

of cosponsors, including Senators MORAN, WYDEN, COLLINS, KING, ROUNDS, HEINRICH, LANKFORD, and CASEY.

As the Senate Intelligence Committee prepares the Intelligence Authorization Act, I have offered this legislation as an amendment to that bill, which hopefully will be included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act. When the committee votes to advance this bill in the coming weeks, I hope this legislation will be included.

This is an example of broad bipartisan cooperation and the result of many conversations we have had with leading intelligence and national security experts in the United States.

I am confident that this legislation will both protect the integrity of America's classification system and help restore needed trust and confidence in the government.

Recent headlines have shone a light on the flaws in our classification system. It is overwhelmed and in need of reform, and that is exactly what the Sensible Classification Act aims to fix.

I look forward to working with all of our Senate colleagues as we fight to restore transparency and accountability and preserve our ability to classify the most sensitive national security secrets as part of our layered national defense. We can and should and must do both.

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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 6 minutes.

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

NOMINATION OF DILAWAR SYED

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today as the ranking member of the Senate's Small Business Committee in opposition to the President's nomination for Mr. Dilawar Syed to serve as the Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The Deputy Administrator is often referred to as the COO of the SBA, with the critical job of overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Agency. From addressing fraud and recouping funds to improving the Agency's responsiveness, to ensuring small businesses are not drowning in unnecessary redtape, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to improve the SBA's most basic functions. Unfortunately, following Mr. Syed's appearance before the Small Business Committee, I do not believe he is the right person for the job.

This nomination was delayed last Congress due to the nominee's failure

to voluntarily disclose his company's PPP and EIDL loans from the SBA.

As the nominee to help lead the Agency responsible for small business pandemic relief funding, I believe Mr. Syed should have been forthcoming in disclosing his interest in an SBA program. Unfortunately, there were false statements and errors in the applications and disclosures signed by Mr. Syed on behalf of his company, which further delayed the committee's consideration of his nomination. The lack of transparency and the resistance in providing requested information to the committee do not inspire confidence that he will be transparent and forthcoming with Congress about the SBA's programs and ongoing challenges.

Based on the track record of this nominee, it is not clear he would reverse the SBA's failure to give committee members details on key policy matters squarely in the committee's jurisdiction. The Agency's continued lack of responsiveness under the Biden administration is a key part of why I stand before you in opposition of this nominee.

I recently questioned Mr. Syed on whether he believes that overregulation stifles innovation and entrepreneurship. He could not give me a direct answer. This is unacceptable to Iowa's entrepreneurs, who are struggling in Biden's economy and drowning in ever-changing regulations. As I am crisscrossing Iowa, small businesses continuously list Washington redtape and regulation as a top issue keeping them from growing and, in too many cases, simply surviving.

I am not convinced Mr. Syed is ready and willing to change the SBA's culture and bring much-needed accountability to the Agency. It is estimated by the investigative community that there is more than \$100 billion in suspected fraud in PPP and EIDL. Addressing this abuse by holding individuals accountable and recovering taxpayer dollars provided to ineligible businesses must be a top priority for this Agency. I have received commitments from Mr. Syed that he would make every effort on fraud recovery and prevention. He also informed me that he believed SBA Administrator Guzman is prioritizing fraud prevention.

But the reality is that the SBA decided not to pursue borrowers with unpaid loans less than \$100,000, giving them a free pass.

Should Syed be confirmed, I will hold him accountable to his commitment and ensure that the Agency is taking a larger role in administrative recoveries. Further, should Mr. Syed be confirmed today, I urge him to do all he can to protect the integrity of the 7(a) loan program at all costs.

Recently, the SBA finalized two lending rules that, if not addressed, would pose serious risks to the long-term health of SBA's lending programs, create predatory underwriting standards, and enable the same fintech companies

that were responsible for fueling rampant PPP fraud to participate in this critical program. This, too, is unacceptable.

I joined Chairman CARDIN, House Small Business Chairman ROGER WILLIAMS, and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ in asking the SBA to pause on implementation of these proposed rules until a permanent leader was in place for the Office of Capital Access. The Administrator didn't even have the courtesy to respond to our letter before plowing ahead and opening up the application period for new fintech firms.

Based on our experience with Mr. Syed over the past 2½ years while his nomination has been under consideration, he has resisted full transparency at every turn. Unfortunately, all evidence suggests that he will just be more of the same ongoing problem as part of the leadership team at the SBA.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion with respect to the Ho nomination be withdrawn and the cloture vote on the Syed nomination occur at 2:30 p.m. today; further, that the Senate recess following the confirmation vote on the Crane nomination until 2:15 to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

VOTE ON CRANE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Crane nomination?

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 148 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Duckworth	King
Bennet	Durbin	Klobuchar
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Luján
Booker	Fetterman	Manchin
Brown	Gillibrand	Markey
Cantwell	Graham	Menendez
Cardin	Hassan	Merkley
Carper	Heinrich	Murkowski
Casey	Hickenlooper	Murphy
Cassidy	Hirono	Ossoff
Collins	Hoehn	Padilla
Coons	Kaine	Peters
Cortez Masto	Kelly	Reed

Rosen	Smith	Warnock
Sanders	Stabenow	Warren
Schatz	Sullivan	Welch
Schumer	Tester	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Van Hollen	Wyden
Sinema	Warner	

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The nomination was confirmed.
(Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. ROSEN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

NOMINATION OF DILAWAR SYED

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I have come to the floor today to express my support for Dilawar Syed, and his nomination to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

This Republican obstruction has gone on long enough. I ask my colleagues from across the aisle to join me in supporting this important nominee. Dilawar Syed is more than qualified to serve in this role at the Small Business Administration. He is an entrepreneur and a job creator, with decades of firsthand experience in business entrepreneurship and community engagement.

He has experience working directly with small business owners and has led efforts to drive economic growth at the local, State, and Federal levels.

Simply put, at the SBA, he would be an asset to our Nation's small businesses and would bring a critical voice to the Agency which currently lacks a fully staffed leadership team.

The SBA has not had a Senate-confirmed Deputy Administrator for more than 5 years. This is a critical mistake. This high-level absence weakens the Agency and inhibits the SBA's ability to serve the millions of small business owners looking to the Agency for resources, assistance, and capital to start and grow their businesses.

Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have launched unfair and baseless attacks against Mr. Syed and have held up his nomination for years. They have even repeatedly failed to show up to vote on his nomination in the Small Business Committee.

These partisan attacks are simply efforts to undermine President Biden and his administration at the SBA, as well as their ability to successfully serve our small businesses nationwide.

These Republican attacks also unfairly disparage Mr. Syed, who is not only a successful business leader and community organizer, but also, importantly, a first-generation immigrant who fully exemplifies the American dream.

With this unique and important background, Mr. Syed would bring an influential new voice and perspective to help the SBA improve its outreach to immigrant communities that have been traditionally overlooked and underserved by the Federal Government.

My friends on the other side of the aisle know the importance of filling this vacancy at the SBA. Yet they have continued to play their partisan games.

Ahead of this vote on Mr. Syed's nomination, I ask you to join me in supporting this eminently qualified nominee. Let's do our jobs and finally get this nominee confirmed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. 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. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today in strong support for the confirmation of Dilawar Syed to fill the long vacant role of Deputy Administrator for the Small Business Administration.

After more than 2 years since President Biden first nominated Mr. Syed, the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship finally reported Mr. Syed's nomination out of the committee earlier this year.

Mr. Syed was nominated to fill a position that has been vacant for nearly 5 years. The vacancy has caused harm to small business owners throughout our Nation who depend on the SBA to be fully staffed in order to access capital, contracting opportunities, and entrepreneurial development training.

In an entrepreneurial career spanning over two decades, Mr. Syed has experience starting businesses and advocating for inclusion entrepreneurship at the international, Federal, and State level.

He currently serves as the Special Representative for Commercial and

Business Affairs at the United States Department of State, where he advances trade, commercial, and economic policies through commercial advocacy.

Prior to his position at the State Department, Mr. Syed was CEO at Lumiata, a healthcare technology company, and president at Freshworks, where he helped scale the software company's products to reach thousands of small- and medium-sized businesses.

Mr. Syed has also held a number of civic positions. In the Obama administration, he served as chair of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Economic Growth. And in California, he chaired the California Entrepreneurship Task Force under Governor Gavin Newsom's Office of Business and Economic Development.

With experience at the State Department as Special Representative and leadership roles in business, entrepreneurship, and public service, he is very well-positioned to help the SBA meet this critical moment small businesses face across the Nation.

As our small businesses continue to recover from the pandemic while facing new challenges, it is essential that the SBA is fully equipped to meet their needs.

During the pandemic, the Agency provided relief to millions of existing small businesses. Now, record levels of new businesses are being created under the Biden-Harris administration. SBA has the unique opportunity to foster the continuation of this small business boom, making sure that entrepreneurs have the resources, assistance, and capital that will create economic prosperity for communities across the country.

While the SBA has worked tirelessly to provide this assistance, the pandemic exposed a clear need for modernization, technical upgrades, new resources, and reforms at the SBA. That is why we need a Deputy Administrator today more than ever. The skills and qualifications Mr. Syed possesses are a perfect fit for the SBA's needs. He has broad support from dozens of small business organizations that understand the needs of entrepreneurs.

They know that Mr. Syed is an individual who will endlessly continue to advocate for and support our small businesses. Allowing the position of Deputy Administrator to remain empty for so long is a great disservice to our Nation's small business owners.

His confirmation process has been fraught with unacceptable delaying tactics, unfounded accusations, and unrelated controversies.

Throughout it all, however, Mr. Syed has shown only patience and perseverance. I am honored to stand here today, finally, to support his nomination for the position of SBA Deputy Administrator. I am confident that America's small businesses and the communities they support will benefit from him in this role.