurdler at the University of Idaho before competing in skeleton after college.

These athletes lead through their examples of dedication and persistence. As younger generations watch, they show us all how to turn preparation into achievements. Thank you, Olympians, for representing Idaho and our country so well in the Olympics, while overcoming the added pressures of training and competing during a global pandemic, in a high-risk and dangerous political environment. We commend you for your extraordinary hard work and commitment.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the Records on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

*Coast Guard nomination of Min H. Kim, to be Commander.

*Coast Guard nomination of Michael A. Cintron, to be Captain.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LEE, and Mr. BOOKER):