

This includes law enforcement groups like NOBLE, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives; the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association; Women in Federal Law Enforcement; the International Association of Chiefs of Police; the Major County Sheriffs' Association; the National Sheriffs' Association.

It includes more than 140 former Federal prosecutors, 8 former ATF Directors, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the association representing the men and women of the ATF.

He has the support of civil rights organizations—the National Urban League, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and faith organizations like the Jewish Federation of North America.

They understand that Steve is the right person to lead this vital law enforcement Agency.

Following the horrific shooting in Highland Park, local law enforcement was able to capture the murderer so quickly because of the help provided by the heroes—the men and women of the ATF.

Yet there are some out there who not only don't want an ATF Director, for whatever reason, they may oppose Steve Dettelbach. That is not even it. They want to abolish the ATF entirely. That is one stupid idea.

You know who thinks that it is a terrible idea? Every single law enforcement officer who has to combat gun crimes on a daily basis. They know how important the ATF is, even though some fringe politicians and just some fringe, conspiracy-minded characters think the ATF should be abolished.

Abolishing the ATF, these law enforcement officers argue, rightly—abolishing the ATF would make our communities less safe.

In their letter endorsing Mr. Dettelbach, the National Sheriffs' Association said that he would work to bring "people together by working closely with state and local law enforcement to ensure that resources are adequately allocated to combat violent crime."

The sheriffs went on to write they appreciated Steve's "goal of being a value-add to local law enforcement by not only adding resources to urban areas, but rural as well."

Rural crime and rural terrorism and rural—abuses like that are just as likely in rural areas as cities.

Mr. Dettelbach has emphasized the importance of "boots on the ground" task forces and pledged to provide forensic help to local law enforcement at crime scenes.

Sadly, our local law enforcement personnel need this help. Fortunately, the ATF, with Steve Dettelbach, I hope, confirmed and soon at the helm, will be there to provide that help.

I can think of no better way to support law enforcement, to reject hate, to keep Americans safe from violent

crime than for the Senate to confirm Steve Dettelbach ATF Director.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting his confirmation.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote on Steve Dettelbach's nomination to lead the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives—better known as ATF.

As I said on the floor yesterday, after describing in horrifying detail the mass shooting in Highland Park on the Fourth of July, we need a confirmed ATF Director now more than ever.

When a mass shooter tears apart a community like Highland Park, IL—or Buffalo, NY—ATF agents are among the first to arrive on scene. In fact, in the hours following the attack in Highland Park, it was ATF agents who traced the firearm belonging to the confessed shooter. Their investigate work was described by local authorities in Lake County as "phenomenal." I couldn't agree more.

The least we can do to support these heroic agents is confirm a proven leader to head the ATF, which has gone 7 years without a Senate-confirmed Director.

Our country and our communities deserve better. They deserve an ATF that is fully equipped to respond on our Nation's darkest days—and to enforce the laws on the books to prevent these tragedies in the first place.

And Steve Dettelbach is exactly the right leader for this challenge. He is a career prosecutor with decades of experience fighting crime, religion-motivated violence, gun trafficking, and he is a proven consensus-builder with bipartisan support.

The vote on Mr. Dettelbach's nomination is not about a new policy or regulation; it is about enforcing the laws that already exist, and respecting the men and women of ATF who deserve Senate-confirmed leadership. This vote is a pragmatic step all of us can take toward making our communities safer.

Guns are now the leading cause of death for American children. And we have more than one mass shooting per day in America. In the wake of Highland Park, Uvalde, Buffalo, and too many tragedies across America, it is clear that we need experienced and dedicated law enforcement leadership in agencies like ATF. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting Mr. Dettelbach.

VOTE ON DETTELBACH NOMINATION

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote occur immediately.

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

All postcloture time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Dettelbach nomination?

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent; the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 246 Ex.]

YEAS—48

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—6

| | | |
|------------|-------|---------|
| Blumenthal | Luján | Sasse |
| Leahy | Risch | Schumer |

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.

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 bill 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. 975, Michael S. Barr, of Michigan, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2018.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Ben Ray Luján, Jack Reed, Jacky Rosen, Tina Smith, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J. Leahy, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Christopher A. Coons, Alex Padilla, Chris Van Hollen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Elizabeth Warren, Jeff Merkley, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tim Kaine.

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 Michael S. Barr, of Michigan, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2018, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 66, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 247 Ex.]

YEAS—66

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Grassley | Portman |
| Barrasso | Hassan | Reed |
| Bennet | Heinrich | Romney |
| Blunt | Hickenlooper | Rosen |
| Booker | Hirono | Rounds |
| Brown | Inhofe | Sanders |
| Cantwell | Kaine | Schatz |
| Capito | Kelly | Scott (SC) |
| Cardin | King | Shaheen |
| Carpenter | Klobuchar | Sinema |
| Casey | Lummis | Smith |
| Cassidy | Manchin | Stabenow |
| Collins | Markey | Tester |
| Coons | McConnell | Toomey |
| Cornyn | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Merkley | Warner |
| Duckworth | Murkowski | Warnock |
| Durbin | Murphy | Warren |
| Ernst | Murray | Whitehouse |
| Feinstein | Ossoff | Wicker |
| Gillibrand | Padilla | Wyden |
| Graham | Peters | Young |

NAYS—27

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Blackburn | Fischer | Marshall |
| Boozman | Hagerty | Paul |
| Braun | Hawley | Rubio |
| Burr | Hoehn | Scott (FL) |
| Cotton | Hyde-Smith | Shelby |
| Cramer | Johnson | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Kennedy | Thune |
| Cruz | Lankford | Tillis |
| Daines | Lee | Tuberville |

NOT VOTING—7

| | | |
|------------|-------|---------|
| Blumenthal | Moran | Schumer |
| Leahy | Risch | |
| Luján | Sasse | |

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The yeas are 66, the nays are 27.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Michael S. Barr, of Michigan, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2018.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Virginia.

RECOGNIZING LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL GRADUATES

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend the Senator from Iowa for giving me a moment of personal privilege.

I also want to acknowledge our colleague who has been the Presiding Officer. I want to acknowledge our colleague who was presiding prior to you coming to the chair and acknowledge that it is her birthday today, a great day of celebration across Arizona and elsewhere.

Mr. President, I will only rise for a moment, and I appreciate my friend the senior Senator from Illinois being here for this. I want to acknowledge my youngest daughter, Eliza, and her fellow classmates from the London Business School—not LSE; the London Business School—where, last Wednesday, I attended their graduation. My hope is that every one of these young men and women who are going to be from across the world—the United States, the UK, Nigeria, Lebanon, Israel, India, Singapore, and a host of other countries—one, I wish them all well. I know they are going to contribute to economies and growth around the world.

I also believe that almost all of them now are going to go off their family's payroll at this moment in time after they have received this great, distinguished MBA they received from the London Business School.

I do appreciate, again, my friend the Senator from Iowa giving me the courtesy of this quick acknowledgement and recognition.

With that, I yield the floor and yield to my friend the senior Senator from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Iowa.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am back to the floor for reasons that my Senator friends are tired of hearing me talk about all the time, but I have come back to give you a specific example of retaliation against whistleblowers, Agencies of the government not answering letters that we have sent, and also what I believe is some political interference in some of my oversight work. Today, it deals specifically with the Department of Veterans Affairs—as we know it around here, the VA.

On April 2 of last year, 2021, I sent letters to the VA and the VA Office of Inspector General based on allegations from multiple whistleblowers. Those whistleblowers reported numerous ethical violations, retaliation, and possible leaking of market-sensitive information that may have affected retail investors. I have been waiting more than a year for a response to my inquiries.

Emails obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by a government watchdog group called Empower Oversight show that career public servants at the VA prepared a response to

my letter over a year ago, but when it came time for the Secretary of the VA, McDonough, to send that letter to my office, senior Biden political officials blocked it. It appears that Biden-appointed VA officials have issued an order not to respond to my request, and I have a pretty good reason why.

We know that the VA received these allegations from whistleblowers early on, and the VA ignored them. Whistleblowers alleged, among other things, conflicts of interest between a senior-level VA official and a company represented by her husband. This official, Charmain Bogue, has since left public service. The company that employed her husband, Barrett Bogue, is entitled “Veterans Education Success,” or VES.

On multiple occasions, starting in December of 2017, an employee at VA sought guidance from VA lawyers on whether Ms. Bogue should recuse herself on procurement-related matters. The lawyers affirmed that Ms. Bogue should recuse herself, and the employee even copied Ms. Bogue on that guidance of recusal. The employee also alerted VA leadership of Ms. Bogue's need to recuse herself. Ms. Bogue never recused herself, but the VA employee was reportedly removed from Federal service. Now, that is retaliation. That is unjustified. It should never happen.

In response to my letter about these and other allegations, the VA Office of Inspector General immediately opened an investigation. The VA Office of Inspector General uncovered more wrongdoing than originally thought, and I have four points that they uncovered. I am only going to go into those four.

Ms. Bogue participated in matters involving her husband's employer, contrary to ethics guidance. Ms. Bogue's interaction with that company violated the apparent conflict rules. Ms. Bogue did not provide sufficient detail to VA ethics about her spouse's business. No. 4, Ms. Bogue refused to cooperate fully in the OIG's investigation.

These are only some of the allegations that I have received.

The VA Office of Inspector General did not review the allegations of whistleblower reprisal; nor did it investigate whether VA employees mishandled nonpublic information.

I raised questions about all of these issues, and to date, I have had no substantive communication from Secretary McDonough about any of these questions I have raised. So what is the VA hiding? What else did the VA know or choose to ignore?

Congress needs answers not stonewalling. Independent government watchdogs and whistleblower advocates have called on the VA to review government grants and screen for companies and individuals who have engaged in wrongdoing. They have also urged the VA to consider whether those individuals or entities should be able to obtain government contracts in the future.