

Ms. CANTWELL. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY).

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 53 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Burr	Luján
Blunt	Hagerty	Sanders

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 will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The senior Senator from Maryland.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. CARDIN. 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.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Black History Month.

Black History Month provides an opportunity for our Nation collectively

to reflect on and celebrate the contributions and legacies of Black Americans. And while we have chosen this month, February, to engage in collective celebration, we must also remember that we benefit from the contributions and legacies of these great Americans every single day.

Today, I would like to focus my remarks on our Nation's black entrepreneurs. From Madame C.J. Walker to Baltimore's own Reginald F. Lewis and beyond, Black entrepreneurs have long been vital to the success of the American economy.

Unfortunately, throughout history, those who seek to hold back the progress of the Black community view the successes of Black entrepreneurs as a threat.

One need only look to the 1921 Tulsa Massacre—a dark incident in our Nation's history that has belatedly entered our collective consciousness.

White residents of Tulsa, OK, bombed, burned, and destroyed the Greenwood District. In addition to an untold number of lives lost—estimates range from dozens to hundreds—the riot destroyed homes, churches, schools, and businesses in the district. At the time, Greenwood was known as “Black Wall Street” due to its thriving Black middle class and successful businesses, and its destruction was one of the worst instances of racial violence in our Nation's history.

It is with instances like Greenwood and the dozens like it in mind that I stand here today because while Black entrepreneurs no longer work under the threat of such violence, they still face many longstanding systemic barriers.

My late friend and mentor, former Congressman Parren J. Mitchell, believed very strongly that the Federal Government had an important role to play in our efforts to right these historical injustices and support Black entrepreneurs.

In 1977, Congressman MITCHELL fought to pass an amendment to a \$4 billion Federal public works program requiring city and State recipients to set aside 10 percent of the funds for minority-owned businesses. He would go on to call the amendment his proudest congressional accomplishment.

I was incredibly proud last year to build on his legacy by working across the aisle and finally codifying the Minority Business Development Agency, MBDA, and giving the agency the resources and leadership necessary to help support entrepreneurs in the Black and other minority communities.

This accomplishment is particularly important in Maryland, as the Presiding Officer knows, since we are the home to the highest concentration of minority-owned businesses in the country.

While we have made progress, we must also continue working together to address these systemic inequities.

At the height of the pandemic, we came together to create the Paycheck

Protection Program, the PPP program, and we worked in a bipartisan manner to improve the program once it became clear that it was leaving far too many of our most vulnerable small businesses behind.

We invested in non-bank financial institutions like the community depository financial institutions and micro-lenders. We strengthened relationships between the Small Business Administration and our Nation's historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions. We created grant programs that reduced structural barriers instead of reinforcing them.

Recent studies have shown that these policies directly address the inequities present during the phase 1 PPP, which favored larger businesses. Through thoughtful policy, we made the program more equitable with the share of loans made to minority-owned businesses during phases 2 and 3 of the program in proportion with their overall share of small businesses.

As I speak here today, the Senate is still trying to find a path forward on President Biden's Build Back Better budget, which implements many of the lessons we have learned over the past 2 years. The bill contains many key provisions that will provide the SBA and the MBDA with resources to empower Black entrepreneurs even more.

For instance, the Build Back Better Act would create a direct loan program at the SBA. It would create a new Up-lift Accelerator program to deepen the relationships between SBA and HBCUs, and it would make the SBA existing loan products more accessible and affordable.

The pandemic has demonstrated that when we come together to address the problems in our society free from partisanship and in good faith, we are able to make great strides. It also confirms that the Federal Government has a key role to play in addressing the historic injustices that have harmed—and continue to harm—Black entrepreneurs and the Black community at large.

This Black History Month, let us commit to pairing our words with actions, just as we did during the pandemic. We need to enact these proven policies as quickly as possible. We cannot let this opportunity pass us by.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE JOHN GERRARD

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the distinguished career of a Nebraska public servant, U.S. District Court Judge John Gerrard.

After just over 10 years on the Federal bench in the District of Nebraska,

he announced Monday that he will move to senior status starting next year. Judge Gerrard's impressive career has spanned more than four decades, and it is not over yet. After his successor is confirmed, he will remain on the bench with a reduced caseload.

Judge Gerrard is a native Nebraskan. He grew up in Schuyler and attended Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln. He left the good life, temporarily, to pursue an MPA at the University of Arizona and a JD at the University of the Pacific in California.

I am grateful that he came home to Nebraska after law school. In 1981, Judge Gerrard began his career in private practice in Norfolk. A year later, he also began serving as a part-time city attorney for the neighboring community of Battle Creek. That was the start of 40 years and counting of selfless public service.

In 1995, he was appointed to the Nebraska Supreme Court by then-Governor Ben Nelson. He was just 41 years old at the time, making him the youngest-ever Nebraska Supreme Court Justice.

After more than 15 years on our State's highest court, he was nominated by President Obama to the Federal judgeship he holds now in 2011, serving as chief judge for 3 of those years.

At every turn, Judge Gerrard has used his respect for the law to advance the greater good of Nebraskans and all Americans. During his time on the bench, I have appreciated hearing his views about many pressing judicial matters. His perspective as a sentencing judge has also been crucial in helping me to unpack how proposed legislation in Congress would affect Federal judges.

It has been an honor to know Judge Gerrard and to work with him for over a decade. He is an accomplished, skilled, and respected jurist, and I am glad that he has chosen to continue his service after moving to senior status.

Everyone who knows Judge Gerrard can attest that his wisdom extends far beyond the law. He has never failed to impress me with his keen observations about life. He is a good man with a servant's heart, and I am proud to call him a friend.

On behalf of all Nebraskans, I would like to thank him for his four decades of dedicated public service. I look forward to working with President Biden to confirm a district court judge who will live up to Judge Gerrard's legacy of ruling fairly in accordance with the Constitution.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RED CROSS NATIONAL BLOOD SUPPLY SHORTAGE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, last month, the American Red Cross began sounding the alarm on a national blood crisis, the first they have ever declared. COVID-19 has added extra volatility to the blood supply, and this shortage strains hospitals and patient care throughout America.

We continue to face that critical blood supply shortage today, with Kansas's blood supply standing at a 1- to 2-day inventory.

I have heard from medical professionals—doctors, nurses, others in Kansas about the tough decisions rural doctors and healthcare providers are having to make, including canceling surgeries, blood transfusions, and possibly not delivering babies because bleeding complications may require blood that these facilities just don't have.

My hometown of Plainville, KS, has a population of about 2,000. We are fortunate to have a county hospital with dedicated healthcare professionals and physicians. One of my hometown physicians, Dr. Sanchez, who I am told is not on Facebook very often but posted his plea—his plea for people to donate blood.

Dr. Sanchez's Facebook post says—this is his story: Today we had to tell a patient with heart disease that the blood transfusions that had prolonged his life with marked improvement in quality could no longer happen at Rooks County Health Center. My patient and his son were understandably upset. It just so happens that the same patient was told a few days previous that the melanoma cancer that he beat for 40 years back returned. And now no blood transfusion.

The doctor said that the hospital is considering canceling surgeries, possibly even not delivering babies. Our stock of common blood type A-positive and donor O-positive blood units are down over 30 percent, from six units to four units. Universal donor O-negative blood has been in short supply for months and maybe for years. Blood supplies are usually replenished at the American Red Cross every 3 weeks, but we have had no new units given or replaced.

That is one doctor, one hometown, one hospital—but it is people. It is people in Kansas. It is people in this country whom we know and care for, people we love, people in our families, and people we don't even know.

The most vulnerable patients among us rely on blood donations for transfusions to support essential treatments such as those of battling cancer or living with chronic diseases. There is no substitute. There is no alternative.

Our Nation can turn to the absence of blood donations. The only answer is for each of us stepping up to donate, helping to end this crisis and contribute to saving lives of those in our communities.

The shortage is severe, and it is affecting Kansas health providers and

their ability to care for their patients. It will cost us lives.

Kansans pull together in times of need, and I encourage everyone in Kansas and across the country to donate. In the United States, every 2 seconds someone needs blood or platelets, and donating blood is one of the most tangible actions we can give to help save lives.

Donation centers provide specific guidance on blood donation process and safety measures taken within their centers. You can find a location that is accepting blood donations near you, and you can visit the American Red Cross website.

So this is a plea that we all consider donating blood to help save the lives of our friends, our neighbors, and our fellow Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO DON NEAGLE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, after more than six decades as a staple of Logan County radio, Don Neagle is retiring this year. As the host of the WRUS morning show and the "Feedback" program, Don brings high-quality news to his community, interviewing everyone from politicians, to writers, to theologians. As one local leader put it so aptly, Don is Logan County's "bulletin board," relaying all of his community's most important news in one place. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Don in his retirement.

For decades, Don arrived at his office every weekday at 4:15 am, preparing the day's news while most listeners were still fast asleep. By the time Logan County residents were on their morning commute, he was already halfway through his workday. Through his incredible work ethic and scrappy style, Don stayed ahead of breaking news and at the pinnacle of Kentucky journalism.

Don is a legendary interviewer, and his "Feedback" show is the highlight of WRUS's entire programming lineup. Any leader in Kentucky government, myself included, knows that it's basically a requirement to be interviewed