

will be sleepwalking into the next deadly wave.

We also need to ensure that as soon as the FDA authorizes a vaccine for kids under the age of 5, parents can get their kids protected as soon as possible.

Funding also is needed for oral antivirals and other therapeutics to treat patients who contract a serious case of COVID. These treatments will keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed.

And we need funding to maintain the testing infrastructure we have built up over the last several months, like President Biden's successful program to put up to 1 billion—billion—rapid tests right at the doors of every American who wants one.

The fact is, Congress should have already provided funding for these life-saving resources, but we still haven't done it. This lack of funding has already hit my home State of Illinois. Last week, shipments of monoclonal antibody treatments to our State were scaled back 35 percent to preserve the supply. Also last week, thanks to a lack of funds, the Department of Health and Human Services announced they would no longer pay hospitals and health clinics for testing they have provided to 30 million uninsured Americans.

Several free community-based testing sites and pharmacies in Illinois are now closing up. The money is running dry. At one community health center in Illinois, one-third of the patients are uninsured. That clinic has received more than \$150,000 to test, treat, and vaccinate the patients—money well spent not just to protect these patients but every Illinoisan. If Congress doesn't provide new funding, that health center may be forced to close for good.

All of us want to keep the masks off for good and move past this coronavirus, but to think we can just wish away COVID forever would be naive, irresponsible, and fiscally unwise.

I urge my Republican colleagues to join in a bipartisan effort to provide new funding for our COVID preparation response efforts. Let's be ready for whatever this virus might bring.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JASMINE HUNT DIMITRIOU

Mr. President, finally, I want to take a special moment to thank a member of my staff who is leaving on a new assignment.

History tells us there have been some extraordinary African-American women in the field of science. Dr. Alice Ball was a chemist who developed the first successful treatment for leprosy. Dr. Patricia Bath was an ophthalmologist who invented something called the laserphaco probe, a tool used in cataract surgery. Dr. Shirley Jackson was a theoretical physicist and former Chair of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

What did they all have in common? They were African-American women

who broke barriers and improved the lives of countless others, and they didn't get the public recognition they deserved.

Well, let me add another name to that list. Her name is Dr. Jasmine Hunt Dimitriou. Dr. Hunt—known as Jasmine in our office—joined my staff in 2010 on an American Association for the Advancement of Science fellowship. She was a newly minted Ph.D. in chemistry who had just graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

The fellowship in my office lasted a year, but thank goodness she liked it so she stayed. We persuaded her to stay longer and devote more than 10 years of her life to public service.

Over the years, Jasmine climbed the office ranks from fellow to lead policy adviser for science, energy, and environment, to legislative director.

Today is her last day in the Senate. She is leaving to take on a new challenge as Deputy Chief of Staff to Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm.

I know I speak for my entire staff when I say that we are thrilled for her. This is a well-deserved recognition and opportunity. I hate to lose her, but I never want to stand in the path of my staff if they have got a chance to promote themselves and to use their talents more effectively. We are going to miss her.

Jasmine grew up in Normal, IL, which is perfect because she is about as normal and stable a person as you will ever find. No matter how long the hours or how tumultuous the mood, she is always clear-headed and calm.

Her mother loved libraries and passed that love along to Jasmine and her brother Joseph. Thankfully, Jasmine remains a voracious reader and learner.

I don't know which is more complicated, understanding how to split an atom or how a bill becomes a law, but Jasmine has mastered both. During her years in the Senate, Jasmine and her husband Mike became parents to two of the cutest little girls. She also has been something of a mother figure to countless young members of my staff whose careers she nurtured.

Now she will bring her leadership for the Nation to the Department of Energy. I have no doubt that, in little time, she will manage to stop climate change with a Thanos snap. She is a remarkable scientist and public servant. I want to thank her for devoting so much of her time and talent to help me, to help the State of Illinois, and to serve this Nation.

Jasmine, best of luck.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

NOMINATION OF JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the nomination of Judith Pryor to serve as First Vice President of the Ex-Im Bank of the United States. Now, the Ex-Im Bank was established to help U.S. exporters by providing financing to foreign buyers of U.S. products.

I have always been very skeptical about the merits of this mission, and I remain skeptical to this day. Ex-Im claims that it only takes risks that private lenders are unable or unwilling to take. That is a central message of the Ex-Im Bank.

We should stop ourselves right there and ask ourselves a question: If private lenders are unwilling or unable to take a particular risk, why should taxpayers be forced to take that risk?

And, at the same time, Ex-Im also claims it only makes safe bets. Mr. President, that is a complete contradiction. It is impossible to do both. Ex-Im can't only take transactions so risky that no one else will do them and, at the same time, only be doing safe transactions. It doesn't make any sense at all.

The fact is, Ex-Im wins business by systematically underpricing risk. That is why borrowers go to Ex-Im instead of any number of private institutions that wouldn't offer deals on the same terms that Ex-Im offers. That is why our largest banks go to Ex-Im for loan guarantees. The Ex-Im terms are too good to be true—at least too good to be true in the private sector. And that is evident by the kinds of transactions that Ex-Im approves.

Consider just last year: Ex-Im financed a deal guaranteeing an \$82 million loan from JPMorgan to Qantas airline for the purpose of buying jets made by General Electric. Now, let's think about this. JPMorgan is the largest bank in America, one of the largest banks in the world. Qantas is the largest airline in Australia. And General Electric is one of the largest industrial companies in the world.

Why did these companies need the American taxpayer to subsidize a deal among the three of them? The obvious answer is they don't. These are some of the biggest, most sophisticated companies in the world, and they have complete access to global capital markets every day of the week. They didn't turn to Ex-Im because they were unable to secure private financing. They turned to Ex-Im because they got a better deal than they would get in a strictly private transaction.

Now, as if that isn't galling enough, Ex-Im has now decided that American markets can't meet our domestic financing needs—purely domestic. I remind you, the U.S. capital markets are the largest, deepest, most sophisticated capital markets in the world by far. Anyone with a bright idea and a business plan can raise capital in the United States. They do it every day.

According to the Securities and Exchange Commission's Office of Small Business Capital Formation report for fiscal year 2021—last year—there were \$2.2 trillion in private offerings of debt and equity and \$1.7 trillion in initial public offerings and other registered securities. So that is almost \$4 trillion of capital markets activities in the United States. That is how big our capital markets are.

And then, separate from that are the banks. According to the Fed, there are about \$2½ trillion in outstanding commercial and industrial loans as of March 16.

My point is, the United States is not an economy that is starved of capital. It is awash with cash. Nevertheless, despite that, the Biden administration has instructed Ex-Im to develop a new Domestic Financing Program to expand the reach of the Bank into a whole new direction.

This proposed Domestic Financing Program would support creating or expanding domestic manufacturing businesses and infrastructure projects as long as there is some expectation that some arbitrary portion of the goods produced will be exported. And this can even include indirect exports. So, in other words, an Ex-Im finance manufacturer won't have to export a thing if he can claim that his customers will.

This is unbelievable. This is well beyond mission creep. As George Will observed in the Washington Post today, this is "mission gallop." And a program like this clearly subverts congressional intent and strains—and "strains" is a polite way to put the interpretation of Ex-Im's charter. And it does so to such an extent, really, I think, to make the charter basically meaningless.

There is no need—there is no reason—for Ex-Im to be providing domestic financing, none. As I said, we live in a highly developed market economy, like the most developed market economy in the world, and promising businesses have access to capital on competitive terms.

And just like all of Ex-Im's other programs—maybe even more so—the only way Ex-Im is going to win business in the domestic financing is if it either finances bad deals that the private sector wouldn't touch or it underprices the risks so that it is more attractive than the private financing.

So, earlier this month, I sent a letter to Ex-Im's President and Board Chair Reta Jo Lewis, and I requested that Ex-Im respond to a series of questions I have about this unprecedented new direction the administration wants to send the Ex-Im Bank. I also asked to withhold Board consideration of this Domestic Financing Program at least until there is a comprehensive framework that is published for notice and comment.

Before the Board votes to launch this whole new category of business at Ex-Im, shouldn't we all see: How is this program actually going to work? How expansive will it be? How expensive will it be? How many private lenders will be elbowed aside so that Ex-Im could be doing loans private banks would otherwise be doing?

And none of this has been spelled out. We don't have any answers to these important structural questions about this program. Yet my understanding is they are going to go ahead and launch this.

So I sent this letter. Ex-Im responded to my questions, but they remained

completely silent on my request to withhold Board consideration until there has been public discussion and debate about the specifics of this framework.

Only 3 days after I got the Ex-Im response to my questions, they noticed a Board of Directors meeting for April 14, at which they intend to consider and probably approve this Domestic Financing Program.

Now, this leads me to the reason that our Democratic colleagues want to push Ms. Pryor's nomination through urgently. See, it is my understanding that the Ex-Im Board needs at least three Senate-confirmed nominees in order to change its existing policies—certainly a policy as big as this one. Ex-Im only has two Senate-confirmed Board members now. So without Ms. Pryor, they couldn't launch this whole new program, which is a terrible idea in the first place.

So that brings me to Ms. Pryor. My concern with her is that she will continue to support, first, what I think is the unacceptable practice of Ex-Im providing taxpayer-funded subsidies to some of the world's largest and most well-capitalized companies, and I fear that she will move Ex-Im in the direction of supporting this whole new Domestic Financing Program.

Ms. Pryor has previously served on Ex-Im's Board, and during that time the JPMorgan-Qantas-General Electric deal that I mentioned earlier was a deal that she supported.

I asked Ms. Pryor a simple question during her nomination hearing, by the way. I said: Do these large, sophisticated American companies have access to private capital? She acknowledged that that is a simple question, and she refused to answer it. Now, why would she refuse to answer such a simple question for which the answer is obvious? It is because she didn't want to admit that these giant multinational firms obviously do have access to private capital, to alternative financing, and she didn't want to acknowledge that, despite that, Ex-Im still did the deal.

I am also concerned about another issue, which is the weakening of one of the very few taxpayer protections that is built into Ex-Im's charter. The charter includes a 2-percent cap on the permissible default rate. So no more than 2 percent of the assets on the books of Ex-Im can be in default at any point in time without precluding future lending. It puts a brake on Ex-Im expansion if they hit that 2-percent threshold.

Well, guess what? Ex-Im's default rate has trended toward that 2-percent cap. It is not quite there yet, but it is getting very close. That is why the President's budget requests that Congress temporarily waive the cap. Rather than address the problems with Ex-Im's deteriorating book of business, Ms. Pryor and the administration support this deeply flawed request to just double the statutory permissible default rate from 2 percent to 4 percent.

How is that good for taxpayers? It doesn't sound good to me.

Congress laid out a clear corrective measure in the event the default rate cap is breached. That is, you freeze the book of business. You acknowledge something is not going right. We have to fix that problem. Is Ex-Im or the Biden administration proposing to fix the problem? No. They just want to ignore it and just raise the cap, pretend it is not there.

I will be the first to acknowledge Ms. Pryor is clearly a competent person and well-qualified. She has a lot of experience. That is not my concern about her candidacy. My concern is that nothing in the entire nomination process—nothing in my discussions with her—has alleviated my concern that she would advance this badly flawed agenda, which is badly flawed in multiple ways, as I have laid out. It is also the case that the Biden administration and its supporters need Ms. Pryor now in order to advance this Domestic Financing Program.

For all of these reasons, I cannot support her candidacy, and I encourage my colleagues to vote against Ms. Pryor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I know we have an 11:45 vote scheduled.

I urge my colleagues to join me in advancing the nomination of Judith Pryor as Vice President of the Ex-Im Bank. I appreciate the ranking member of the committee's comments about her qualifications. She is clearly qualified.

What we need to always remember is our foreign competitors operate more than 100 export credit agencies and credit programs supporting our manufacturers. As if our policy has not been stupid enough as a country—PNTR with China, which caused the hollowing out of community after community in southwest Virginia and in my State and much of the area throughout the Midwest—China's export finance activity is larger than all of the export credit that G7 countries collectively provide. China will continue to use export credit to win manufacturing businesses in critical sectors.

In Ohio, we just lost two more light bulb manufactures, LED manufacturers. The light bulb was invented by an Ohioan, Thomas Edison, in a New Jersey lab. We used to lead the world. Now, 99 percent of LED light bulbs are made in China. Does that not teach us something?

How about semiconductors? We invented semiconductors. We only make about 10 percent of them in the country right now.

As First Vice President of Ex-Im, Ms. Pryor will help lead the Nation's official export credit agency as it supports workers and manufacturers throughout our country.

This is the most pro-worker President of the United States in my lifetime. He puts workers at the center of

our economic agenda, our manufacturing agenda. We know what that means for building middle-class lives. More to the issue, the Senate previously confirmed Ms. Pryor to be a Board member of Ex-Im in July 2019, 77 to 19. More recently, she was advanced out of the Banking and Housing Committee, which I chair, by a voice vote—12 Republicans, 12 Democrats—a voice vote. There was no objection, no dis-sension. The Chamber of Commerce—not always an ally of the Biden administration—the Chamber of Commerce supports Ms. Pryor. She worked with former president Kimberly Reed, a Republican appointee; and current member Spencer Bachus, a former Republican Congressman, to reopen Ex-Im to full operations.

My interest in her is a national interest. My interest is also that she is a native Ohioan. She hails from Richmond Heights, a Cleveland suburb, with 25 years of international business, finance, and public policy experience.

Don't be misled by attacks on Ex-Im's creation of a new financing facility for U.S. exporters. They already have a quorum. She is not essential for that quorum. She is essential because she is so darn good in her job. Ex-Im President Reta Jo Lewis is doing exactly what Congress—a majority of Congress, not unanimous, but a majority of Congress—told the Bank to do when we reauthorized this charter in 2019: Help American exporters compete with China.

Our economy—this is almost hard to believe—I mean, it is hard to believe—for the first time in 20 years, our economy is growing faster than China's economy. That is because we are finally stepping up with a real manufacturing policy. We are not asking Congress to waive any rules. The Bank is required to show that its financing does not crowd out financing from the private sector. It is essential that our manufacturers have every tool at their disposal so they can compete globally. That is why we need Judith Pryor at Ex-Im. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Ms. Pryor's nomination.

I yield the floor.

#### VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge.

The yeas and nays have been previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 115 Ex.]

#### YEAS—50

Baldwin	Duckworth	Klobuchar
Bennet	Durbin	Leahy
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Lujan
Booker	Gillibrand	Manchin
Brown	Hassan	Markey
Cantwell	Heinrich	Menendez
Cardin	Hickenlooper	Merkley
Carper	Hirono	Murphy
Casey	Kaine	Murray
Coons	Kelly	Ossoff
Cortez Masto	King	Padilla

Peters  
Reed  
Rosen  
Sanders  
Schatz  
Schumer

Shaheen  
Sinema  
Smith  
Stabenow  
Tester  
Van Hollen

Warner  
Warnock  
Warren  
Whitehouse  
Wyden

#### NAYS—50

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

Graham  
Grassley  
Hagerty  
Hawley  
Hoeven  
Hyde-Smith  
Inhofe  
Johnson  
Kennedy  
Lankford  
Lee  
Lummis  
Marshall  
McConnell  
Moran  
Murkowski  
Paul

Portman  
Risch  
Romney  
Rounds  
Rubio  
Sasse  
Scott (FL)  
Scott (SC)  
Shelby  
Sullivan  
Thune  
Tillis  
Toomey  
Tuberville  
Wicker  
Young

(Mr. HICKENLOOPER assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50.

The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the motion is agreed to.

The nomination is discharged and will be placed on the calendar.

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

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the cloture vote on the Pryor nomination, the Senate recess until 4:30 p.m.; that if cloture is invoked on the Pryor nomination, the vote on confirmation occur at 4:30 p.m.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. For the information of the Senate, two rollcall votes are expected to occur at 4:30 p.m. Those votes will be on the confirmation of the Pryor nomination and cloture on the Contreras nomination. Additional rollcall votes are expected later this evening.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant 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. 672, Judith DelZoppo Pryor, of Ohio, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2025.

Charles E. Schumer, Tammy Duckworth, Mazie Hirono, Brian Schatz, Richard Blumenthal, Jacky Rosen, John W. Hickenlooper, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Cory A. Booker, Alex Padilla, Tim Kaine, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Gary C. Peters, Christopher Murphy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 Judith DelZoppo Pryor, of Ohio, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2025, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber wishing to vote or to change their vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 69, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 116 Ex.]

#### YEAS—69

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Risch
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Romney
Blunt	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Hoeven	Rounds
Boozman	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Capito	Klobuchar	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Lujan	Sinema
Casey	Manchin	Smith
Collins	Markey	Stabenow
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Thune
Cotton	Moran	Tillis
Cramer	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Crapo	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Warnock
Durbin	Ossoff	Warren
Feinstein	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wicker
Graham	Portman	Wyden

#### NAYS—31

Barrasso	Hagerty	Paul
Blackburn	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Lankford	Toomey
Daines	Lee	Tuberville
Ernst	Lummis	Young
Fischer	Marshall	
Grassley	McConnell	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 69, the nays are 31.

The motion is agreed to.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 4:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:13 p.m. recessed until 4:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. HICKENLOOPER).

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

#### VOTE ON PRYOR NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pryor nomination?

Ms. WARREN. 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.