

be paired with commensurate oversight measures, including a requirement for a comprehensive strategy and effective execution from the IRS and appropriate safeguards and accountability for taxpayers. But that, interestingly enough, is something Democrats failed to include in their legislation, and they have shown little interest in IRS oversight since.

That cannot continue.

We need to put safeguards in place to ensure that the tens of billions of dollars Democrats have funneled to the IRS are being used responsibly and efficiently and that the IRS is not mismanaging its tax collection powers.

The National Taxpayer Advocate has noted that the money from the so-called Inflation Reduction Act has been “disproportionately allocated for enforcement activities and should be re-allocated to achieve a better balance with taxpayer service needs and IT modernization.”

“We need to put taxpayers first,” the advocate said, and she is right. But, unfortunately, Democrats’ priority is not taxpayers; it is tax collection.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation along with Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, cosponsored by all Senate Finance Committee Republicans, to improve oversight and hold the IRS accountable for its spending decisions. Our legislation, the IRS Funding Accountability Act, would require the IRS to provide Congress with an annual plan for how the Agency intends to use its new funding—a plan that could be rejected by Congress with a joint resolution of disapproval.

The IRS would also be required to provide Congress with quarterly updates on implementation of the spending plans, and there would be real consequences for failing to submit plans and reports on time, including the rescission of funds until the IRS complies with reporting requirements.

The IRS did recently release an underwhelming report on how it intends to spend its funding windfall, but the report, which was submitted more than 45 days late, was exceptionally vague and short on important details. Our legislation would require the IRS to put forward detailed plans on time and ensure that Congress has the ability to prevent misuse of funds or violations of taxpayer receipts. And I would hope that my Democrat colleagues would recognize the need for this kind of commonsense legislation.

Any massive funding infusion to a Federal Agency needs to be accompanied by meaningful oversight to protect taxpayer dollars and doubly so when it comes to an Agency like the IRS with a track record for poor customer service and mishandling Americans’ priority information. As we move forward, I will continue to do everything I can to push for accountability at the IRS to make sure that taxpayers’ rights are respected and that Americans’ tax dollars are being used responsibly.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak and complete my remarks before the rollcall starts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Also without objection.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the highest Court in America should not have the lowest standards when it comes to ethics, but for too long that has been the case for the U.S. Supreme Court. It definitely needs to change.

While the Senate was out of session for the Easter recess, the independent nonprofit news organization ProPublica published a series of stunning reports.

They found that a billionaire real estate developer and prominent Republican donor, Harlan Crow, has given Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas nearly 20 years of undisclosed luxury gifts and getaways: a lavish yacht vacation in Indonesia, private plane trips, visits to a deluxe mountainside resort, and more.

Then, just days ago, ProPublica found that in 2014, Crow’s company bought properties owned by Thomas and his family, including the house where the Justice’s mother still lives. These transactions were also hidden, undisclosed, even though Federal law clearly requires that they be reported publicly.

Let’s be clear. Serving as a Federal judge, and especially a Supreme Court Justice, is one of the highest honors in the Nation that we can confer on an individual. But above all, it is a public service. Judges and Justices are entrusted by the American people to serve the public interest and administer equal justice under the law. That is why taxpayers and not billionaire donors fund judicial salaries, court-houses, and operations. Judges have a responsibility to put service to others ahead of their own personal self-interest.

But the conduct revealed in ProPublica’s reporting tells a much different story. They show a Justice accepting secret, lavish luxury trips and real estate purchases from a wealthy donor with interests affected by the Court.

This is conduct we cannot tolerate, whether it is from a mayor, a city council member, or other elected official, and we certainly shouldn’t tolerate it in the highest Court of the land. The Supreme Court needs to clean up its act and fast.

Throughout our history, ethics scandals at every level of government have

inspired reform. Congress has repeatedly amended ethics laws governing the House and Senate to ensure that there is transparency and disclosure for the trips we take and the donations we receive. We have a Code of Official Conduct that we must follow and Ethics Committees that provide guidance and oversight for our activities. These committees can launch investigations and penalize misconduct when it occurs.

Congress has also passed numerous laws that affect the operation of the Federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court. We pass appropriations bills each and every year to cover judges’ paychecks and the operations of our courthouses. We have enacted financial disclosure laws like the Ethics and Government Act and recusal laws like 28 U.S.C. 455 that apply to all Federal judges, including Supreme Court Justices.

We have long known there are shortcomings in the current ethics standards for the highest Court in the land, the Supreme Court. For example, the Justices do not consider themselves bound by the Code of Conduct that every other Federal judge follows. Additionally, they do not have clear and uniform processes for making and explaining their decisions on whether to recuse themselves from a case where there is a conflict of interest or an appearance of one. And as the recent ProPublica series has revealed, some Justices simply aren’t telling the American people about the gifts and travel that they are accepting.

Frankly, the excuses we have heard thus far from Justice Thomas are laughable. Claiming that a private luxury yacht in Indonesia from a major political donor was “personal hospitality” that didn’t need to be disclosed is an absurd conclusion, and it is insulting to the American people who expect Justices to be held to the same standards as anyone else in government.

That is why reform is essential. It is critical to our justice system and to our democracy that the American people have confidence that the judges and especially the Supreme Court Justices can’t be bought and that they are serving the public interest and not their own personal interests.

In the past, Congress has stepped up to strengthen court ethics. Just last June, we passed the bipartisan Court-house Ethics and Transparency Act which applies the STOCK Act’s reporting and disclosure requirements to Federal judges and Justices. But the Supreme Court doesn’t need to wait on Congress to clean up its act. The Justices could take action today if they wanted to, and if the Court fails to act, Congress must.

In the coming days, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on the need to restore public confidence in the highest Court of our land, the Supreme Court. This won’t be our first hearing on the topic. We have held a

number of important hearings over the years on the need for judicial ethics reform, including an important hearing in the last Congress on the Court Subcommittee, chaired by Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island. Some on the Republican side may claim that this focus on ethics is just a reaction to decisions being handed down by the rightwing activist majority of the Supreme Court. To them I say, check the record.

I have been at this pursuit for more than 10 years. I wrote a letter, joined by Democratic colleagues, to the Chief Justice 11 years ago urging him to adopt a Code of Conduct. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing in 2011 with Justices Scalia and Breyer. During that hearing, I asked them about Supreme Court ethics, which was in the news because of troubling reports even then of gifts being made by Mr. Harlan Crow. Unfortunately, Chief Justice Roberts rejected our call to act 10 years ago; and it appears that Harlan Crow took that as a sign that he should ante up and increase his largesse. Is it any wonder that we face a crisis of public confidence in the Supreme Court?

Our Constitution established a system of checks and balances between the branches of government, and it established a system in which no person is above the law.

There are few positions in our Federal Government more elevated than Supreme Court Justices, but Justices are public servants, and they must conduct themselves in that manner. Our job in the Senate Judiciary Committee, and in the Senate, is to make certain that they do—nothing less.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Idaho.

VOTE ON PLUMB NOMINATION

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the rollcall begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

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

Mr. CRAPO. 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 California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 84 Ex.]

YEAS—68

Baldwin	Heinrich	Romney
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rounds
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boozman	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	Kennedy	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Luján	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	McConnell	Thune
Coons	Menendez	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cramer	Moran	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Ernst	Murray	Welch
Fetterman	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Fischer	Padilla	Wicker
Graham	Peters	Wyden
Grassley	Reed	Young
Hassan	Ricketts	

NAYS—30

Barrasso	Daines	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Braun	Hawley	Risch
Britt	Hoeven	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Vance

NOT VOTING—2

Feinstein Gillibrand

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 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. 57, Amy Lefkowitz Solomon, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Margaret Wood Hassan, Raphael G. Warnock, Gary C. Peters, Jack Reed, Christopher A. Coons, Brian Schatz, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Luján, Elizabeth Warren, Martin Heinrich, Christopher Murphy, Tammy Baldwin, Alex Padilla.

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 Amy Lefkowitz Solomon, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 58, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 85 Ex.]

YEAS—58

Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Booker	Kennedy	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Luján	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Tillis
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cornyn	Moran	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Welch
Fetterman	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Graham	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	Young
Heinrich	Reed	
Hickenlooper	Romney	

NAYS—40

Barrasso	Fischer	Ricketts
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Rounds
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Britt	Hoeven	Schmitt
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tuberville
Crapo	Marshall	Vance
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Mullin	
Ernst	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Feinstein Gillibrand

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The yeas are 58, the nays are 40.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Amy Lefkowitz Solomon, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:19 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

NOMINATION OF AMY LEFKOWITZ SOLOMON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week, the Senate will vote to confirm Amy Solomon as Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs—OJP—within the Department of Justice.

Ms. Solomon is a devoted public servant whose policy expertise and commitment to the rule of law will serve