

six decades—since the time of the John F. Kennedy administration—and one that I hope we will be able to add to this Senate's long list of accomplishments. It is called the Southwest Connector, and it will be vital to my State's economy as well as that of the neighboring State of Missouri.

I have requested congressional-directed spending to support this project in the next fiscal year. It will expand Illinois State highways 127, 154, and 3 from two to four lanes and create a much-desired rural expressway between St. Louis and Southern Illinois.

Madam President, I can remember when I was new to this business, and in the first campaign, working for a man named Paul Douglas, who was our Senator at the time, I went to Southern Illinois with him in the 1960s, fresh out of college, and heard him tell the story about the valiant efforts that they made to build up Southern Illinois and to restore a broken economy. Part of that was involved in creating lakes and water supplies which still serve the region and are effective in our future view of where we must go as a nation and as a State.

Now we need to do the same thing in transportation. Expanding these two-lane highways to four lanes will boost economic development in Southern Illinois and Missouri by creating jobs and enabling the regions to better compete.

Several sections of the Connector's planned route rank in the top 5 percent of the most dangerous two-lane highways in our State of Illinois. The Connector would improve traffic safety by separating lanes of traffic with a 50-foot median, and it would improve mobility for emergency vehicles and provide faster access to healthcare facilities. The project would also benefit the National Guard armories in Sparta and Murphysboro, whose activation has been particularly crucial during the floods in the region.

When Congress passed the bipartisan infrastructure law in 2021—the largest investment in our infrastructure since President Eisenhower created the Interstate Highway System—it was proof that we could get big things done on behalf of the American people. We have a chance to do it again by moving forward on the Southwest Connector.

I want to particularly thank the mayor of Murphysboro, Will Stephens, who visited both of our offices. He has been working hard to make the Connector a reality, despite the fact that the concept of the Connector really started years before he was born.

There are countless local leaders across America like Mayor Stephens who are committed to improving our communities but who have been forced to wait on Washington to provide the funding. Let's not make them wait any longer. Congress needs to return to regular order in a timely manner to carry out the annual appropriations process and fulfill the authorizations in the bipartisan infrastructure law and to con-

sider earmarks for community projects that have the opportunity to transform rural communities across America.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am committed to working with my colleagues under the bipartisan leadership of Chair MURRAY and Ranking Member COLLINS to pass our 12 annual appropriations bills on time.

Madam President, I know this is near and dear to you as well as myself. To see this project move forward is going to change the face of Southern Illinois at a time when they need this infusion of economic activity and opportunity. I hope this project can be included in our projects that are authorized and appropriated in this year's bill. I will be working toward that goal.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

TRUMP INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, last Friday, the Department of Justice announced Donald Trump had been indicted on 37 counts related to his mishandling of classified documents. One only has to listen to the statements from former Trump National Security Advisor John Bolton and Trump's former Attorney General to know just how serious this indictment is.

As I have said before: No one is above the law—including Donald Trump. This case must be allowed to play out through the legal process without outside political or ideological interference. I encourage both supporters and critics of Donald Trump to maintain the peace and let the justice system do its work.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Madam President, now, on Senate business, it will be another busy week here in the Senate as we confirm more nominees and address pressing issues like AI. Tomorrow, the Senate will convene the first of three Senators-only briefings on artificial intelligence.

These briefings are the first all-Senators briefings ever on AI. Tomorrow's briefing, provided by Antonio Torralba of MIT, will focus on the state of AI today, providing an overview of AI, where it is being used right now, what it is currently capable of, and other recent developments.

Professor Torralba is one of the top machine-learning experts in the country, someone exceptionally skilled at breaking down all the complexities of AI in an accessible and simple way.

I strongly urge all my colleagues on both sides to attend tomorrow's briefing because elected representatives in the 21st century cannot ignore AI any more than we can ignore our national security, job creation, or civil liberties. It is imperative that we Senators take time to educate ourselves on AI and its implications so that we can ensure it becomes a force for human prosperity while mitigating its very real risks.

I also urge my colleagues to attend the other two AI briefings happening in the coming weeks. Our second briefing will focus on where AI is headed in the future and how America can remain a leader in the field.

Our third classified briefing on AI, the first ever classified Senate briefing on the subject, will focus on how our adversaries will use AI against us, as well as how the DOD and the intelligence community are using this technology to keep Americans safe.

I look forward to attending the briefing tomorrow, and I thank Senators ROUNDS, HEINRICH, and YOUNG for their work on this issue.

On the nominations front, last week, after confirming several highly qualified nominees like Dilawar Syed to the SBA, I filed cloture on two more executive nominees and two district judges.

On the judicial front, we will soon consider the nominations of Hernan Vera to serve as a district judge for the Central District of California and Casey Pitts to serve as a district judge for the Northern District of California. And for the information of Senators, I will be filing cloture on more nominees later this evening.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Now, on the Republican tax plan, with the predictability of a meteorome, Republicans are back doing what they do best: pushing tax giveaways that benefit the wealthy, large, huge corporations, while telling working families to take a hike. Last Friday, the House Republicans released a sweeping array of new tax giveaways that double down on some of the worst parts of the 2017 Trump tax law.

This latest GOP tax scam feels like a bad rerun. Once again, the biggest winners are billion-dollar companies, Big Oil polluters, and very high-income households. Once again, the biggest losers in this Republican tax scheme are vulnerable families and anyone who worries about protecting our planet for future generations.

The bulk of these new business tax giveaways will flow directly to the largest corporations in the country. Half of the 10 billion in interest deduction benefits, for example, will flow to companies with revenues of over a billion dollars annually.

Republicans' latest proposal will also gut billions in clean energy investments, essential for lowering our carbon emissions and creating millions of good-paying green jobs. In just 10 months, the Inflation Reduction Act has created over 142,000 new good-paying jobs, and more are coming in the next few months and years.

But Republicans want to gut those investments. Big Oil polluters, meanwhile, under the Republican plan, would get a \$10 billion tax break. It is almost too perfect that Republicans unrolled this Big Oil tax giveaway right as millions of Americans endured the hazards of toxic air pollution exacerbated by climate change.

And, of course, this tax giveaway by the Republicans will mean next to

nothing for too many Americans who aren't among the top percentage of earners.

And for all the consternation we have heard from Republicans about lowering the deficit, this latest tax package will do what Republican tax packages have regularly done in the past: blow another hole in our deficit.

Independent forecasters say Republicans' proposals would increase the deficit by a trillion dollars. These are the same Republicans who nearly defaulted us because they were worried about the deficit and about debt, and now they are making a proposal that increases debt by a trillion dollars. What hypocrisy.

Republicans love to sing from the hymnal of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction when it suits them. But whenever they push tax breaks for the ultrarich and the big corporations that increase the deficit, suddenly they switch their tune. Republicans claim that these tax cuts pay for themselves, as if by magic, but the GOP has been claiming for decades that their tax cuts pay for themselves only to have the actual economic facts repudiate them over and over and over again. Americans know by now that cutting taxes for the rich while ignoring working families is a failed approach—the trickle-down approach that Republicans seem to love. But Republicans seem remarkably impervious to learning from experience. After all, the last time the Republican tax scam was passed under President Trump, we know what happened: The winners turned out to be wealthy shareholders and corporations, not families. And then big corporations used their windfall from the GOP tax scam to spend trillions of dollars on corporate stock buybacks.

The latest Republican tax scam is more of the same: giveaways to large corporations, giveaways to Big Oil, and another massive hole in the deficit. The good news is, the American people saw through the GOP tax plan when Republicans passed it in 2017. When they were running in 2018, they hardly mentioned it because Americans were aware it was not for them but for the wealthiest people. The American people, once again, see through this tax scam just as clearly today.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 26.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Dale E. Ho, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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. 26, Dale E. Ho, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Edward J. Markey, Tammy Duckworth, Ben Ray Lujan, Margaret Wood Hassan, Christopher Murphy, Debbie Stabenow, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Angus S. King, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Raphael G. Warnock, Brian Schatz, Peter Welch, Jack Reed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 29.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Nusrat Jahan Choudhury, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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. 29, Nusrat Jahan Choudhury, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Tim Kaine, Margaret Wood Hassan, Ben Ray Lujan, Raphael G. Warnock, Tammy Duckworth, Jack Reed, John W. Hickenlooper, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Baldwin, Brian Schatz, Christopher Murphy, Tina Smith, Debbie Stabenow, Sheldon Whitehouse.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 23.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Julie Rikelman, of Massachusetts, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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. 23, Julie Rikelman, of Massachusetts, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tina Smith, Christopher Murphy, Mazie Hirono, Tammy Baldwin, Margaret Wood Hassan, John W. Hickenlooper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Catherine Cortez Masto, Brian Schatz, Gary C. Peters, Alex Padilla, Michael F. Bennet.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, June 12, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.