

## UKRAINE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on entirely different matter, there was a remarkable exchange yesterday when a Russian reporter tried to put false words in Speaker MCCARTHY's mouth about alleged Republican opposition to helping Ukraine defeat Russian aggression.

Well, the Speaker put him in his place and shut him down. He reminded everyone of his ongoing support of aid to Ukraine and of Republicans' commitment to help our friends win. Republicans are the party of American strength, at home and abroad. And that includes standing up to would-be tyrants who are invading sovereign countries, killing innocent people, and putting the core national interests of the United States at risk.

Equipping Ukraine to defend itself is a direct investment in America's own national security—our national security. As brave Ukrainians degrade the Russian military on the frontlines, a major threat to Western security and economic prosperity gets weaker.

In the meantime, our own defense capabilities are actually getting stronger. A large part of the security assistance appropriated for Ukraine actually funds the production of new cutting-edge capabilities for the U.S. military and supports good-paying jobs for skilled American workers right here at home.

Unfortunately, it is the administration whose policies have been slow and halting. Since the beginning of Russia's escalation, the Biden administration had lagged several steps behind the pace of relevance in delivering decisive aid to Ukraine. Every approval of new assistance has required agonizing deliberations and prodding from congressional Republicans and Democrats alike. This was the case with the Stinger and Javelin systems the Ukrainians needed to drive back Russian convoys and Polish fighter jets that stood waiting on the tarmac, with the HIMARS and Harpoons and PATRIOT systems they needed to put the invaders on the back foot and the Abrams tanks they needed to support a counteroffensive and now with the cluster munitions, longer range fires, and fourth-generation fighter jets our friends need to actually turn the tide. At every single mile marker—every one—the Biden administration has dithered—dithered—unnecessarily.

It is time for the President to get serious about victory and invest in American strength.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael Farbiarz, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

## DEBT CEILING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it is about time. Ninety days after his last meeting with Speaker MCCARTHY and after weeks of pointblank refusal to engage in discussion, President Biden finally agreed to meet with the Speaker about debt ceiling legislation.

I will say it again. It is about time. If the administration's estimate is correct, the United States is mere weeks away from reaching the limit of its borrowing capacity—which means, of course, that the President has to reach an agreement with the Republican-led House of Representatives on a debt ceiling bill, but the President has been completely AWOL on this issue.

While I am very pleased that the President's Treasury Secretary has apparently managed to convey the urgency of the situation to the President and that the President is actually going to sit down with Speaker MCCARTHY, it remains to be seen how seriously the President will take negotiations.

He certainly hasn't been taking this issue seriously so far.

House Republicans, on the other hand, have been taking this issue seriously. They have offered legislation to raise the debt ceiling, paired with spending reforms to slow the rate at which we are accumulating debt. But up until 18 hours ago, the President was refusing to engage on the issue at all.

The day Republicans passed their debt ceiling legislation last week, the President was asked if he would sit down with Speaker MCCARTHY to negotiate on the debt limit. His reply: I am happy to meet with the Speaker but not on the debt limit. The debt limit isn't negotiable.

In other words, it is my way or the highway. You either accept my position on the debt limit—a debt ceiling increase with no spending reforms—or I will let our Nation default.

If that is not an unserious position, I don't know what is.

The fact is, in recent history, increases in the debt limit have almost

always been the result of negotiations, and 7 of the last 10—7 of the last 10—debt limit increases have included some mix of policy or budgetary changes rather than simply a straight increase. No matter how much President Biden would like his word on the debt ceiling to be law, the fact of the matter is that in our system of government the President does not have absolute power. And when the American people have sent divided government to Washington, as they did in the last election, then if you can't persuade the other side to see things your way, you have to negotiate. You have to compromise.

President Biden understood this at one time. Back in 2011, here is what then-Vice President Biden had to say about lawmakers who didn't want to negotiate on a debt ceiling increase:

How can you explain the fact that grown men and women are unwilling to budge up till now, and still some of them are still unwilling to budge, by taking an absolute position: "My way or no way." That's not governing. That's no way to govern. You can't govern that way.

That from President, then-Vice President, Biden back in 2011.

Then-Vice President Biden was right, and I am very much hoping that he will remember those words now and not only sit down with Speaker MCCARTHY but actually commit to reaching a compromise.

I was not encouraged by a reference from the Senate Democratic leader's office to sitting down with congressional leaders to discuss a "clean" debt limit bill. That hardly displays an understanding of the fact that any debt ceiling legislation will require compromise between the White House and House Republicans.

It is also the height of hypocrisy for the Democrat leader to talk about a "clean" debt limit bill when just a few years ago he was using the debt ceiling as leverage to negotiate with President Trump. But, apparently, "one rule for me, another for thee" are the Democrats' watchwords.

Our Nation's debt situation is very serious. Our current national debt is over \$31 trillion—yes, \$31 trillion—and it is projected to grow to more than \$50 trillion over the next decade, at least if the President's budget were to be adopted. That is an unfathomable amount of money, and more to the point, it is an entirely dangerous amount of money.

Our national debt has already exceeded the size of our economy, which is a very dangerous marker to hit. Under our current trajectory, by 2033, debt held by the public will be at the highest level relative to GDP—relative to the size of our economy—literally, in history, exceeding even post-World War II levels.

In fact, according to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, 50 cents of every dollar our country borrows in the next 10 years will go just toward paying interest on our national debt.

Debt at that level threatens economic growth. It sucks money away from essential government spending on things like Social Security and Medicare and our national defense, and it leaves us excessively dependent on other countries, sometimes hostile countries, that hold our Nation's debt. And for all of those reasons and more, it threatens our national security.

House Republicans are absolutely right to take this opportunity to insist on some attempt to at least slow our rate of spending, and the American people would seem to agree. A recent poll found that 65 percent of Americans—including—including 58 percent of Democrats, believe that the "debt ceiling debate is a good time to force tough issues, like cutting future spending to reduce the deficit." That is the way the question was worded in the poll.

Let me just repeat that.

Sixty-five percent of Americans, including fifty-eight percent of Democrats, believe that the "debt ceiling debate is a good time to force tough issues, like cutting future spending to reduce the deficit." Let's hope that Democrats are paying attention.

The ball is in the President's court. House Republicans have been at the table for a while now. They have offered ideas. They have put forward and passed legislation. Now it is up to President Biden. He can either get serious about this fundamental responsibility, engage in real negotiations with Speaker McCARTHY, and arrive at a genuine compromise on debt ceiling legislation or he can continue to refuse to meaningfully engage on this issue and ensure that his Presidency will be remembered not just for a massive inflation crisis but for a Democratic default on the debt. The choice is his.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my full statement prior to the vote.

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

#### NOMINATIONS OF MICHAEL FARBIARZ AND ROBERT KIRSCH

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to support two remarkable, dedicated, and exceptionally qualified nominees to serve on the U.S. District Court of New Jersey: Mr. Michael Farbiarz and Mr. Robert Kirsch. Both nominees represent the best that our State has to offer. Both have served with distinction in various roles. Both deserve to be swiftly confirmed to the district court.

Consider the distinguished public service career of Mr. Farbiarz. A resi-

dent of Glen Ridge, NJ, he has served as an assistant U.S. attorney, as cochief of the Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit, and general counsel of the New York-New Jersey Port Authority. His relentless work ethic in every role has made him a shining star in New Jersey's legal community—a representation that is not given but earned.

And whether serving in the leadership roles that he has had, enforcing our laws as a Federal prosecutor, or providing legal counsel to those who serve on the Port Authority commission, his breadth and depth of legal experience prepare him well to continue his service to the Garden State as a fair and effective Federal judge.

Like Mr. Farbiarz, Robert Kirsch is a dedicated public servant who has been capably serving on the Superior Court of New Jersey for over a decade. A native of South Orange, he was sponsored for his position by then-State Senator TOM KEAN, Jr., a Republican, and was appointed by Governor Corzine, a Democrat.

Throughout his tenure, Judge Kirsch has consistently earned bipartisan support in his long and impressive career in public service. He holds a wealth of experience both as a jurist and a former Federal prosecutor, and while presiding over a busy docket of criminal cases, Judge Kirsch has consistently chosen to do what is right, not what comes easy.

Outside of the courtroom, Robert Kirsch is a devoted advocate for public safety and the well-being of his community. In particular, he has led a passionate effort to improve New Jersey's juvenile justice system, earning him numerous awards and widespread recognition. This commitment to fairness and impartiality—values he has demonstrated throughout his career—will surely be an asset while serving on the Federal bench.

I submit to my colleagues that Mr. Farbiarz and Judge Kirsch are two phenomenal nominees to fill New Jersey's final judicial vacancies. They have earned "well qualified" ratings from the American Bar Association. They have letters of support from both the New Jersey State Bar Association and the Association of the Federal Bar of New Jersey.

In short, they are the final pieces of the puzzle as I, alongside Senator BOOKER and the Biden administration, have worked to fill not one, not two, but eight vacancies that were existing. There was a judicial emergency on the District Court of New Jersey. At the beginning of the last Congress, the number of vacancies was so dire that it was deemed a "judicial emergency." In one of the busiest courts in America, work ground to a halt as a result, creating a backlog that delayed justice for victims of crime and plaintiffs in court.

We had our work cut out for us, but by putting our heads down and our noses to the grindstone, Senator BOOK-

ER and I can now proudly say we have shepherded eight well-qualified nominees through the process. These are individuals who believe in precedent; who are not judicial activists; who are, in essence, in the mainstream of the law. All that remains is for this body and our colleagues to join us in confirming these final two nominees to their roles.

It will be a great day for the State of New Jersey and for our country as we vote to elevate Michael Farbiarz and Robert Kirsch to the Federal bench. We thank them both for their incredibly dedicated service, and I certainly look forward to thanking my colleagues for their dutiful consideration of these two nominees on the floor.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### 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 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. 121, Michael Farbiarz, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, John W. Hickenlooper, Margaret Wood Hassan, Gary C. Peters, Mark Kelly, Jack Reed, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Catherine Cortez Masto, Mazie Hirono, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jeanne Shaheen, Tammy Baldwin, Angus S. King, Jr., Alex Padilla, Robert Menendez, Michael F. Bennet.

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 Michael Farbiarz, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Ex.]

#### YEAS—65

|              |              |           |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Baldwin      | Fetterman    | Menendez  |
| Bennet       | Gillibrand   | Merkley   |
| Blumenthal   | Graham       | Moran     |
| Booker       | Grassley     | Mullin    |
| Boozman      | Hassan       | Murkowski |
| Brown        | Heinrich     | Murphy    |
| Budd         | Hickenlooper | Murray    |
| Cantwell     | Hirono       | Ossoff    |
| Cardin       | Kaine        | Padilla   |
| Carper       | Kelly        | Peters    |
| Casey        | Kennedy      | Reed      |
| Collins      | King         | Romney    |
| Coons        | Klobuchar    | Rosen     |
| Cortez Masto | Lujan        | Rounds    |
| Cotton       | Manchin      | Sanders   |
| Duckworth    | Markey       | Schatz    |
| Durbin       | McConnell    | Schumer   |