

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, on nominations, well, it has been a busy week for nominations here on the floor. This morning, the Senate will confirm Nusrat Choudhury, whom I was proud to recommend to President Biden to serve as district judge for New York's Eastern District.

When President Biden listened to my recommendation and nominated Ms. Choudhury, she made history as the first Bangladeshi American ever to be nominated to the Federal bench, and, today, Ms. Choudhury will make history as the first Bangladeshi American ever to be confirmed to the Federal bench. Ms. Choudhury will also be the first Muslim American woman and only the second Muslim American ever to serve as a Federal judge. It shows she is a history maker in more ways than one.

Ms. Choudhury is also a shining example of the American dream: the daughter of immigrant parents, a graduate of Columbia, Princeton, and Yale Law School. Ms. Choudhury has dedicated her career to making sure all people can have their voices heard in court.

It is a great day for our country. Our courts are at their strongest when they mirror the diversity and dynamism of our democracy. We have a vibrant Bangladeshi community in New York and in the United States. I am confident Ms. Choudhury will make an excellent judge.

Yesterday, the Senate also confirmed another excellent judge, Dale Ho, whom I was proud to recommend to be district judge for the Southern District of New York. As voting rights continue to come under attack, it is only fitting that we elevated one of the country's top voting rights experts to the bench to safeguard our democracy and preserve our most fundamental right as citizens.

With Mr. Ho and Ms. Choudhury, we will have confirmed 21 Asian Americans to the bench. Let me say that again. With these two new nominations, we will have confirmed 21 Asian Americans to the bench, a demographic that has been historically underrepresented in the judiciary.

I am proud of this majority's record of increasing both the demographic and professional diversity on the bench. This is how we strengthen the public's trust in our judiciary. And our work will continue.

I yield the floor.

 CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

 EXECUTIVE SESSION

 EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The Republican leader is recognized.

GERMANY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as I have discussed all week, the war in Ukraine has forced some of America's closest allies to sober up and start investing more seriously in their own defense.

Germany is exhibit A. Yesterday, Germany's Government released a comprehensive security strategy—another important step forward for a key member of the transatlantic alliance—but, as I mentioned at the Munich Security Conference, questions remain about whether the encouraging changes in Germany will be sufficient or enduring.

Some of these questions are being answered. Germany's national security strategy is an incremental shift. It is the product of a rather divided government, like our own, reaching difficult consensus, except with three different, sometimes internally divided political parties rather than just two.

But just consider where our German allies were before Putin's escalation. Europe's most powerful economy had let a major portion of its military fall into literal disrepair. German military spending reached barely halfway—halfway—to NATO's member target of 2 percent of GDP. And the country's precarious reliance on Russian energy was actually only increasing.

But as Ukraine dug in for a fight last February, Germany changed course. In the last 18 months, Berlin has made major contributions of key lethal capabilities to the Ukrainian cause and is on track to provide even more. The new German security strategy is clear-eyed about the Russian threat, and in light of hard-learned lessons, it prioritizes reducing dependence on foreign energy and integrating economic and security policy.

As Foreign Minister Baerbock put it this week:

We paid for every cubic metre of Russian gas twofold and threefold with our national security.

None of us should want to make the same mistake when it comes to Beijing, and in this regard, Germany's strategy indicates incremental progress toward a more realistic understanding of the challenge a revisionist power and systemic rival like China poses not only to neighbors but to the West as well. Germany's governing coalition continues to debate its approach to the PRC, and answers to how Germany plans to manage it are still forthcoming.

The world will want to know how Germany will balance growing realism about Beijing's behavior with its stated desire for economic partnership with China. They will want to know what Germany is prepared to do to assist vulnerable Asian countries that are the most threatened by the PRC's military aggression, espionage, and economic or diplomatic pressure. Of course, these same questions can still be asked about our own government's approach to the PRC.

More broadly, I am encouraged that Germany's strategy explicitly recognizes robust defense as a pillar—a pillar—of German security.

I have criticized Germany's slow pace of defense spending to meet urgent needs, but I am encouraged by Germany's new Minister of Defense, Boris Pistorius, who has a focus on rebuilding Germany's military and cutting through its calcified military procurement bureaucracy. To be successful, he will need cross-party political support and sustained defense spending above 2 percent of Germany's GDP. This new strategy does not necessarily guarantee such a commitment.

Ultimately, the biggest question for our German allies is whether their strategy sufficiently defines the priorities of their government and whether it provides the resources necessary to execute it. The very same question still applies to America's own national security strategy.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. President, now on a totally different matter, in the coming days, the Supreme Court will rule on President Biden's plan to impose student loan socialism on millions of working families across America. The Court's decision will settle whether the President is allowed to use two-decade-old "emergency" authorities dating back to the early days of the War on Terror to put \$430 billion in debt on the American taxpayers without congressional approval. But the American people don't need to wait for the Supreme Court to explain to them why letting wealthy people dine and dash doesn't make sense; they know the Biden administration's plan adds up to a raw deal.

Almost a third of all student debt in America is held by the wealthiest 20 percent of households. Only 8 percent—8 percent—is held by the bottom 20 percent of households. Sure enough, one prominent analysis found that more than 70 percent of President Biden's so-called loan forgiveness could go to the top 60 percent of earners. It is no surprise when you consider that the median annual income of young college graduates is 55 percent higher than folks working with high school diplomas. In some cases, Americans who choose to go to college already have an extra leg up. More students at the Nation's most elite colleges have parents among the top 1 percent of earners than the bottom 50 percent.

The facts are so clear—so clear—that even a former top Obama administration economist has admitted that

“across-the-board student loan forgiveness is regressive”—student loan forgiveness is regressive.

So, Mr. President, it is really pretty simple. Millions of Americans choose—choose—to take on student loan debt and unlock higher earning potential. Millions of other Americans choose not to take on debt and make sacrifices to avoid it. The Biden administration wants to take that basic choice away and impose student loan socialism instead. They want working Americans to take on \$430 billion in debt they didn't sign up for, just to pad the pockets of Washington Democrats' base. What a raw deal.

Senate Republicans know that complex issues require thoughtful solutions, not partisan hatchet jobs. That is why several of our colleagues are working hard on legislation that actually gets to the root of soaring tuition costs. Senators CASSIDY, GRASSLEY, CORNYN, DAINES, TUBERVILLE, and TIM SCOTT have put forward ideas to increase transparency before students sign up for massive debt, to streamline repayment plans, and to go after the advanced-degree loans that are particularly responsible for driving up prices. I am grateful to our colleagues for their work on real solutions.

On the other hand, the Biden administration's student loan socialism plan is painfully, painfully unfair, and very soon we will find out if it isn't just downright illegal.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in June, our Nation celebrates National Immigrant Heritage Month. It is a reminder that, with the exception of Native Americans and the descendants of enslaved people, every one of us shares something in common with the families arriving in America today, and that is the fact that our own ancestors once traveled far and wide to reach this land of liberty and opportunity. In my case, it was my grandmother. The year was 1911. She was forced to flee her home in Lithuania. She boarded a ship in Germany, bound for America, carrying two things in her arms: her Catholic prayer book and my infant mother. She arrived in our country with the same hopes as every immigrant who comes to America—from the immigrant business owners in my State of Illinois and communities like Little Village to all of the immigrant farm workers who keep food on our tables.

And today, the month of June is not only a chance to celebrate America's heritage as a nation of immigrants, it should also serve as a call to action for

us in Congress. That is because today, June 15th, marks the 11th anniversary of a life-changing program for a group of young people who share my mother's story—the Deferred Action For Childhood Arrival Program, DACA.

Back in 2010, on a bipartisan basis, the late Republican Senator Richard Lugar and I asked President Obama to use his power as President to protect from deportation hundreds of thousands of young people, many of whom arrived in our country as infants and toddlers, like my mom. And 11 years ago today, President Obama responded. He announced that he would use his executive authority to create the DACA Program.

These young people are known generally as Dreamers. They have grown up alongside our kids and grandkids. They pledge allegiance, as you said so many times, to the same American flag, and many have gone on to serve our Nation as members of the United States Armed Forces, first responders, and much more. In fact, over the years, Dreamers have become a household name. They have touched the hearts of Americans because in them, we see ourselves, our own history, our own families.

Dreamers have earned their place in the American story. But right now, they are still waiting on this Congress to finish the job that President Obama started with DACA.

This program was always intended to be a temporary solution. The permanent solution is obvious: Enact legislation—bipartisan legislation—that was introduced more than two decades ago—the DREAM Act. It would provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers all across America. Without the protections of the DREAM Act, these young people have been forced to live a life of uncertainty. They have to renew their status every 2 years, which means they can only plan their lives in two-year installments.

Today I want to tell you the story about one Dreamer. Her name is Sumbul Siddiqui. Her story is the 136th Dreamer story that I have shared on the Senate floor. Sumbul's family moved to the State of Georgia from Pakistan when she was 4 years old. With most of her relatives out of the country, she relied on her neighbors in Georgia as her chosen family. Growing up, she was a star student with no shortage of passions. She spent hours in the library getting lost in books, learned to play the viola, and fell in love with the arts. In her mind, she was just like any other kid, until she started applying to college and discovered officially, legally, she was not an American citizen.

So even though Sumbul graduated from high school with the highest honors, she feared that her immigration status would prevent her from pursuing a college education. Fortunately, it did not.

Instead, Sumbul was awarded a private merit scholarship to attend Agnes

Scott College in Atlanta, GA. During her first year, she was accepted into the DACA Program. She worked four jobs to cover the cost of tuition and graduated still a semester early with honors. She even found time to volunteer at a free health clinic. And it was in this role, working alongside doctors in her community, that she found her professional calling: medicine. So she decided to apply to a medical school that had supported Dreamers since the beginning of DACA. I am proud to say it is the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago.

You see, back in 2012, the Stritch School of Medicine made a brave commitment. They became the first medical school in America to adjust its admission policy to welcome Dreamers. And in the years since, nearly 40 Dreamers have graduated from this program at that medical school.

Last month, Dr. Sumbul Siddiqui became one of those graduates. I had the honor of speaking at her commencement ceremony before she and her fellow graduating class, which included five other DACA recipients, walked across the stage to receive their medical degrees. With her medical degree, Dr. Siddiqui plans to dedicate her career to serving families in the Chicagoland area. Soon, she will begin her residency at the University of Chicago, where she will focus on supporting underserved communities.

Ask yourself a basic question: Would America be better off if Dr. Siddiqui and Dreamers like her were unable to work here in the United States, when our communities are in desperate need of doctors and nurses? Of course not.

Earlier this year, I reintroduced the Dream Act with my friend, Republican Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM. We have been on the cusp of passing the DREAM Act for years, but time and again, Congress has failed to finish the job.

Right now, this legislation is more important than ever. That is because one judge in Texas—who has repeatedly ruled against DACA—could soon end protections for nearly 600,000 Dreamers. That would be a disaster—not just for Dreamers, but for our entire country. It is time for Congress to step up and meet our responsibility to Dreamers once and for all—as well as our responsibility for America's future—on a bipartisan basis.

I think that time is already here, and I hope we will meet our obligation that is long overdue to solve this problem, not just for this wonderful young woman and the ambition she has shown to make a better life for herself, but for the future world.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.