

For all of the GOP's lipservice about public safety, the House DOA Act defaults on America's law enforcement and first responders. Nearly 30,000 law enforcement jobs across the country would be cut under the Republicans' DOA Act. Over \$8 billion in funding for the DOJ would be eliminated. Donald Trump called for Republicans to defund law enforcement, and now it looks like House Republicans are following through.

But that is just the start. The House Default on America Act would also spell disaster for American families and American healthcare. Parents who struggle affording childcare would see over 100,000 childcare slots eliminated under the GOP proposal, preventing moms and dads from getting a job or finishing their education since they can't afford to pick up their kids in daycare. Over 21 million Americans would be at risk of losing their health coverage—21 million Americans losing health coverage—while hospitals would see billions in funding disappear. Hospitals, patient groups, doctors—you name it, they are all coming out in droves to oppose this measure.

We just endured a global pandemic that claimed the lives of over 1 million Americans, and House Republicans want to cut funding for healthcare and hospitals? Utterly revolting.

But the damage isn't just limited to American families. The Republican DOA Act would cripple America's ability to stay ahead of the Chinese Communist Party.

After all the work we did last year on CHIPS and Science, the Republican bill would slash billions—billions—from cutting-edge research and prevent us from fully implementing CHIPS and Science. The damage would be measured in countless jobs lost and billions in squandered private investment. That is the last thing we can afford as President Xi and the CCP work to outcompete America on the world stage—squandering all that great private investment that is now coming to America.

Let's not forget, should this Republican DOA bill go into effect, taxes will go up for small businesses that no longer benefit from the green energy tax credits Democrats passed last year. Many of these green tax credits support job creation in Republican districts—jobs that Republicans are happy to take credit for while working behind the scenes to destroy them. It is the dictionary definition of "hypocrisy."

Finally, the House Default on America Act would break America's promise to our veterans, gutting funding for new VA facilities, funding for housing and food security and addiction treatment, and even endangering 81,000 jobs across the Veterans' Administration. How could House Republicans possibly think it is OK to cut funding for our veterans in exchange for lifting the debt ceiling? What kind of message does that send to our military families, our servicemembers?

If MAGA Republicans want to sell their cuts to the American people, they should not do so in the middle of discussions to avoid default. That discussion properly belongs in conversations about the budget, not here. And we will be happy to discuss those cuts with them, oppose them, as we might, in the budget—not as a prelude to default.

In the meantime, I urge Speaker MCCARTHY to stop wasting any more time on this DOA—dead on arrival—bill. Time is running out for Congress to work together to avoid catastrophe.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, now Senate business and the ERA. The Senate is set to have a very busy week on the floor.

Later this afternoon, we will begin with a cloture vote on the nomination of Joshua Jacobs to serve as VA Under Secretary for Benefits. Mr. Jacobs comes before the Senate at a critical moment for the VA, as he will be the one responsible for overseeing the implementation of PACT Act benefits. To date, the VA has already completed 191,000 PACT claims, 80 percent of which have been granted, I am proud to say. As senior adviser, Mr. Jacobs has already done great work at the VA pushing these benefits out the door, and he is clearly the right man for the position.

Later today, I will also file cloture on Anthony Johnstone, an outstanding nominee to serve a lifetime appointment as circuit court judge for the Ninth Circuit. I want to thank Senator TESTER for championing this strong nominee. The Senate will take it up later this week.

Finally and importantly, a few moments ago, I took the first procedural step for the Senate to take up a monumental resolution regarding the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The Senate will vote to take up this historic ER measure on Thursday.

It has been exactly 100 years since the first Equal Rights Amendment was proposed here in Congress. Despite the progress America has made in the advancement of women's rights, we have yet to take one fundamental step: ratification of the ERA to guarantee gender equality under the Constitution. The Senate has a chance this week to bring our country one step closer to equal justice under the law by passing this bipartisan ERA resolution.

Three-quarters of the States have already ratified the ERA, just not in the requisite time set decades ago. The resolution would remove the arbitrary deadline and formally recognize that 38 States—the number required under the Constitution—have ratified the ERA.

Anyone who thinks the ERA isn't necessary at a time like this is not paying attention to the terrible things happening in this country. In the past year alone, the Supreme Court has eliminated the protections of *Roe v. Wade*, our courts have targeted drugs like mifepristone, and we have seen over a dozen hard-right States enact near-total bans on abortions. We need the ERA more than ever, ever before.

I want my daughters and grand-daughter to live in a country where they never have to worry about being discriminated against simply because of their gender. While, sadly, that is not the case today, we have a great opportunity to make significant progress on ERA ratification this week so we can enshrine the rights of generations of women to come.

I want to thank Senator CARDIN, who has spearheaded this, along with Senator MURKOWSKI—it is bipartisan—and thank them for championing this ERA resolution, and I look forward to advance its voting this Thursday.

Finally, in a few minutes, my colleague from Massachusetts will take the floor to ask unanimous consent that some of our brave military leaders get the promotions they deserve. It is absolutely outrageous that the Senator from Alabama is playing with the security of America—playing with the lives of these military leaders, whose lives are being disrupted by his harsh action.

He believes strongly that women in the military shouldn't have the right to abortion. Almost all Americans disagree with him. But no matter how strongly he feels, to hold up the promotion of military leaders, many of whom—most of whom have dedicated decades of their lives to protecting our country, and now leaving those positions vacant, risking our security, is one of the most abominable and outrageous things I have seen ever done in this Chamber, witnessed by the fact that no one has ever had the temerity, the gall to do this before.

So I salute the Senator from Massachusetts for bringing these names up. Everyone in this Chamber should exalt them. Members of this Chamber from the other side should go plead with the Senator from Alabama to stop this headstrong, nasty, and unneeded action.

I again thank our Senator from Massachusetts, who is chair of the subcommittee that is relevant, for bringing this issue to floor and showing America what the Senator from Alabama is exactly doing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to thank the leader for his strong words about the importance of making sure we advance our military leaders when they have been approved for promotion and pay increases.

You know, most people are aware that the Senate votes on nominees who have been appointed by the President to occupy top roles in almost all parts of the Federal Government—Cabinet Secretaries, judges, Ambassadors. Less well known is the fact that the Senate must also vote to approve thousands of military promotions every year. So if a colonel has done well on the job and their service's promotion board decides they are ready to be a brigadier general, the Senate must vote to approve

this promotion before it can go through.

Now, typically, this vote is a formality. These promotions are processed in big batches rather than one at a time, and they usually happen without even taking a recorded vote. But right now, the Senator from Alabama has imposed a hold on all, every single senior military nomination and promotion. That means that one Senator is personally standing in the way of promotions for 184 of our top-level military leaders. One Senator is holding up pay raises for men and women in uniform. One Senator is blocking key senior military leaders from taking their posts. One Senator is jeopardizing America's national security.

Think for a minute about what this looks like. These holds deprive military families of the pay increases they have earned, because the nominee's new pay cannot take effect until the promotion goes through. Without formally being assigned to a change of duty, families can't make decisions right now about moving or enrolling kids in a new school for the next school year.

The Chief of Staff of the Army has said: What it really does, it affects the families and some of the kids. And they are trying to figure out where they are going to school, where they are going to move. And all those things kind of come into the readiness of the force. For families with special needs, there may be even more significant delays to access important services.

Secretary Austin has stated that this delay "creates a ripple effect through the Force that makes us far less ready than we need to be."

So why is one Senator—one Senator—punishing 184 dedicated men and women who actively serve in our military, all because he personally disagrees with a single policy decision from the Pentagon?

Now, look, it is no secret that I disagree with a lot of policy decisions from the Pentagon. As Senators, we have a lot of tools to shape and influence government policies—tools that we can use without putting our national defense at risk. We can pass laws. We can conduct oversight. We can meet with administration officials. We can hold hearings. Occasionally, a Senator may object to an individual nomination, usually to indicate opposition to that appointment or to insist on answers to questions from a Federal Agency. I have done this myself in the past, as have many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. But that is not what the Senator from Alabama is doing. Instead, he is blocking every single top military leader from advancing indefinitely. He snared all 184 top-level servicemembers who are currently slated for advancement, and he stopped every single one of them dead in their tracks.

Like me, the Senator from Alabama serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee. As a consequence, he has

many more opportunities than most Senators to influence DOD policy. He has many more opportunities to question witnesses, many more opportunities to receive briefings, and many more opportunities to influence the annual Defense bill that Congress passes every single year to govern Pentagon operations. He has many opportunities that do not actively threaten our national security. He has not raised any individual objections to the 184 servicemembers whose promotions are now held up in the Senate, and he has not raised any objections to the process by which these men and women were vetted and nominated. No. The Senator is blocking 184 top military promotions because he disagrees with the Department of Defense policy to help servicemembers and their families access needed healthcare—specifically, to travel to access abortion care. I disagree with the Senator on that issue, but if he wants to press for votes to reverse DOD's healthcare policies, he can do that. I will oppose him. But if I lose and if Congress changes the law, then DOD will change its policies. That is how democracy works.

Holding up the promotion of every single military nominee isn't democracy; it is extortion, and that kind of extortion has serious consequences for our national defense. These holds pose a grave threat to our national security and to our military readiness. They actively hurt our ability to respond quickly to threats around the world.

Just take a look at the list of 184 people who have already been approved for promotions. The 184 people whom the Senator from Alabama has blocked so far include nominations for the next commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet in the Middle East, nomination for the next commander of the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific, our next military representative to NATO, and the current Director of Intelligence for U.S. Cyber Command. It includes our next Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Integration for the Air Force. It includes a top official in Birmingham's Army Reserves. And it includes the former Chief of Staff for Operation Warp Speed, a program the Senator from Alabama has repeatedly credited for saving millions of American lives.

In fact, the Senator from Alabama is singlehandedly holding up 11 three-star commanders, three recipients of Silver Stars, and three Purple Heart recipients. These are brave servicemembers who deserve better than to be stuck in an administrative hell, waiting for a single Senator to release them to the promotions and the assignments and the pay increases that their military leaders determined that they have already earned.

The Department of Defense has warned that these blanket holds are making the United States more vulnerable to threats from foreign actors like China, North Korea, and Iran. In the coming months, approximately, 80 three- and four-star generals and admi-

als, including the leaders of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, will reach the end of their current terms, and new nominees will be slotted to replace them.

In addition, if the Senator's reckless hold is not lifted and if the Senate cannot confirm a new Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President may be without a principal military adviser. By the end of this year, we could have 650 generals and flag officers waiting for Senate confirmation.

The Senator from Alabama's response to his actions is to say that he will keep these holds in place "until hell freezes over" unless DOD changes its healthcare travel policy. I sincerely hope that is not true because holding hostage nearly the entire military leadership of the U.S.A. at a time when we are facing military threats around the world and our allies are literally engaged in war in Europe is dangerous; it is reckless; and it needs to stop right now.

As chair of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel, I care deeply about protecting our servicemembers and the integrity of our promotion system. These holds are depriving families of pay raises that they have earned. We are talking about grocery money for families. These servicemembers are being treated disrespectfully—people who should be treated with dignity and respect. And unless there is some specific problem with an individual nominee, those who have been nominated for a new rank or a new post should get the advancement that the Pentagon has already recommended for them.

No more politics. I am here today to respectfully ask my colleague from Alabama to let these promotions move forward and to find other ways to continue advocating for the policy changes that he wants to see. I am hopeful that he will set aside politics and do what is the right thing and allow these servicemembers to carry out their responsibilities to our Nation.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 90. If confirmed, this nominee would be America's military representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Military Committee. This Boston University graduate was the first woman to serve as president of the Naval War College. At this critical juncture of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, we need her leadership in NATO now more than ever.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 90; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. I want to start by reminding everyone why this is happening. It is not about abortion. It is not about the Dobbs decision. This is about a tyrannical executive branch walking all over the U.S. Senate and doing our jobs.

In November, I got word that the Pentagon was thinking about spending taxpayer dollars to facilitate elective abortions. This goes beyond what the law—which was passed here—the law allows. The law only allows the Department of Defense to facilitate and fund abortions in the cases of rape, incest, and the life of the mother.

Now, I warned Secretary Austin that if he did this and changed this, I would put a hold on his highest level nominees. Secretary Austin went through with the policy anyway in February of this year. So I am keeping my word. This was Secretary Austin's choice, not mine. He knew the consequences for several months. Nothing in the law allows Secretary Austin to facilitate elective abortions. In fact, the law just says the opposite. So this was Secretary Austin's choice.

Secretary Austin thought abortion is more important than his highest level military nominations. Secretary Austin could end the policy today, and I would lift my hold. Secretary Austin has chosen not to do that.

This is the fourth time the Democrats have come to the floor to try to break this hold. I will come down here as many times as it takes.

The Senator from Massachusetts claims that my hold on the Pentagon nominations is affecting readiness and so have the other Senators who have come to this floor. Senator SCHUMER said last week on this floor multiple times that it was affecting readiness. Several other Senators have said the same thing. Democrats keep repeating the same talking points and the same opinion, but not one of them has cited any facts—not one.

I even asked the Pentagon to explain to me how this affects readiness. All I have heard is opinions like we just heard from Senator WARREN. The senior Senator has been asking questions from the Pentagon.

On April 6, the senior Senator sent this letter to Mr. Austin. The full letter may be found at <https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2023.04.06%20Letter%20to%20DoD%20on%20Tuberville%20Holds.pdf>.

The letter asks about the effects of my hold on military readiness. I will answer right now. My hold has no effect on readiness, none.

In an Armed Services Committee hearing last week, Senator REED asked two of the military top combatant commanders what impact would my hold have on readiness. ADM John Aquilino said: "No impact." John Paul LaCamera agreed. There is no impact on readiness or operations.

Experts have known for more than a decade that the military is topheavy. We do not suffer from a lack of generals. Democrats are concerned with promotions of generals but have shown very little to no concern about our historic recruitment crisis—and it is a crisis. Right now, the military is missing more than 20,000 enlisted soldiers from last year's short on recruiting. That is in addition to another 8,000 that President Biden, for some reason, kicked out of the military over vaccine mandates.

So we are missing 28,000 enlisted troops right now, and the Democrats are panicking about 180 generals and admirals.

Last week, a report showed that the Army, Navy, and Air Force—all of them are preparing to miss their recruitment goals this year, and nobody is talking about it. They will miss their goals by thousands and thousands of new servicemembers. Yet I don't hear Democrats say a word about it. They are worried about 180 top-level generals and admirals. We have plenty of generals.

When my dad served in World War II, we had one general for every 6,000 troops. Think about that—1 for every 6,000. Now we have 1 general for every 1,400 enlisted servicemembers. That is more than four times the ratio of generals to troops. That is a lot of money. We won plenty of wars with a lower ratio. Again, bipartisan experts have shown this for more than a decade.

Let me mention a few examples. Here is an article from Ben Freeman of the Project of Government Oversight from 2011. It is entitled: "The Most Top-Heavy Force in U.S. History," found at <https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2011/11/todays-military-most-top-heavy-force-in-us-history>.

The author talks about testifying before the Senate on this issue. He also mentioned a nearly 25-percent increase in three-star and four-star generals in the previous decade. Over the same time, the increase in enlisted members was just 2 percent—2 percent. People who actually do the work.

I have a report from Third Way from 2013, which may be found at <https://www.thirdway.org/report/star-creep-the-costs-of-a-top-heavy-military>.

Here is what this centrist organization said in their report 10 years ago. It is called "Star Creep: The effects of the top-heavy military."

The story says:

America's armed forces have far too many generals and admirals—a situation that wastes money and creates a drag on military effectiveness. Although the U.S. military is 30% smaller now than it was at the end of the Cold War, it has almost 20% percent more three and four-star officers. [Twenty percent.] The layers of bureaucracy to support them have grown as well, slowing down decision-making and burdening the warfighter.

We need to trim the fat, which will make our military both leaner and more effective.

That was 10 years ago.

Here is another article. This one is from the Washington Times in 2016,

which may be found at <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/apr/5/ash-carter-says-us-military-too-top-heavy-aims-cut>.

The title of the article: "Ashton Carter says U.S. military too 'top heavy,' aims to cut ranks of generals and admirals."

Ash Carter was President Obama's Department of Defense Secretary. He felt the military was also topheavy. Both of President Obama's Secretaries of Defense agreed with that. The late Senator John McCain agreed with that statement. Again, this has been common knowledge in military circles for a decade. Yet now my Democratic colleagues have selective memories.

Finally, I will just mention one more article from the Washington Times from this past January. It is called "Top Heavy: U.S. military bloated by brass as officer-to-enlisted ratio dwarfs Cold War era," which may be found at <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/jan/29/top-heavy-us-military-bloated-brass-officer-enlist>.

Here are a few numbers from the article. In World War I, we had one officer for every 15 enlisted. In World War II, it was one of every ten. Today the ratio is 1 to 4.

Today we have more admirals than we have ships. Let me repeat that: We have more admirals in our military than we have ships.

Yet the Democratic side of the aisle is in panic that we don't have enough admirals; it just doesn't make sense. In the first century of this Nation, we only had a handful of three-star generals ever. George Washington and Ulysses S. Grant were the first two three-star generals in our history. Today we have more than 160 three-star generals. Overall, there are more than 650 generals today. "Star creep" is putting this very mildly.

This hysteria on the other side of the aisle has absolutely no basis in fact. They have complained about my holds for weeks, but they still haven't shown me one single fact.

So I am looking forward to Secretary Austin's response to Senator WARREN. I can't wait to read it. In the meantime, I am not going to budge. I will come down here as many times as it takes day and night to vote. I am not afraid to vote. We are working a 3-day week this week. We just took a 2-week recess earlier this month. And if Democrats are so worried about the military readiness, then why are we taking days off? Let's vote. We can vote these. I mean, it is not like I am holding them and they can't be confirmed.

We can vote on every one of these people. Just call them up on the floor. We can vote on them. Everybody needs to vote. I am not afraid to work. I will stay here as long as it takes. And let me remind my colleagues that we just voted—and confirmed—last week a military nominee, the way we are supposed to do it, instead of a hundred at a time.

Clearly, we are capable of voting on military nominees and promotions. We

could also be voting on legislation that expands the DOD's abortion policy. We can bring it right here and vote. That is our job—instead of the Secretary of Defense playing Congress and doing bills on his own. That is not how this place is supposed to work. In fact, that is how this should be done in a democracy.

So, finally, let me remind my Democratic colleagues again: I gave the Pentagon fair warning. I told them if they imposed this policy on our country, then I would hold these nominees. They chose to go forward with this policy anyway. They forced my hand. This was the Biden administration's choice. All I am doing is keeping my word, and that is why I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, let's be clear what is at issue here. The Department of Defense has said if a servicemember requires reproductive healthcare for themselves or for a member of their family, care that is not available in the location where the member is currently stationed, the member can request time away from the base to travel elsewhere for treatment.

As Pentagon leaders have testified, military commanders respect the privacy of servicemembers and do not request information about the specific medical treatment or who it is for.

The Senator from Alabama doesn't like that. He is worried that a servicemember might—might—be seeking an abortion for themselves or for a family member. And he doesn't think the Department of Defense should participate in that in any way. Fine.

The Senator from Alabama can advocate for a bill to invade the medical privacy of every single servicemember. He can advocate for a bill that requires every commanding officer to do what no private employer can do, and that is to rifle through a servicemember's personal medical information. The Senator from Alabama can seek to change Federal law so that a commanding officer interrogates a servicemember with questions like: Do you need time off because you are having trouble getting pregnant? Has your wife had a miscarriage? How many weeks pregnant are you? Was your daughter raped?

These are not questions that commanding officers want to ask, nor should they be authorized or required to ask them.

Now, Senator TUBERVILLE can push for a vote on the bill he cosponsors to ban the Department from providing paid leave or transportation to access reproductive care. Frankly, I don't think the Senator has enough support in Congress to pass any bill like that.

And I understand the Senator's frustration. Many of us have proposals to change Pentagon policies that don't have enough support in Congress to pass, but that is not an excuse to jeopardize our active military operations all around the world.

I confess, I am a little stunned by the Senator from Alabama's argument here. I had not been aware that it was a controversial view that our military needs officers in charge of the Fifth Fleet or the Seventh Fleet, our fleets in the Pacific and in the Middle East.

It is pretty alarming to hear the Senator suggest that we don't need leaders running the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps. Every President since World War II would probably disagree that there is no need for a chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Now, look, if the Senator from Alabama thinks that there should be fewer high-level leaders in the Armed Forces, he could advance legislation to reform our leadership structures. But blocking leaders from taking the jobs to which they have been assigned is reckless.

Not only that, these delays are felt throughout the ranks since this creates, as Secretary Austin described it, a ripple effect throughout the military. It is cruel to our servicemembers. Just because you are not going to run the Army does not mean that your promotion does not matter. As Army Chief of Staff McConville recently testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee, these delays affect both the families and some of the kids. They are trying to figure out where they are going to school, where they are going to move.

I think back to my own three brothers. All three of them served in the military. My oldest brother was career military. I cannot imagine a circumstance where he had worked, he had put his life on the line, he served in combat off and on for 6 years, and yet to be told that although the Air Force thought he was ready, had served, had been an exemplary member of the military, that he could not have his promotion, he could not have his pay increase, he could not go to his next assignment all because one Senator decided to hold it up over a different discussion about policy.

I would urge my colleague from Alabama to find another way to press for the policy changes that he wants at the Department. I heard him say that he had read the letter that I had sent to Secretary Austin asking about the impact on our military. Secretary Austin has already spoken to that, but I hope he will be responding soon to my letter.

But I hope that these words from the Senator, that he is looking forward to Secretary Austin's response, have at least opened the door, that if Secretary Austin says: This has an effect on our military readiness, that the Senator from Alabama will be prepared to lift his objection and let what are, currently, 184 members of the military go forward and the ones who need to go forward in the future.

So I hope he has left the door open for that. The Senator from Alabama and I fundamentally disagree on the issue of abortion. We disagree on Department of Defense policies. But all of

us should be able to agree that a blockade of the promotion of every single senior member of our Nation's military creates unacceptable risks to our national security, and it needs to stop right now.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 94. Collectively, these 37 nominees in Calendar No. 94 have served in the Army for nearly a thousand years.

This list includes a commanding officer stationed in South Korea, the head of plans for central command, and the deputy chief of staff in the fight against ISIS. The list also includes the deputy provost marshal general for the Office of the Provost Marshal General, which is responsible for all—all—of the Army's policing functions.

There is also a graduate of Auburn University, where the Senator from Alabama was once head coach. And I am sure that this servicemember never expected that his promotion would be blocked by the Senator from Alabama.

Mr. President, I renew my request with respect to Calendar No. 94.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I stand here before my friend and colleague, the senior Senator from Alabama. He stands in opposition, as do I, to the plan of the Department of Defense to use Federal funds to facilitate the performance of abortions.

Now, let's remember what we are looking at here. This has been in place for a long time. Congress enacted a law. Codified 10 USC section 1093. Let's just brief that here.

1093 part (a) says:

Restriction on use of funds. Funds available to the Department of Defense may not be used to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest.

Part (b) reads as follows:

No medical treatment facility or other facility of the Department of Defense may be used to perform an abortion except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest.

Look, this policy has been in place for a long time—for decades, in fact. It is accompanied by other policies restricting the use of Federal funds on issues related to abortion.

You know, the American people, yes, are divided on questions, many questions, regarding abortion. There are a lot of gradations of that. Some would put restrictions here; others restrictions there; others would insist on no restrictions whatsoever.

But one thing that does tend to unite Americans, more than any other topic within the area of abortion, is that we don't want the use of Federal taxpayer dollars going to facilitate or fund abortions. We don't want that.

Overwhelmingly, that holds really, really well. Democrats and Republicans

alike believe that it is unfair, understand that it is unjust, especially on an issue that is as divisive as abortion is.

To take money at the point of a gun, which is what we do when we collect tax revenue, essentially. You know, that if you don't pay your taxes, at some point people with guns will show up, and you have got to do what they say.

So when you are taking money at the point of a gun—as you do when you are collecting tax revenue—you have a sacred responsibility to handle that well. And if the American people don't want it, that is why they enacted a Congress that has put this in law, that we don't use Federal funds to fund abortion.

So along comes Secretary Austin and the current Department of Defense, and they decide, well, we really want to do this. And so I can only imagine how this conversation must have gone internally. Obviously, I wasn't part of those conversations. I was not made privy to them. They didn't invite me to them, we will just say.

But I would imagine they more or less went something like this, hey, what can we do to, you know, help people get abortions using Federal funds. And I am sure someone brought up, well, 10 USC section 1093 prohibits that. So they said, what could we do that arguably could circumvent that, something that Congress may not have specifically identified.

And at some point, someone said, well, there is nothing in here that directly categorically prohibits the use of travel funds or the availability of leave time for people seeking abortions.

So, bingo, they came up with this idea. Let's just give people who want abortions, women who want abortions in the military 3 weeks of paid leave and an expense account to handle out-of-state travel during that 3-week period, and that circumvents, technically speaking, the restriction. This is, of course, a major policy change, and it is a policy change on a topic that many Americans feel passionately about—and, by many Americans, I mean not just Republicans. Republicans and Democrats don't like the idea that U.S. taxpayer dollars should be used for abortions, and they have put this in place—this being a major policy change, a major policy change affirmatively at odds with the spirit, if not also the letter, of various provisions of Federal law. Respect for the Constitution itself, for the separation of powers, and for the sacred role of the legislative branch to make laws should have commanded that the burden of making this policy change should be on those who would want Congress to act, and that we not give special privilege to an executive branch Department—here, the U.S. Department of Defense—to undertake such a major policy change that they knew they could never get past the Congress. They couldn't. It wouldn't pass. There is not a chance it would get past the House. It wouldn't

get past the Senate either. They knew this, and that is why they did it by executive action—just executive fiat.

If Secretary Austin, the Secretary of Defense—if he wants to make law, he should run for Congress. He should run for the House. He should run for the Senate. I would welcome him here as a colleague or as a counterpart, down the hall in the House. I genuinely would. Then he would be in a position to do this. But he may not and must not be allowed to legislate from the E-Ring of the Pentagon. That is not how we do things in this country.

Now, as you look at the arguments that have been exchanged today, we have talked about military readiness. I agree with my colleague from Alabama. I haven't seen anything indicating that military readiness commands this, much less commands it in a way that justifies departing from the spirit, if not the letter, of Federal law.

I have also heard the argument made, quite counterintuitively, that if the Senator from Alabama, Senator TUBERVILLE, wants to change the law, he should run legislation to that effect. He should be required to pass a statute.

That is not how our system works. We have got laws. This is a major departure from established policy set in existing law. The burden is not on Senator TUBERVILLE.

You see, it is this body that gets to change laws, to change policy. We are the policymaking organ of the Federal Government, and to pass a law—any law—article I, section 1, and clause 1, the very first operative provision of the U.S. Constitution, right after the preamble and all the initial language, it says that “all legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.”

Article I, section 7, makes it clear how you make a Federal law, and it is not made by the Secretary of Defense or any other executive branch official. It is made, under article I, section 7—the only way you can make a Federal law—when the House of Representatives and the Senate both agree on the same legislative text, then presents that legislation to the President of the United States, who may sign it or acquiesce to it—after 10 days, if he acquiesces, it becomes law—or he can veto it. If he vetoes, it can become law only after two-thirds of both Houses have overridden that veto. Those are the only ways you can change Federal law.

The onus is not on those of us opposing this policy. Nor should the onus be on Senator TUBERVILLE to establish that he is not the one impacting military readiness. This is untrue. It is unproven. It is contrary to fact. But even if it were not so, this is not on him. You see, because to whatever degree this is impacting military readiness, that argument goes right back on Secretary Austin in a heartbeat. It goes right back on him because he doesn't have to impose this policy. He

doesn't have to force this change in policy amounting to a hostile act against the spirit, if not the letter, of this law. He doesn't have to do that. He could and should allow Congress to make this determination in due course, as Congress does. And it just so happens that we are coming up, in the coming weeks and months, on an opportunity to do precisely that, through a committee—through legislation that comes through a committee—on which both the Senator from Massachusetts and the Senator from Alabama serve, the Senate Armed Services Committee.

This legislative vehicle of which I am speaking, of course, is the National Defense Authorization Act. It is an opportunity that we use every year, for many, many decades, to make policy decisions involving the Pentagon.

So, if this issue is so important to military readiness, let Secretary Austin and those around him come to Congress and ask us to approve that, to make that policy choice—recognizing, as they should have done already without having to be told, that it is wildly inappropriate for them to make this policy change so wildly in conflict with the spirit, if not also the letter, of existing statute.

So that is what he could do. He can come to us and make that argument in connection with the National Defense Authorization Act. If he can persuade enough Members of the House and enough Members of the Senate to get it passed, it would be done.

In the meantime, unless or until such time as he can do that, especially to the degree that this is impacting military readiness—these objections—then, what he should do is abundantly clear: Suspend implementation of these policies until such time as Congress acts to change them. That is not an unreasonable demand—not in the slightest.

Look, it is also apparent that Secretary Austin and the Department of Defense have become hostile toward female members of the military who choose to have children. That is the message this sends—undeniably, unequivocally. When you tell people: You know, you are pregnant, and it sure would be convenient for us if you didn't have this baby—so inconvenient, in fact, that we will give you 3 weeks of paid leave and a travel account so that you can go somewhere else, you know, so that you cannot have that child—think about what that does. That creates a hostile work environment for our female servicemembers, and I find it repugnant, and so do the American people.

That is why we have a prohibition in law.

For these reasons, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. So, Mr. President, I have great respect for the Senator from Utah. I appreciate that he is very careful about citing law and often comes to

this body to talk about reading the actual words of a statute. And so he read to us 10 U.S.C. 1093(a), which prohibits Federal funds—and he should look back at the verb—“to perform” abortion. It also, in section (b), prohibits using military facilities—bases, hospital rooms, clinics—to perform abortions.

Now, I appreciate that the Senator from Utah read those words because it is pretty clear from those words that DOD policy here does not violate congressional prohibitions on the Federal Government paying for abortions or permitting them to happen in Federal facilities other than the exceptions noted in the statute. All that is happening in this particular bill is clarifying that servicemembers who need to travel out of State to access any kind—and I want to underline “any kind”—of reproductive healthcare that is not available where they are stationed, can request time off and go get that care for themselves or a family member.

Servicemembers remain personally responsible for bearing the full medical cost for abortions that fall outside the narrow exceptions provided by law.

Now, I will say it again as clearly as I can: I oppose congressional restrictions on funding for basic medical care. I would like Congress to end those restrictions, but that hasn't happened, and I am not about to hold up every major military promotion in the United States and hold them hostage to try to force it to happen.

Any one Senator has the right to hold up every military promotion, but it is irresponsible, and it endangers our national security.

Now, the Senator from Utah suggested that somehow the Department of Defense did not already have authority to do that.

The Department of Defense clearly has the authority to carry out the policy in question. Multiple statutes have provided the Secretary of Defense with broad statutory authority to pay for the travel and transportation expenses of servicemembers and other authorized travelers. It has been in place for a long time and has been used repeatedly.

I want to make another point here, though. Limiting the authority to do that should be considered very, very carefully if we don't want to endanger the ability of the Department to respond to unexpected threats.

Again, if the Senator from Utah or the Senator from Alabama thinks that the DOD has exceeded its authority or that the authority didn't exist in the first place, then that Senator can conduct oversight or seek to change the law. The place for that debate is through the legislative and oversight process, not in blocking the promotions of every single military official in this country.

I am shocked to hear the Senator from Utah repeat the argument that somehow it doesn't matter if 184 leaders in the military are blocked from going to their next posts, are blocked

from receiving their promotions, are blocked from receiving their pay increases. I would remind, with respect, both of my colleagues that we are talking about here the next commander of the Fifth Fleet in the Middle East. We are talking about the next commander of the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific. We are talking about our next military representative to NATO. We are talking about the current Director of Intelligence for U.S. Cyber Command, and on and on and on. Taking hostages like this does not promote the national security. It endangers our national security.

I just want to say that the argument that the Senator from Utah has used that somehow by providing the full range—access to the full range—of reproductive healthcare services means that the military is trying to tell women not to have babies is downright insulting. First of all, reproductive healthcare services include efforts to get pregnant. It also includes enough privacy that nobody—no commanding officer—is asking about your current circumstances on whether you are trying to get pregnant, whether it is succeeding, how much trouble you are having, what kind of services you have used, and why you want to go somewhere else to get them.

It means treating people with respect, and treating people with respect means treating them like grownups to make their own decisions. And if they can't get the services they need because they are stationed in a place where those services are not available, they don't have the choice to pick a different place to work. They go where their commanders tell them. What this policy says is that they have the right to ask their commanding officer, without additional information, for an opportunity to leave the area and go somewhere else where they can get access to the services they need. I believe that that is the way we show respect for people who have babies.

I also want to say, if the Senator from Utah and the Senator from Alabama are hard on the question of supporting people in our military, women having more babies, then, by golly, join us in the fight to put more money into pre-K and more money into DOD schools, more money into flexible spending accounts to cover childcare costs, more money into promoting new parental leave policies to provide 12 weeks of paid leave when a woman has a baby.

As the Senator from Utah has acknowledged, DOD's travel policy covers people who are doing more than having abortions. Travel policy is not a vacation. Servicemembers, under this policy, are limited to—and I will read the words—“the minimum number of days essential to receive the required care and travel” as quickly as possible.

The message this policy sends is that the Department of Defense, unlike the Senator from Utah and unlike the Senator from Alabama, supports women in

making their own healthcare decisions. This policy was based on conversations and support groups and focus groups with servicemembers. This is what servicemembers said they needed. This is the support they want.

I am much more troubled by the signal sent by Republican Senators who are holding up the Department of Defense from protecting women's healthcare.

I look forward to working with the Senator from Utah and the Senator from Alabama in order to work on more policies to support military families.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 84. If confirmed, this nominee would command the Fifth Fleet, which operates in the Middle East.

Unless the Senator from Alabama thinks that the Fifth Fleet doesn't matter, I would remind him that, last year, the Fifth Fleet prevented an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps navy vessel from confiscating a Fifth Fleet unmanned surface vessel in the Arabian Gulf. If we want to ensure that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard doesn't take other U.S. assets in the region, we cannot possibly support leaving this command post vacant.

Mr. President, I renew my request with respect to Calendar No. 84.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, first of all, my friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, a moment ago, referred to the Pentagon's policy as a bill. Perhaps this was a Freudian slip, but one way or another, it was an acknowledgment of the fact that it is a change in policy—a change in policy that is in conflict with the spirit if not also with the letter of Federal law. So, as a bill—and I think it is fair to characterize it as such—it ought to have to be passed through Congress.

Now, my friend from the State of Massachusetts has used the language of the text of statute 10 U.S.C., section 1039 in much the same way. I would imagine, that Secretary Austin and his advisers parsed it and cribbed it and manipulated it in their development of this policy.

But let's remember the reason I say that it violates the spirit if not also the letter of it. It is that there is an argument to be made here that it is. Funds available to the Department of Defense may not be used to support abortions. How is this money being used? Well, with the extra leave time that you wouldn't get in the absence of this and with the travel to another State, it is for the purpose of an abortion. It is conditioned on your getting an abortion.

My friend and colleague from Massachusetts points out that it is also there with respect to fertility treatments—IVF or otherwise. Well, all that may be the case, and I have a couple of responses to that.

No. 1, I do not and would never object to that if that is what this were. In fact, I would relinquish my objections altogether if this policy were about helping military women gain access to fertility treatments. There is no provision in Federal law—not in title 10 and not anywhere else that I am aware of—that prohibits the Secretary of Defense from doing that. That would, moreover, not amount to a major departure from established policy. So, if that is really what is on the table here, I wouldn't object to that at all.

But it is the part about abortion. The Senator is conditioning the use of these funds—the receipt of additional leave time, the receipt of an expense account, and 3 weeks off—to go have an abortion. That is using Federal funds to get an abortion, to fund an abortion, because that is part of that.

Moreover, the suggestion that this applies evenhandedly, equally—that it was equally intended to promote access by military women to fertility treatments—is at odds with and belied by the fact that the President, ever since the Dobbs opinion was released at the end of the last term of the Supreme Court, has been calling this an all-of-government cause—an all-of-government cause—to make sure that they can get around Dobbs in any way that they possibly can. This is, was, always has been, and always will be about abortion.

Like I say, the rest of it would be unobjectionable. I wouldn't raise any objection to it. I can't imagine my friend and colleague from Alabama would anyway. So that is a bit of a red herring, and it is a bit of a smoke-screen to say that this is about fertility treatment. It is not about that.

With respect to the readiness component of it, look, I get it. As for the hard-working men and women of the military, for whom I have deep respect, in having gained promotions, we want to be able to promote them and approve their promotions. Yes, that needs to happen. And to the extent that any one of those people really needs to be processed and approved very quickly, there are ways to do that. We could tick these off one after the other. Senator TUBERVILLE mentioned that we took care of one just in the last week or so on the floor. We could be doing that right now. If you want to see where the Senate's legislative priorities are, they are not with this. They are with other things. If this really were a priority, we would, through the leadership of the Democratic majority leader, be in a position to do that. He has chosen different priorities and not this one.

Look, at the end of the day, this thing—you could dress it up any way you want, but this is a major change in policy that is utterly at odds with the spirit if not also the letter of Federal law. As such, changing it should require a change in statute. If he wants to push for that, he is free to do so. If it doesn't pass, then he is stuck with

that. If he is not content with being able to advocate for it from the outside, he should run for the House, or he should run for the Senate. He must not be allowed to legislate from the E-Ring of the Pentagon.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I listen to the Senator from Utah as he works mightily to twist the language of the statute, which is entirely clear: The Federal Government cannot perform abortions. Federal money cannot be used to “perform.” That is the relevant verb here. Under this policy from the Department of Defense, the individual who gets an abortion or whose family member gets an abortion is responsible for all of the costs of the performance of that abortion. That part is clear.

But I am very troubled by what the Senator from Utah said about fertility treatments. He said he would be glad to remove all objections if he knew that someone were going to get a fertility treatment or fertility treatments but just not if someone were going to get an abortion. I would like to suggest, with respect, a couple of things here.

The first one is, you may want to understand the science a little bit better because one of the consequences of many fertility treatments is that it doesn't work and results in an abortion, in which case, someone who goes for fertility treatments knows that they may be signing up down the line for an abortion because, although they very much wanted to have a baby, it did not work out. This is where they find themselves medically and is the decision that they want to be able to make for themselves—a decision that the Senator from Utah wants to take away from them.

I also want to make the point about—we asked this in committee, the Senator may remember, in the Senate Armed Services Committee hearings, to the commanders to the military commanders, the commanding officers: Do they want to ask these questions? And the answer was, across the board, no, they don't want to be in the business of asking why it is that you need reproductive healthcare services and then making the careful calculation about whether or not your wife is in the middle of what appears to be a miscarriage and she needs to go somewhere where she can get treatment because she can't get it where the base is located. That is a stunningly intrusive question to ask—one that, by the way, no private employer could ask.

If the Senator from Utah and if the Senator from Alabama want to change the law and say that it should be the job of commanding officers to ask each woman who says, “I need time to travel elsewhere for reproductive services,” and to inquire into detail about their healthcare needs and substitute their own decisions about what is the appropriate healthcare response, they could

try to promote a bill for that. I don't think the Senators are going to get the votes in the U.S. Senate.

Put it up if that is what you want to do, but you don't get to do it through the backdoor by saying, when it now turns out that servicemembers find out they need reproductive care that is not available near the bases where they have been stationed by their military command, that they cannot travel elsewhere for that care.

The Senator talks about the spirit of the law. The spirit of the law is that we respect our servicemembers and that we respect the women of the military to make their own healthcare decisions. That is what this rule from the Department of Defense is all about.

So, in a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 49. This is a person who was the Chief of Staff for Operation Warp Speed, one of the greatest achievements of the Trump administration to rapidly develop tests and distribute lifesaving COVID vaccines. We should all be grateful for his leadership, not hold up his promotion to play political games.

I will also be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 113. If confirmed, this would be the commander for the Naval Sea Systems Command, which manages 150 acquisition programs and billions of dollars in foreign military sales. This role is crucial to making sure the Navy gets the ships it needs on time and on cost, and holding it up only hurts great power competition with China.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 82. These 27 Air Force nominees have collectively served their country for over 600 years. Among the nominees is a NASA astronaut who received his master's degree from MIT and commanded NASA's third longest duration commercial crew mission.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 85. If confirmed, this nominee would command the Seventh Fleet, which operates in the Pacific and is the Navy's largest forward-deployed fleet. If our country wants to check Chinese aggression, we must ensure this post is filled with strong and capable leadership.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 47. If confirmed, this nominee would be the commanding general for the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command and the U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command. This nominee has held air and missile defense assignments throughout the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, and Europe. America needs someone with this kind of experience to be confirmed for this post.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 97. Collectively, these 60 nominees have served in the Navy for more than 400 years. Among these nominees is an MIT graduate who served as the commander of the USS Gerald Ford—the

first new aircraft carrier class we have built in over 40 years. He has logged 2,600 hours in 22 different aircraft. He is eager to serve his country, and he is being held up by one man in the U.S. Senate.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 46. This nominee studied at the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. He currently serves as commander of the 10th Medical Group and commands surgeons at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Leaders like her ensure the health and readiness of our military.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 83. This nominee studied at the Squadron Officer School at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, as well as the Air Command and Staff College and the Air War College in Alabama. Alabama has invested a lot in her. She is now capable and ready to serve as the Chief of Staff for the Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. She should be confirmed.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 48. If confirmed, she would serve as Deputy Chief of Staff for the Army's G-4, which is responsible for the Army's strategy policy plans and programming for logistics and sustainment. If we want to be ready to fight, we need to confirm her position.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 50. Collectively, these two women—two women—have served the Army for over 60 years. They deserve to be promoted.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 51. If confirmed, he would serve as Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration for the Air Force. As we contend with Russia's reckless threats to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine and China rising as a nuclear power, we need sober and expert advice to keep Americans safe from the threat of nuclear weapons. We need to confirm him.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 52. If confirmed, this nominee would be the Military Deputy and Director for the Army Acquisition Corps. The Army is not only leading and modernizing our own forces, they are playing an essential role in making sure Ukraine has all of the munitions and weapons for victory against Russia. We cannot—cannot—allow this post to become vacant.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 86. Collectively, these 11 nominees have served over 275 years in the Air Force. Among these nominees is the commander of the 439th Airlift Wing at Westover Air Reserve Base in Massachusetts, the largest Air Reserve base in our Nation.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 87. Collectively, these two nominees have

served the Air Force for over 55 years. One of the nominees currently serves as mobilization assistant to the command surgeon for Air Combat Command, which is responsible for the health of 81,000 Active-Duty and civilian personnel.

The holds imposed by the Senator from Alabama are punishing the people who make sure that those who serve are healthy enough to combat any threat to U.S. national security.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 88. Collectively, these 10 nominees have served over 280 years, with nearly 20,000 flying hours of experience. These nominees include a Special Operations forces commander, a mobilization assistant to the commander responsible for training 293,000 students a year, and another mobilization assistant to the commander of Space Operations Command.

I know how important space operations are to the Senator from Alabama. I cannot believe he is willing to jeopardize these essential missions to train and lead our forces.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 89. This nominee is currently commanding the largest Army command in the Caribbean. That promotion was particularly significant for him personally because he is from Puerto Rico. During his promotion ceremony, he said that he assumed the command "fully aware of the dire consequences to our Nation and to our freedom if we fail to sustain a high level of readiness in a world in which security challenges are becoming more complex." Blocking his promotion only exacerbates those security challenges.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 91. This nominee is currently serving in Birmingham, AL, as the Chief of Staff, United States Army Reserve Deployment Support Command. This is a constituent of the Senator from Alabama who cannot receive the promotion he deserves.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 92. This nominee is currently the Director for Joint Reserve Intelligence Support Element for Europe and Eurasia for the Defense Intelligence Agency, helping to make sure Ukraine and our allies in Europe have the critical national security information they need to be victorious on the battlefield. Yet she can't receive the promotion she deserves because the Senator from Alabama is playing politics with women's healthcare.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 93. This nominee is currently the deputy commander for support for providing security assistance to Ukraine. He is doing everything he can to make sure Ukraine defeats Russia. Yet the Senator from Alabama is making sure he doesn't advance to the promotion he has clearly earned.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 95. Collectively, these eight nominees have served in the Marine Corps for over 200 years. They deserve their promotions.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 96. Collectively, these nominees have served the Navy for over 55 years. Both are currently serving in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, making them responsible for the health and safety of our sailors, our marines, and their families. The pandemic has already driven so many skilled healthcare professionals out of the workforce. We need to retain and promote these kinds of professionals to continue to protect the readiness of our forces.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 98. Collectively, these two nominees have served the Navy for 55 years. Both nominees are making sure the Navy has the supplies needed to be ready, including one currently serving as the Chief of Staff for Navy logistics who supports our fleet in the Pacific. A mother of three, she has fought to make sure the Navy is supporting other mothers who serve.

The Department has done the right thing to support women's rights, while the Senator from Alabama is fighting to take those rights away.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 99. These two nominees have collectively served the Navy for over 60 years. Both nominees have extensive experience managing our major weapons programs, and this promotion would place one of them in charge of aircraft carrier programs. Making sure our weapons work and enhance security is one of the most important missions, and we need to retain that experience if we want to keep our Nation safe. The Senator from Alabama's actions threaten to drive people like these nominees out of the military.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 100. This nominee is currently serving as the Director of Health and Training at the Defense Health Agency and is a recognized member of the American Board of General Dentistry. If he is confirmed, he will be the Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Our servicemembers deserve the best healthcare we can deliver, and promoting people like this nominee ensures that we uphold the highest standards of care.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 101. If confirmed, this nominee would be the commander of Naval Supply Systems Command, which makes sure the Navy has everything they need to serve all around the world.

The rear admiral who helped Americans understand the importance of naval power to national security put it best when he said that logistics was "as vital to military success as daily food is to daily work."

The Senator from Alabama's actions deprive our Navy of the leadership the Navy counts on so that they will reliably have the tools they need to succeed militarily.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 102. These 13 nominees have collectively served in the Navy for over 400 years. These nominees include multiple commanders of carrier strike groups, including one born in Springfield, MA. Another nominee is the Deputy Director of Special Operations and Counterterrorism for the Joint Staff. If confirmed, one nominee would command the Naval Surface Force, which is responsible for manning, training, and equipping the entire surface force. If my colleagues want to protect the seas and fight terrorists, they should not stand in the way of these promotions.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 103. This nominee is currently the executive assistant for the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. If we want to continue to make sure the United States has the best information about current and future threats, we should confirm people like this, not hold up the promotions they have already earned.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 104. These two nominees have collectively served the Navy for over 55 years. One nominee is currently serving as information warfare commander for Carrier Strike Group 5 in Yokosuka, Japan. The other is the Chief of Staff for U.S. Fleet Cyber Command and the Tenth Fleet. As we continue to see warfare expand to the information and cyber domains, we need to promote Navy captains like this.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 105. These four nominees have collectively served the Navy for over 100 years. They include a Boston University graduate managing the Navy's new frigate program and the commander of America's shipyard in Norfolk. The Senator from Alabama knows better than most how much work we need to do to reach the Navy's shipbuilding goals. Blocking the promotions of the very people working to make sure we have the ships we need to protect the global commons only endangers our national security.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 106. Collectively, these two nominees have served the Air Force for 65 years. One of the nominees earned her nursing degree at Boston College, to rise to become the chief nurse of the entire Air Force. Go get 'em. The other nominee currently serves as commander for the Air Force Medical Readiness Agency, making him responsible for leading over 44,000 personnel at 76 military treatment facilities. These nominees are providing critical care and leadership to keep our forces healthy, and they should not be punished because

the Senator from Alabama thinks he knows more about healthcare than medical professionals do.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 107. Currently serving as the commanding general for Marine Corps forces in Japan, he would be the Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations for the Marine Corps if confirmed. As we approach competition with China, we need leaders with experience in the region to be promoted, not to have their careers stopped by politics.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 110. Collectively, these 23 nominees have served over 620 years of service in the Air Force. These nominees include the Director for Strategic Capabilities on the National Security Council, which makes him the principal adviser to the President on how to avoid a nuclear war, and it includes the adviser to the National Nuclear Security Administration, protecting the safety and reliability of our nuclear stockpile. Another nominee makes sure that we provide all the air and space power necessary to promote U.S. interests in the Pacific. The current Director of Intelligence of the U.S. Cyber Command is also held up by the Senator's antics.

Let me assure the Senator from Alabama: We do not want to play nuclear football.

Look, we have been at this for almost an hour and a half now, but these nominees—these 184 nominees—have been waiting for months. Holding them up and declaring that we just don't need people in these positions is an insult to them, and it undermines the safety and security of the United States of America.

If we want to be able to recruit the very best and the very brightest our country has to offer, we need to treat those people with a little respect. That means that when we are in it on politics, we do not drag 184 of our most able leaders into the middle of it and say: Your promotion, your pay, your next duty station are all on hold until one Senator gets his way on one DOD policy.

That is an incredibly dangerous approach, and the Senator from Alabama, as much as I respect him, I believe is acting in ways that are irresponsible and put our national defense at risk. I urge him to release his holds immediately and allow these senior military officers to get the promotions they have earned.

I renew my request with respect to each Calendar number I have raised.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I want to make something very, very clear here. None of these positions the Senator from Massachusetts has men-

tioned will go unfilled. Each role has its commander in place until the relief is confirmed. That is how the military works.

Mr. President, one thing very important to me and to our country is our military. There is only one thing more important, and that is our Constitution that they protect. For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have two statements for the RECORD that I want to enter into the RECORD, but I would like to say my debt of gratitude to the Senator from Massachusetts.

Members of the Senate go to parades and salute the military, and we give speeches on the floor about how much we appreciate them and their sacrifice. This is an illustration of the Senate at its worst. We should be standing behind these men and women who have given their lives to our country, who will risk their lives for our country, some earning Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts for doing it.

Listen, I want to tell you, if we are respecting these men and women, we should give them the promotions they have worked their whole lives to achieve and, in so doing, keep our military the strongest in the world. I respect these men and women, and I think what is happening on the floor of the Senate is not only dangerous but it is insulting. That is the only word that can be used for one Senator to hold up 184 men and women and their promotions in the military. I never thought I would see that day in the U.S. Senate.

Whatever the reason, it is time to bring the charade to an end. We can debate the policy in the committee and on the floor, wherever we wish; but when it comes to these individuals, do not hold these men and women in the military hostage to the political debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

I commend the Senator from Massachusetts for raising these issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, Leader SCHUMER said since last week that he intends to introduce a resolution purporting to support law enforcement.

In 2020, "defund the police" became the rallying cry of the radical left. Every day for the next 2 years, officers reported to duty despite a campaign saying that they didn't deserve money for even bulletproof vests; and 1,146 of those officers died protecting Americans. I don't remember Democrats taking to this floor to defend law enforcement back then. Instead, they blocked resolutions that condemned attacks against officers.

By April of 2021, antipolice protests and Democrat silence were all but routine. And we know what happened: Police morale plummeted.