

As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I am confident that, as Ambassador of Global Women's Issues, she will work tirelessly and effectively to advance the rights of women and girls worldwide.

Dr. Gupta should have been confirmed last Congress, but we cannot go back in time. But what we can do is act now. Mr. President, I strongly support Dr. Gupta's nomination and urge my colleagues to vote for cloture.

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. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. I ask unanimous consent that the vote that was supposed to take place at 1:45 p.m. commence immediately.

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

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. 66, Geeta Rao Gupta, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues.

Charles E. Schumer, John W. Hickenlooper, Alex Padilla, Christopher A. Coons, Tina Smith, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tim Kaine, Jeanne Shaheen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Patty Murray, Michael F. Bennet, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Christopher Murphy, Catherine Cortez Masto.

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 Geeta Rao Gupta, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 115 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—6

Feinstein	Moran	Scott (SC)
Johnson	Sanders	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). On this vote, the yeas are 50, and the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

NOMINATION OF GEETA RAO GUPTA

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my excitement and support that the Senate voted to take another step closer to confirming Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta to serve as Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues.

Today's vote has been a long time in the making, but it moves us one step closer to ensuring that we have a functioning Office of Global Women's Issues that has a Senate-confirmed leader. This is really critical, particularly right now given what is happening around the world, because around the world, women are under attack.

In Iran, thousands of girls and young women have been the victims of chemical attacks in classrooms. We still don't know what the cause of those attacks are, but we do know who has been at risk and who has been suffering, and that is, girls and young women—girls and young women who are the future of Iran, and they are forced to go to school worrying about their safety. Their families are forced to consider if their education is worth risking their lives, and their communities are forced to reckon with a government that is unmoved by the senseless attacks on its girls.

In the Ukraine, Russian forces have used mass rape as a weapon of war in their unprovoked war on Ukraine. Children and their mothers have been reported to be sexually assaulted while their family members are forced to watch.

In Latin America, a woman is killed every 2 hours because of her gender. That is 12 women a day dying simply because they are women.

In Sudan, we see another disturbing but sadly expected pattern. Women are disproportionately affected by the conflict there. They are forced from their homes. They are forced to share their homes with soldiers. They face sexual and gender-based violence and human trafficking. As violence shutters hospitals across that country because of the civil war, roughly 219,000 pregnant women are at risk for lack of medical care.

And, of course, in Afghanistan, the situation is maybe even worse. The de facto Taliban authorities have normalized the systematic violation of the rights of women and girls, to the point that the United Nations warns that "discriminatory denial of women and girls' fundamental human rights may amount to gender persecution, a crime against humanity."

These horrible examples humanize the plight that women around the world are facing, but another troubling set of statistics underscores why this plight is not isolated to one country. It is a global challenge that does not stop at the border of one nation.

Thirty percent of women and girls 15 and older have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner. The majority of the world's poor are women, who globally earn 24 percent less than men and who face some form of job restrictions—so some form of job discrimination—in 84 countries.

It is a sad reality that in 2023, there is not really a single country that has achieved gender equality. In fact, the progress of the last several decades has been set back by the COVID-19 pandemic and authoritarian trends around the world.

So Dr. Gupta, as she takes over—hopefully, once she is confirmed next week—as she takes over that Office of Global Women's Issues, she has a huge responsibility. She will head an office of smart, engaged, and dedicated staff who have devoted their careers to the rights and empowerment of women and girls.

I would be remiss today if I didn't mention Katrina Fotovat, who has served as the senior official at the Office of Global Women's Issues since January of 2021. Kat has led the Office as it implements the Biden-Harris administration's policies on women, peace, and security, countering violent extremism and promoting economic quality, and combating gender-based violence. Her leadership has been invaluable, and she exemplifies what it means to be a public servant.

For those people who question why we need an Office of Global Women's Issues to be a lens for our foreign policy, I think it is important to remind everyone that empowering women and achieving gender equality is not just a moral imperative; it is also a strategic imperative.

The evidence routinely demonstrates that women's empowerment is integral to achieving greater security and stability around the world. Simply put, those societies, those countries that empower women are more stable, and they are more likely to be democracies.

When women work—even when they make less than men for the same job—they invest 90 percent of their income back into their families and communities. That is compared with only 35 percent for men. Closing the gender gap in education adds half a percent to a country's per capita gross national product. We have excellent data that shows that a peace agreement in conflict areas is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in the development of the peace agreement.

These are tangible benefits that show that empowering women benefits whole communities, women and men alike.

We have seen that the work of the Office of Global Women's Issues has shown that change is possible. We can leave a better future for our daughters and granddaughters.

Around the world, more women are in government at all levels today than they were a generation ago, and not coincidentally, more countries are also creating laws to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Rates of child early and forced marriage are down, while more girls are staying in school. Clearly, the women of the world have not been cowed by violence, oppression, and inequality. They are fighting back, and they are demanding equality and equity.

In 2017, we passed the Women, Peace, and Security Act, ensuring that women's voices and participation are included in conflict resolution and decision-making processes. When I travel around the world, I have been heartened to hear about the effect of the U.S. leadership on women, peace, and security, which is an important part of the mandate of the Office of Global Women's Issues.

Our efforts to encourage the inclusion and empowerment of women are making an impact, despite the huge challenges they face on a daily basis.

Around the world, we are seeing women fighting for their rights. In Iran, women have faced down a brutal dictatorship. They have defied state-sanctioned violence to lead marches in the streets that demand justice for the senseless death of Mahsa Amini.

In Ukraine, women have taken up arms against the invading Russian force while also leading their families and communities to safety.

And across Latin America, women have demanded that their governments do more to stop the senseless gender-based violence and to hold those who commit violence accountable.

Women have long been at the forefront of the pro-democracy movement in Sudan, leading efforts to hold the military and ruling elites to account

and demanding that their voices are heard.

And in Afghanistan, in the face of overwhelming odds, women are defying the Taliban's strict decrees to actively protest for their rights. They have not given up. They continue to risk beatings, detention, and death to demand their rights. Their peaceful demonstrations have been met with military force, and yet they continue to protest.

So we cannot stand idly by. These women are why we need a strong U.S. policy that supports the equality and empowerment of women. They are why we need an engaged Office of Global Women's Issues, and they are why we need to confirm Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta as Ambassador at Large as soon as we can next week so that she can take over in that critical position.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the postcloture time on the Shogan and Gupta nominations be considered expired and the confirmation votes be at a time to be determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 71.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of L. Felice Gorordo, of Florida, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of two years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 71, L. Felice Gorordo, of Florida, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of two years.

Charles E. Schumer, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sherrod Brown, Jack Reed, Benjamin L. Cardin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons, Brian Schatz, Mazie K. Hirono, Tim Kaine, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Tammy Duckworth, Margaret Wood Hassan.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 55.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Glenna Laureen Wright-Gallo, of Nevada, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 55, Glenna Laureen Wright-Gallo, of Nevada, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

Charles E. Schumer, Ben Ray Lujan, Peter Welch, Tina Smith, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Raphael G. Warnock, Christopher Murphy, John W. Hickenlooper, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Baldwin, Edward J. Markey, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Mazie K. Hirono.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls