

same courage and patriotism that we now see in Vladimir Kara-Murza. Like Mr. Kara-Murza, he knew very well he could go to jail for speaking out against the government, but Mr. Khodorkovsky did so anyway and refused to flee the country, saying:

I would prefer to be a political prisoner rather than a political immigrant.

Of course, by then, Mr. Putin had already shown himself willing to violate the international laws of war, having leveled the Chechen capital of Grozny in his own Republic of Russia in 1999. In 2008, he launched a new assault on international law with the invasion of Georgia. In 2014, he started a bloody war in eastern Ukraine. In 2016, Russian dictator Putin and his forces attacked the Syrian city of Aleppo, killing hundreds of civilians and prolonging the rule of Bashar al-Assad.

Meanwhile, Putin ramped up his attacks on domestic freedom as well. In 2015, Boris Nemtsov, leader of the democratic opposition, former Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, was shot to death in broad daylight just yards away from the Kremlin. Three months later, Mr. Kara-Murza was poisoned for the first time. More recently, in 2020, Alexei Navalny, the current leader of the opposition, was himself poisoned and had to seek treatment in Berlin. This is Vladimir Putin's Russia today. When Navalny recovered, he chose to return to Moscow, knowing the risks, and immediately upon landing, he was arrested.

This is the deplorable state of Russia and freedom under Vladimir Putin. Time and again, he has shown that he is bent on stamping out the aspirations of his people for freedom and the rule of law.

As leader of the free world, America must continue to condemn Putin's lawless acts and stand in solidarity with our Russian friends who are courageously fighting against all odds for a better future in Russia and are suffering as a result.

These are modern-day heroes—Alexei Navalny, Vladimir Kara-Murza—and we should not forget them.

My friend the distinguished senior Senator from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN, and I, along with Congressmen STEVE COHEN and JOE WILSON, are the four House and Senate leaders of the Helsinki Commission, which monitors human rights in former Soviet countries. We recently sent a joint letter to President Biden calling on the administration to name and sanction all of those who have been involved in the arrest, detention, and persecution of Vladimir Kara-Murza. I issue that call again today, and I invite my colleagues from both parties to stand with Vladimir Kara-Murza and work for his release.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to complete my remarks.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the confirmation of Dr. Lester Martinez-Lopez to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, or ASDHA.

The Defense Department is responsible for the health and welfare of over 1.3 million Americans who are entrusted with protecting our Nation. In order to ensure they get the care they need and deserve, the DOD must have an Assistant Secretary of Defense in place to lead their health affairs.

This position is the principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense for all health and force health protection policies, programs, activities, and the Integrated Disability Evaluation System. The ASDHA is responsible for the execution of the DOD medical mission, to provide and maintain physical and mental health readiness for medical services and support to members of the military services, their families, and those held in the control of the military services.

Dr. Martinez-Lopez is eminently qualified for the position and has an impressive history of public service. Dr. Martinez-Lopez graduated from medical school in 1978. He retired from the U.S. Army as a major general and was the first Latino to head the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command at Fort Detrick, MD. He is the former director of the Army's worldwide medical research, acquisition, and logistics program, overseeing a vast research portfolio that included cancer, trauma, infectious diseases, aviation medicine, and telemedicine research.

Dr. Martinez-Lopez also directed the premier national biological and chemical defense laboratories and research program and led the development of the National Biodefense Campus at Fort Detrick.

He served as the commanding general of the Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, where he directed a worldwide public health organization and was responsible for preventive medicine, health promotion and wellness, global medical surveillance, occupational and environmental health, and health risk communication.

Dr. Martinez-Lopez has an extensive military and medical background that makes him eminently qualified to fill this critically important role. But Republican obstruction has left us without a confirmed Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs for nearly a year, endangering the health of our servicemembers and the safety of our Nation.

Unfortunately, Dr. Lopez is not the only critically important civilian DOD nominee Senate Republicans are blocking. Just yesterday, Chairman REED came to the floor to ask for unanimous consent on the nominees to serve as inspector general of DOD, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and a judge of the

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

This unprecedented obstruction must end, and we must fill these important positions, including Dr. Martinez-Lopez, as quickly as possible.

I urge my colleagues to confirm this nominee.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 779, Lester Martinez-Lopez, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I rise in objection to this nominee due to his support of President Biden's irrational and now proven foolish vaccine mandates for our military.

Last August, the Biden administration imposed a COVID-19 vaccine mandate across the entire military. This led to the expulsion of thousands of qualified, honorable servicemembers who elected not to receive the vaccine. This DOD mandate failed to account for immunity to the virus many troops gained through natural infection, which we now know is equal to or greater than the effectiveness of the vaccine. The mandate also failed to account for the fact that these men and women are our bravest and healthiest Americans, with strong immune systems.

Recently, we learned that the Army cut roughly 60,000 National Guard and Reserve members from pay and benefits for refusing to take the COVID vaccine at the beginning of July. This decision was made at a time when more than 30 percent of its recruitment slots are not fulfilled.

The recruiting crisis has gotten so bad that the Army is now placing enlistees who exceed body fat standards into a dietary and exercise program in order to lose weight. This manpower shortage could result in undermanned units and potentially longer deployments as well as greater dependence on National Guardsmen to meet mission goals.

These personnel shortages are clear and obvious, and they are getting worse. Yet the ideologues in charge of this administration refuse to drop the vaccine mandate for the military. There is no longer any rational basis to persist in this demand other than as a deliberate campaign to punish dissenting opinions and oppress political enemies.

The Department also appears to be going out of its way to deny religious accommodations for our troops. More than 24,000 members across the branches have submitted religious accommodation requests. Almost all have

been rejected. The Air Force approved fewer than 130 of the more than 9,000 religious requests submitted by airmen.

It is time for this administration to do what is morally right and patriotic, what is decent and sensible and prudent for the readiness of our military, and drop this vaccine mandate. Further, the Defense Department should reinstate those servicemembers who have been expelled for this reason, return them to their previous positions, and provide backpay for time missed.

But until they do so, I will continue to object to this nominee. And, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, very briefly, the fact that my colleague is objecting to the consequences of not adhering to the requirement for vaccination is not within the purview of Dr. Lester Martinez-Lopez. So, therefore, their objection as to this particular nominee is misplaced and, in my view, irrelevant.

I again call on my colleagues to enable this nominee to come forward under unanimous consent.

#### VOTE ON PRESSMAN NOMINATION

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

Ms. HASSAN. 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. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

The result was announced—yeas 61, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 274 Ex.]

#### YEAS—61

Baldwin	Crapo	Merkley
Bennet	Feinstein	Moran
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Murphy
Blunt	Graham	Murray
Booker	Hassan	Ossoff
Brown	Heinrich	Padilla
Cantwell	Hickenlooper	Peters
Capito	Hirono	Portman
Cardin	Kaine	Reed
Carper	Kelly	Risch
Casey	King	Romney
Collins	Klobuchar	Rosen
Coons	Lujan	Rounds
Cornyn	Markey	Schatz
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Schumer
Cramer	Menendez	Shaheen

Sinema  
Smith  
Stabenow  
Tester  
Tillis

Toomey  
Van Hollen  
Warner  
Warnock  
Warren

Whitehouse  
Wyden  
Young

#### NAYS—30

Barrasso  
Blackburn  
Boozman  
Braun  
Cassidy  
Cotton  
Cruz  
Daines  
Ernst  
Fischer

Grassley  
Hagerty  
Hawley  
Hoeven  
Hyde-Smith  
Johnson  
Kennedy  
Lankford  
Lee  
Lummis

Marshall  
Paul  
Rubio  
Scott (FL)  
Scott (SC)  
Shelby  
Sullivan  
Thune  
Tuberville  
Wicker

#### NOT VOTING—9

Burr  
Duckworth  
Durbin

Inhofe  
Leahy  
Manchin

Murkowski  
Sanders  
Sasse

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President shall be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader is recognized.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 1068.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elizabeth Wilson Hanes, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 1068, Elizabeth Wilson Hanes, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Charles E. Schumer, Christopher Murphy, Tammy Baldwin, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Elizabeth Warren, Jeanne Shaheen, Jeff Merkley, Alex Padilla, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Gary C. Peters, Edward J. Markey, Sherrod Brown, Tim Kaine, Ben Ray Lujan, Mazie Hirono.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, July 28, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, a few weeks ago, the fate of the CHIPS Act, our collective effort to shore up the vulnerable semiconductor supply chain, was in limbo. Republicans said we would not move forward with what was then known as USICA, the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, while Democrats were crafting a partisan reckless massive tax and spending bill behind closed doors.

Then Senator MANCHIN, the Senator from West Virginia, made a decision that angered most of his Democratic colleagues—he slammed the door on the climate and tax provisions and reconciliation. He said:

Until we see the July inflation figures—

Which we haven't seen yet—

until we see the July Federal reserve interest rates, then let's wait.

He noted that families were struggling to buy such essentials as gasoline and groceries and added:

I can't make that decision basically on taxes of any type.

That was what I will call the old Joe.

After we received assurances privately from some Senate Democrats, including the staff of the Senate majority leader, that the tax and climate provisions were off the table, we were able to move forward with USICA and the funding of this vulnerable semiconductor supply chain that is an important part of the bill that the House is voting on today.

So Republicans and Democrats went to work, negotiating in good faith to reach an agreement because we recognized that the vulnerability of our semiconductor supply chain was an economic and national security existential threat because 90 percent of the advanced semiconductors in the world that power everything from your cell phone to the F-35, to the Stinger or the Javelin missiles that are being used in Ukraine today—90 percent of those come from overseas, and the United States makes zero percent of them. That was the vulnerability and the risk we were exposed to, so that is why we worked so hard on a bipartisan basis to pass what used to be called Endless Frontier. I guess it has had about four or five different names so far, but it started, in my mind, with the CHIPS for America Act that Mr. WARNER, the Senator from Virginia, and I introduced in June of 2020.

So we all celebrated with a bipartisan press conference just in the LBJ Room over here, but then shortly after that bipartisan announcement, we learned some astonishing news: The climate and tax provisions apparently