

service workers has never been more important.

Roughly three-quarters of all nonfatal workplace injuries happen to healthcare workers.

While it is too early to have comprehensive data from the pandemic, evidence from healthcare organizations suggests that workplace violence has exploded during the pandemic, nearing crisis levels for healthcare and social service workers. This workplace violence crisis is surely contributing to the staffing shortages that many healthcare employers have warned us about.

In Wisconsin, vacancy rates for healthcare positions have been increasing, and threats against healthcare workers are viewed as the main culprit. These workers care for our loved ones and comfort us in our most trying times. They deserve to have the safe environment in which to do their work that this legislation provides.

So as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1195 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Reserving the right to object, I come from the business world and know firsthand that employers care about their employees. If you don't keep your workplace safe—we just discussed it today in the Budget hearing—they are not going to stick with you. I think the question is about how you address those issues. I am married to a lifelong business owner in our hometown downtown that would say the same thing.

None of us who own businesses think—unless you get very, maybe large, where you think you don't need to pay attention to basic common sense and the rules—you need something, I think, that addresses the issue from here.

You know, I think that so often when there is an issue, there is just a tendency to reflex to the Federal Government. What is not considered are the costs and how it might actually play out.

In this case, I do acknowledge the issue, but I think the bill is in search of maybe a problem in the sense that we have got a mechanism that already works. I will talk about that here in a moment.

OSHA is there to find these issues and adjudicate them accordingly, and I think what this would do is not lend the marginal benefit and would end up, like many bills, adding redtape and costs.

It has two budget points of order as well. Those are complicated. I just believe there are better options.

Let me talk about this: I introduced the Voluntary Protection Program Act that has the same approach in mind, aiming at the same problem. I did it with my colleague from Colorado, Senator BENNET. It allows OSHA to work alongside employers and workers to encourage businesses without going through the redtape or the dictate of the Federal Government, and it has been successful.

It is not like we are trying to reinvent the wheel. It makes businesses exempt from bureaucratic requirements as long as, in good faith, they are trying to address the underlying issues.

Look at this. In its current form, it safeguards nearly 1 million workers, 700 local unions, and 2,200 worksites. VPP sites have shown injury and illness rates 50 percent lower than their industry averages.

This is something that we should be incorporating across the system because it is working, and it is working with an enforcement Agency and businesses solving the problem before we give an overall framework from here down.

It has been around for over 40 years, demonstrated its success. I think it would be a better approach to a problem. I acknowledge it is just not being used broadly enough. After all, it is kind of the way I think things should work first before you create a law.

I will ask for consent here shortly to pass the VPP Act. Let me add one important note that is personal to many in this Chamber. The 116th Congress was my first as a U.S. Senator, as a freshman. I was assigned to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and I had the great honor to serve alongside Senator Mike Enzi, who was the chair of the Budget Committee. This was his bill.

Senator Enzi was known as one of the individuals here never to shirk an issue but come up with commonsense ways that wouldn't add further to our debt, add more bureaucracy, but still solve the issue. This bill addresses a program that he cared about deeply that needs to be put into statute, to where it is used more broadly, and I was honored to take the lead on this act, along with Senator BENNET.

My bill is a no-brainer. Employers get the choice to participate. It has a proven track record, and it makes workplaces safer. It is a win-win for all involved.

Therefore, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, obviously, I am very disappointed, and I would point out that a voluntary measure, as my colleague on the HELP Committee just described, is not what we need when we step up to help protect our frontline workers in emergency rooms and in multiple settings where there is, sadly, an increasing propensity for violence.

Yesterday, I met with members of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the people who work on the frontlines in our emergency departments and emergency rooms across the country—as well as the emergency nurses. One after another, they shared stories of the violence they see and experience. I can't imagine walking into work every day knowing that this could be the day that someone was going to be struck or injured.

A doctor talked about being strangled with his stethoscope. A nurse talked about hearing a fellow nurse being punched and then falling on the floor, unconscious, and now with a concussion. I met a nurse several years ago from Wisconsin who was beaten so severely by a patient that she can no longer work in nursing.

We are not talking about studying a problem and coming up with a voluntary solution; we are talking about a crisis happening to our healthcare workers and at a time when they are also dealing with a pandemic.

Healthcare workers, social service workers, nurses, and doctors have been here this week. We will have more coming next week. These frontline heroes, who have endured so much, deserve the protection of an enforceable OSHA standard, not just a voluntary program, which is already the status quo.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1081

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 1081 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the Braun substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. BALDWIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I suppose I prematurely gave my reasons for objecting as I responded to Senator BRAUN's objection to passing the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act; but, again, this is pretty much the status quo. If it is a voluntary program, it is not an enforceable OSHA standard; and these frontline heroes who have endured so much over the past few years, with increases in violence and during the pandemic, deserve the legislation that I have sponsored, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act. The House passed it over a year ago, and that is what we should be taking up.

So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wyoming.

NOMINATION OF KATHRYN HUFF

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to support the nomination that we are soon to vote on, and that is the nomination of Dr. Kathryn Huff. She was nominated to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at the Department of Energy.

Now, while I don't agree with her on many issues, she is a strong supporter of nuclear energy. She is well qualified for the position to which she has been nominated. She holds a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering and currently serves as a special adviser to the Energy Secretary.

Before joining the Department, Dr. Huff was an assistant professor in the Department of Nuclear, Plasma & Radiological Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has also worked in our National Laboratories.

At her nomination hearing in early March, Dr. Huff testified:

It would be my honor to help the United States bolster and reclaim its global leadership in nuclear energy.

Now, more than ever, it is critical that the Department work diligently to make America energy-dominant again. Nuclear technology is essential to meeting America's energy, environmental, and national security objectives. We need to be looking for opportunities to expand our use of nuclear energy. Dr. Huff is ready and able to take on that responsibility.

Russia's army is funded by the sale of energy. That includes uranium. Russia accounts for one-third of the world's uranium conversion and half of the world's uranium enrichment capacity. It is our third largest supplier of uranium—for us in the United States.

Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine has opened the world's eyes. We can't be reliant on Russia. Now is the time for the United States to stop buying Russian uranium. Now is the time for the United States to ramp up our domestic uranium production. Dr. Huff recognizes that opportunity, and she is prepared to act.

The Department of Energy needs to take immediate action to establish a strategic uranium reserve. This is to ensure our existing reactors have the fuel that they need.

We also can't allow America's advanced reactor developers to be dependent on Russia. The Department of Energy needs to take immediate action to develop an American supply of high-assay, low-enriched uranium. To meet these challenges, we need experienced leadership in place at the Office of Nuclear Energy. Dr. Huff is up to that task. So I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting her nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 3 minutes.

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

NOMINATION OF KATHRYN HUFF

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, 2 days ago, it was my unhappy task to notify the Senate that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources had deadlocked on another nomination and on 3 important public land bills, with all 10 Democratic members voting for each bill and all 10 Republican members voting against them.

I strongly believe that the Senate works best when we work together, find common ground, and reach a consensus and that we fail the American people when we don't.

So it is with great pleasure that I come to the floor today to speak on the nomination of Dr. Kathryn Huff to be the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Energy. I am very pleased to say that Dr. Huff's nomination is one thing Democrats and Republicans on the committee agree with completely. We reported her nomination last week without a single dissenting vote. I urge my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, to vote to confirm her today.

My friend JOHN BARRASSO is ranking member, and we work very close together, and this is one that we found total unanimity that she is the right person at the right time in the right place for this job.

Dr. Huff is extremely well qualified for this important position. She has the academic training as a physicist and in nuclear engineering. She holds degrees in physics from the University of Chicago and nuclear engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has extensive postgraduate experience as a research assistant at Argonne and the Idaho National Laboratories and as a postdoctoral fellow at Berkeley. She has extensive professional experience as a professor at the University of Illinois for 5 years before joining the Department of Energy.

She joined the Department of Energy a year ago as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy. She served as the Acting Assistant Secretary for nearly a year prior to her nomination. She has very clearly demonstrated her ability to handle the job through her performance as the Deputy and Acting Assistant Secretary over this past year. She also showed her firm grasp of nuclear issues facing the Department at her confirmation hearing.

In short, Dr. Huff has earned the strong bipartisan endorsement of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. I urge all Senators to vote to

confirm her today. It shows that when we get the right person who is qualified for the job, basically, we will come together.

I would advise any administration to look deeply at the person you are bringing before us to make sure they fit those requirements. This is a carbon copy of what I would continue to find—people such as Dr. Huff to fill these very, very, very important jobs. It takes that type of dedication, but it takes the type of knowledge and experience that Dr. Huff has.

I urge total adoption of this by all Members of our Senate, 100 of us.

VOTE ON HUFF NOMINATION

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

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays are requested.

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 Colorado (Mr. BENNET) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 80, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 160 Ex.]

YEAS—80

Baldwin	Fischer	Ossoff
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Padilla
Blumenthal	Grassley	Peters
Blunt	Hagerty	Reed
Booker	Hassan	Risch
Boozman	Heinrich	Romney
Braun	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Brown	Hirono	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schatz
Capito	Johnson	Schumer
Cardin	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	Kelly	Sinema
Casey	Kennedy	Smith
Cassidy	King	Stabenow
Collins	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Coons	Lankford	Tester
Cornyn	Leahy	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Van Hollen
Cotton	Lummis	Warner
Cramer	Manchin	Warnock
Crapo	Markey	Warren
Daines	Menendez	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Merkley	Wicker
Durbin	Murkowski	Wyden
Ernst	Murphy	Young
Feinstein	Murray	

NAYS—11

Blackburn	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cruz	McConnell	Thune
Hawley	Paul	Tuberville
Hoeben	Sasse	