

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on nominations and judges, today will be a very busy day here on the Senate floor. This morning, we will vote to advance and then confirm the nomination of Jeremy Daniel to serve as a district judge for the Northern District of Illinois. We will also vote to advance the nomination of Darrel Papillion to serve as a district judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Mr. Daniel and Mr. Papillion are highly regarded and skilled litigators with impressive credentials, and both received a bipartisan vote out of the Judiciary Committee. So I expect both nominees to move through this Chamber with bipartisan support, and I thank my Republican colleagues for working with us.

Finally, we will vote to proceed with Nancy Abudu to serve as circuit judge for the Eleventh Circuit. If confirmed, Ms. Abudu would be the first Black woman ever to serve on the Eleventh Circuit, another critical step to breaking down the barriers in the Halls of Justice.

The Eleventh Circuit covers Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, home to nearly 8 million Black Americans, and she will be only the third Black jurist ever and the first Black woman jurist ever to preside on that court. The daughter of Ghanaian immigrants, who worked her way up to becoming one of the nation's leading civil rights attorneys, Ms. Abudu is an embodiment of the American dream, and she has dedicated her career to ensuring that dream is alive and well for everyone in this country.

Throughout her career, Ms. Abudu has ensured our laws and our institutions work for all of us equally. She has dedicated herself particularly to the cause of democracy, of protecting the right to vote, and has fought back against attempts to shut Americans out of the Democratic process.

I am certain Ms. Abudu will continue to apply the law equally and impartially from the Federal bench, and I look forward to advancing her nomination today. I am proud of the historic progress this Senate majority has made in advancing and confirming highly qualified, diverse judicial appointments to lifetime appointments to the bench, and you can be sure we are going to keep going.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, President Biden took one step

toward the debt limit solution we have been laying out for him literally for months.

After meeting with Speaker MCCARTHY, the President, finally—finally—designated specific members of his staff to negotiate with the Speaker's office directly.

I am glad the President has taken the advice that I gave him back in February; that this would ultimately end in a negotiation between the President and the Speaker. It is encouraging that the White House is now engaging seriously with the only counterpart who can help deliver an actual solution. But because it took the President 3 months to start dealing in reality, we now have a time problem.

So I am hopeful the President's team will join with House Republicans to produce a responsible spending agreement to raise the debt ceiling, and I will continue to support Speaker MCCARTHY 100 percent.

IRAN

Mr. President, on another matter, yesterday, at my urging, Biden administration officials held a briefing for our colleagues on the growing challenge Iran poses to America's allies, our interests, and our own personnel.

The list of threats from Tehran is long and growing. The IRGC continues to harass commercial vessels in the Arabian Gulf. They arm and equip the Houthi rebels in Yemen who terrorize America's Gulf partners. They back the terrorist proxies in Iraq and Syria who killed an American and wounded two dozen others in March. They fund, train, equip, and facilitate Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's proxy war against Israel.

All the while, Iran has developed closer ties with China, expanded its nuclear and missile programs, suppressed peaceful nationwide protests, and continued its efforts to assassinate current and former U.S. officials as well as Iranian-American dissidents here on American soil.

The administration recognizes Iran as "Russia's top military backer" and describes Iran's two-way arms race trade with Russia as a "full-scale defense partnership."

Tehran is not deterred from terror at home and abroad. Looking at this administration's record of retreat, it is little wonder why. President Biden began his term by relaxing pressure on Tehran's proxies in Yemen and turning his back on America's partners in the Gulf. His administration spent 2 years fruitlessly chasing the Iranians around the negotiating table. And they signaled weakness and incompetence through their reckless and disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

And while Iran and its proxies have conducted more than 80—80—attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria since the President took office, America has responded with force four times—four times. If Iran does not fear serious consequences with such aggression, we cannot be surprised when they

attack again and again all across the region.

Unfortunately, the Middle East is not the only place where the Biden administration has met serious threats with a timid and halting response. Just look at the President's Ukraine policy: doing the right thing only after weeks or months of self-deterrence.

But today, President Biden has an opportunity to change course. This week, he will meet with America's closest allies and trading partners overseas. In the shadow of global challenges, he can start rallying our partners with real American leadership to help Ukraine defeat Russian aggression and to impose meaningful costs on Russia for its brutal war, to deter Iran's violence at home and abroad with new and effective international sanctions, and to meet China's manipulation and malign influence with resolve and with strength. I hope the President will seize the opportunity.

NOMINATION OF NANCY G. ABUDU

Mr. President, on one final matter, just in time for Police Week, Senate Democrats are moving to confirm an anti-police activist to the Federal bench. Nancy Abudu is the President's nominee for the Eleventh Circuit. Her record falls far, far outside the mainstream.

Let's begin with the nominee's tenure as director of strategic litigation at the Southern Poverty Law Center. Half a century ago, the SPLC focused its attention on fighting actual—actual—White supremacy. Today, it is better known as labeling political opponents as "hate groups." Here is how leftwing commentary summed up its so-called "hate map" a few years ago:

[T]he whole thing is a willful deception designed to scare older liberals into writing checks.

Again.

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Over the years, Ms. Abudu has been happy to join in on the fearmongering. She has described prohibitions on convicted felons voting as "practically the same system as during slavery." She said her biggest concern about voter suppression was States passing laws to require voters to have photo IDs. She claimed that the State of Alabama, which posted the Nation's second highest turnout among Black voters in 2018, was trying to "establish White supremacy."

And one of her employer's latest bits of legal jeopardy occurred on Ms. Abudu's watch, in her area of professional responsibility. Several SPLC lawyers are under investigation by a panel of Federal judges in Alabama for "judge shopping" a case. In other words, these activists filed and refiled their litigation in the hopes of getting a sympathetic judge. Conveniently, Ms. Abudu has claimed that even as director of strategic litigation, she was not involved in directing this particular litigative strategy.

Nevertheless, the nominee's affiliations speak for themselves. We are talking about a former State leader of the National Lawyers Guild, a group that claims "policing is the true threat to our collective safety"—"policing is the true threat to our collective safety,"—and a senior leader at the SPLC, which recently defended a staff attorney after he was charged with domestic terrorism for participating in a violent attack on a police training facility in Atlanta.

Disregard for the rule of law should be immediately disqualifying for anyone seeking a lifetime appointment to the Federal bench. After a year and a half of consideration, I hope our colleagues will recognize that this nominee is unfit for judicial service and reject her nomination.

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.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week is National Police Week, which is a time set aside to honor the service of our Nation's law enforcement officers, to show appreciation for the sacrifices they make to keep our communities safe, and to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Being a police officer is no easy task. An ordinary day for the men and women in blue takes extraordinary character. It takes courage to run toward danger, to take on the unknown. But if you ask a police officer, he or she will usually say: It's just part of the job.

That job is a vital one.

I am profoundly grateful to the brave Americans who step up to protect and serve in my State of South Dakota, in Washington, DC, where the U.S. Capitol Police work to keep us, our staff, and our constituents safe, and around the country.

There is no denying that law enforcement is a dangerous job. Police officers face threats and confront suffering on a daily basis, and many officers bear the visible and invisible wounds of their job. Some officers make the ultimate sacrifice—laying down their lives to protect their fellow citizens.

This year's National Police Week resolution honors the memory of the 443 law enforcement officers who were killed in the line of duty last year as well as the 32 lost to date this year. And my thoughts and prayers go out to their families and to their fellow officers.

Being a police officer has never been easy. Over the last few years, however, steady criticism and vilification and the enduring "defund the police" move-

ment have made the job a lot harder and taken a noticeable toll on morale.

Police retirements and resignations are up around the country, and there aren't enough applicants to fill available openings. The police department in Asheville, NC, is down 40 percent of its budgeted positions. Cleveland, OH, has its smallest police academy class in 25 years—just nine recruits. And here in Washington, DC, the Metropolitan Police Department has fewer officers than at any time in the last 25 years.

Meanwhile, crime continues to surge around the country. Here in DC, violent crime is up 13 percent from the same time last year, and property crime is up 30 percent over the same period. In Philadelphia, retail and auto theft are surging. As one article recently noted, small business owners are hoping the next mayor will make public safety a top priority. Meanwhile, in Chicago, crime is up 42 percent compared to the same time last year, driven, in part, by a staggering 131-percent increase in motor vehicle theft. And the list goes on.

Surging crime is almost unquestionably being aggravated by the rise of big city prosecutors who seem uninterested in actually prosecuting crimes. Philadelphia's district attorney, for example, actually campaigned on a platform of prosecuting fewer crimes. And then there is the U.S. attorney for Washington, DC, who declined to prosecute two-thirds of arrests last year—two-thirds. DC police data say the average homicide suspect has been arrested 11 times before he or she commits a murder—11 times. Think about that.

Congress has the legal authority to block DC ordinances thanks to Federal legislation rooted in the Constitution which gives Congress legislative jurisdiction over the seat of the U.S. Government. When, in the face of a crime surge, the DC City Council passed a law weakening penalties for a number of crimes, Congress intervened and successfully blocked the bill. And, yesterday, the Senate successfully passed Senator VANCE's legislation to block another DC City Council measure—a measure that would make it more difficult for police officers to do their jobs and could lead to the targeting of individual officers.

Between soft-on-crime policies and prosecutors and antipolice rhetoric—too often amplified or accommodated by members of the Democratic Party—it has been a difficult few years for police officers.

The Biden administration has presented yet another challenge for law enforcement—the crisis at our southern border that has raged for the past 2 years thanks to the President's refusal to take border security seriously. There have been a staggering 5 million attempted illegal crossings of our southern border during the Biden administration, an average of 6,300-some individuals per day, and that doesn't

even count the so-called got-aways, who are individuals the Border Patrol saw but was unable to apprehend. And those numbers got even worse last week as the Biden administration prepared to lift pandemic-era title 42 authorities, which allowed the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to quickly turn back at least some individuals at the border.

Our Border Patrol agents and our Nation's border communities are overwhelmed. Border Patrol agents in San Diego, last week, arrested an Afghan national on the FBI's terror watch list, underscoring that the immigration crisis directly affects our national security and public safety.

Cross-border illegal activity is making life difficult for law enforcement agencies around the country. I have talked to sheriffs in South Dakota—about as far from our southern border as you can get—who are dealing with fentanyl that has been trafficked across the border from Mexico.

Last year, Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead estimated that 90 percent of fentanyl and meth in our State comes through Mexico, and that trafficking is undoubtedly being facilitated by the chaos at our southern border.

Despite the many challenges they face, particularly over the past few years, law enforcement officials and officers continue working around the clock to keep our communities and our country safe.

This week and every week, we need to honor their service and remember their sacrifices. And this week and every week, we need to do the work of ensuring that our laws and policies support our Nation's law enforcement officers and their jobs, that our men and women in blue have the tools and resources they need to enforce the law, and that misguided policies don't endanger our officers and stand in the way of public safety.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The Senator from North Carolina.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, it is my honor to rise today to speak on behalf of the citizens of the great State of North Carolina.

I wouldn't be here today without some very special people: the love of my life, Amy Kate; our three kids, Joshua, Kathryn, and Macy; and my wonderful parents, Richard and Sylvia Budd.

I wouldn't be who I am or where I am today without all of your love, your support, and your strength.

I also want to thank the dedicated members of my team, both my official staff and campaign staff, who have helped me along this journey.

As this voyage unfolded, I was always grateful for my fellow Senators, whose presence was a constant source of encouragement and advice. I want to thank Senator RICHARD BURR and Senator THOM TILLIS for their service to this institution and to our State.