

laws of the United States to do what we are clearly helping you do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, it was such a joy to be in Tennessee last week and visit with so many of our local officials, and I had the opportunity to spend some time with some of our sheriffs. And one of the sheriffs made a point that I think deserves attention in this body today.

He said: Marsha, for years, we have measured the drugs we have apprehended in grams or ounces, but today everything is in pounds. That is the uptick in volume that our local law enforcement is seeing in our communities.

Now, the question is, Why is this happening? How is it that so much more is getting across that southern border? And my colleague from Ohio and my colleague from Missouri have each mentioned the problems that exists there—no “Remain in Mexico,” no wall.

And we are at a time here in this country where our supply chains are really being stressed, but the supply chains of the cartels seem to be doing just fine. Fortunately, our Border Patrol has been able to cause some blips and some problems with those supply chains, and they have been able to apprehend some of the drugs coming across our border.

In January, in a period of 7 days—1 week—our Border Patrol caught 47 pounds of methamphetamine in California, 3,800 pounds of marijuana in two raids in Texas, and 20 pounds of cocaine in Texas.

The street value was about \$7 million that they pulled off of the street, but this is, unfortunately, a blip for the cartels—just a blip on their radar. These thousands of pounds of drugs are a footnote in the long history of the “got-aways” and the drug mules who keep these cartel supply lines flowing from South and Central America and into the United States.

Now, as my colleagues have said, until this administration decides they want to get serious about protecting our Nation’s sovereignty and securing this southern border, this is going to continue.

Now, what does this cause in our country? What it means is every town is a border town, and every State is a border State. Until the Biden administration decides they are going to get serious on that border, it means that your town will function like a border town, your State like a border State. Nashville, Knoxville, Memphis are all experiencing some of the same problems that you are seeing on our Nation’s borders.

And whether the State is Maryland or Wisconsin or Nevada, whether these are other States—Illinois, Colorado—what you are seeing are these problems that are brought about by an open border: gangs, cartels, human smuggling, sex trafficking.

So I would ask my Democratic colleagues, and I would hope they would ask the President: Where else do they think these thousands of pounds of drugs are being headed?

That is right. It is a rhetorical question, but they are coming to your neighborhoods, and your local law enforcement agencies are going to find themselves dealing with this.

Now, the Biden administration has said, repeatedly, that they want to focus their border policy on finding the root causes of illegal immigration. So Vice President HARRIS recently took her second trip to the Northern Triangle so she could try and figure out what the root causes are.

But while she is there and meeting with diplomats, the cartels’ drug trade, along with their human trafficking trade, is booming. It is booming. The number of apprehensions across this southern border are at an alltime high.

And as my colleague mentioned, the “got-aways”—the hundreds of thousands of “got-aways” that are now in your communities—the hundreds or maybe even thousands of pounds of different drugs are coming into your communities.

We have been down this road before. We have made investments in the Northern Triangle to try and beat back the poverty, the corruption, and we are having the same problems. They are the same that they were years ago.

There is no buy-in on a policy. The only buy-in that this administration has managed to earn is the buy-in of corrupt officials and drug lords who have invested in our wide-open border.

Why is it that you have to pay the cartel to come in? Why is it that the cartels are moving these sex trafficking rings onto U.S. shores? Why is it that the cartels are setting up distribution centers in our cities? It is because this administration has that border wide open, and they see the opportunity to make big bucks, to really enrich themselves.

How can we expect to fight corruption when we encourage them to set up these business operations?

I would encourage my Democratic colleagues to take a look at the numbers that are coming from that southern border, look at numbers that were there from 2021, look at the numbers of not grams and ounces but pounds of illicit drugs that are being apprehended, talk to their local law enforcement about what they are finding on their streets, and then ask themselves: Are you doing everything you can to keep our communities safe? Are you doing everything that you can to keep our children and our grandchildren safe in their communities?

If you had to answer that question today, if the administration had to answer that question today, the answer would be an emphatic, no, they are not because the border is open. That policy is failing the American people; it is failing our communities that are truly

struggling to keep drugs out of the hands of kids; and it is failing the thousands upon thousands of people who took you at your word—and then you have seen this border turned over to the cartels.

I yield the floor.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Lopez nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenia Seoane Lopez, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

### VOICE ON LOPEZ NOMINATION

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted “nay”.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 24 Ex.]

### YEAS—59

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

### NAYS—38

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

## NOT VOTING—3

Hoeven Luján Romney

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, may I make an inquiry of the Chair?

How long was that last rollcall?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Approximately 55 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Can the Chair report the last Senator who voted?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair does not have that information.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will immediately be notified of the Senate's actions.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Staples nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Sean C. Staples, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

## VOTE ON STAPLES NOMINATION

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient question?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 25 Ex.]

## YEAS—59

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

## NAYS—38

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

## NOT VOTING—3

Hoeven Luján Romney

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). 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.

## 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. 613, John P. Howard III, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for the term of fifteen years.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Gary C. Peters, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Elizabeth Warren, Mazie Hirono, Alex Padilla, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Amy Klobuchar, Jon Tester.

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 John P. Howard III, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for the term of fifteen years, 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 New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 26 Ex.]

## YEAS—62

Baldwin	Hawley	Portman
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blunt	Hirono	Rounds
Booker	Inhofe	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Burr	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Lankford	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Lummis	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Tillis
Coons	Markey	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Graham	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

## NAYS—34

Barrasso	Fischer	Rubio
Blackburn	Grassley	Sasse
Boozman	Hagerty	Scott (FL)
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Marshall	Tuberville
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Daines	Paul	
Ernst	Risch	

## NOT VOTING—4

Hoeven Menendez  
Luján Romney

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). On this vote, the yeas are 62, the nays are 34.

The motion is agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John P. Howard III, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for the term of fifteen years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

## SCHOOL CHOICE

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, my colleagues across the aisle spent the first part of this year laser-focused on voting rights and the filibuster. Democrats at all levels, including President Biden, spoke of nothing else, claiming that this was the most important issue facing Americans and that the future of our country was at stake. But this was not a righteous crusade; it was a march into complete delusion—a message completely out of touch with the struggles of real Americans.

While Democrats lectured, Americans confronted reality. Across the country, inflation is squeezing paychecks, and COVID cases are skyrocketing. These are the issues that families are focusing on. Omicron's surge has sent students home from classrooms and back in front of computer screens. This is where parents' minds have been these last few weeks—not on Senate rules, not on the filibuster, but on their children's educations because when parents think