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Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, on housekeeping, I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to treaty document No. 112-8 be at 5 p.m. today.

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

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, a remarkable change is taking hold in our country and around the world due to artificial intelligence. The public is now more conscious of this technology than ever before. And thanks to recent advancements in machine learning and neural networks, AI's impact in the coming years will be world-altering.

Tomorrow morning, I will speak at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on how Congress can begin acting on AI in earnest. I will share my ideas about a comprehensive framework Congress can use to supercharge AI innovation in a safe and responsible way. Because AI is moving so fast, it is so complex, and so outside Congress's expertise, I will talk about some steps we must take to stay ahead of AI's rapid development.

Many of AI's impacts are truly exciting. It will reshape how we fight disease, tackle hunger, manage our lives, enrich our minds, and ensure peace. But we cannot ignore AI's many dan-

gers: AI will dramatically disrupt our workforce, could lead to massive and sophisticated misinformation and weapons, could jaundice our elections and democratic system, and there is the danger that we may prove incapable of managing this technology at all.

Congress cannot behave like ostriches in the sand when it comes to AI. Some might think it is better to ignore this issue or hope someone else figures it out because it is so complex, but ignoring AI is untenable for Congress.

In the 21st century, elected representatives must treat AI with the same level of seriousness as national security, job creation, and our civil liberties, because AI will touch on these issues and many, many more.

I want to thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle who are already putting AI front and center, including our little team of Senators HEINRICH, YOUNG, and ROUNDS, as well as Chairman CANTWELL, PETERS, KLOBUCHAR, WARNER, and DURBIN, as well as their ranking Republican Members. I want to commend colleagues from both sides of the aisle who have spoken out on AI's challenges, including Senators BENNET, THUNE, BLUMENTHAL, and many others.

We must prepare for the age of AI together—both parties working with goodwill bipartisan cooperation. That is the only way our efforts will succeed in the ways it should.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, now on nominations, later today, the Senate will vote on the confirmation of Julie Rikelman to serve as circuit court judge for the First Circuit.

For years, Ms. Rikelman has had a hand in some of the most important legal fights over women's rights and civil liberties. She was the attorney who defended the Mississippi clinic in the Dobbs case that ultimately overturned Roe.

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, on yesterday, we commemorated the end of American slavery. We were reminded by the violence in our land of the truth of John 8:34, which states:

[E]veryone who sins is a slave of sin.

Free us from fear, self, others, and sin. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, and deliver us from the chains of hatred and prejudice. As we remember Juneteenth, may we offer ourselves to become slaves of righteousness.

Lord, help our lawmakers and everyone they serve to discover the holiness to which You call us, as we experience the eternal freedom to be found in living for Your glory.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Few lawyers have fought harder, smarter, and more effectively to protect women's rights in America than Ms. Rikelman. On the bench, I am confident she will serve with excellence to uphold the Constitution.

Appointments to the circuit court are essential. The lion's share of all Federal cases are decided at the circuit court level, so it is necessary these vacancies are swiftly filled with exceptional nominees like Ms. Rikelman.

This week, the Senate will also advance the nomination of Natasha Merle to be a district judge in the Eastern District of New York. With Ms. Merle's confirmation, the Senate will reach a major milestone: 100 district judges confirmed by Senate Democrats under President Biden.

Many of these 100 judges have knocked down longstanding barriers to the halls of justice: the first Muslim district judge, the first women of color to be district judges in Maryland and Oregon, the first openly LGBTQ judge in Puerto Rico. The list could go on and on.

District judges are an important reason why our Federal judiciary is far more balanced, far more diverse, and far more experienced than the one we just had a few years ago. So hitting this milestone of 100 district judges is very significant. Senate Democrats will continue moving forward on more judges in the weeks and months to come.

TAX CONVENTION WITH CHILE

Madam President, now on the Chile tax treaty, tomorrow, the Senate will vote to advance a crucial treaty impacting America's clean energy and business relationships between Chile and the United States.

A lot is at stake in our treaty with Chile, including America's global competitiveness and the future of our clean energy transition. This United States-Chile treaty is very similar to other treaties we have with more than 60 countries around the world, many of which support U.S. jobs and business growth. So I hope this treaty passes the Senate very quickly.

Chile is one corner of the so-called Lithium Triangle, home to the world's largest lithium reserves and currently the second largest lithium producer. Lithium is a key ingredient for so many important and emerging technologies, from iPhones to EV batteries to energy storage. Nations around the world, including the United States are racing to source these precious materials.

But right now, American companies are at a significant disadvantage. Because the United States doesn't have a tax treaty in place with Chile, they face double taxation and other barriers to investment and trade. Countries like China have an edge on us. It is an unnecessary roadblock to a fruitful and economically prosperous partnership between Chile and the United States.

Ratifying the Chile tax treaty would quickly remedy this issue. This treaty

has been in the works for over a decade. It now has strong bipartisan support, and now is the time to finally get it across the finish line.

I am pleased that we are finally moving the treaty forward on the floor this week. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—Senators MENENDEZ and RISCH and many others—for their work.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, Senate Democrats continue to dutifully advance the Biden administration's radical nominees.

This week, the Senate will decide whether to give yet another leftwing lawyer a lifetime appointment to the Federal bench: Natasha Merle, who is an activist lawyer with a penchant for staking out extreme and inflammatory positions that are thoroughly divorced from reality. For example, she attacked widely popular election integrity measures, claiming "it's inconsistent to denounce White supremacy but not repudiate voter ID laws."

Alongside the self-proclaimed "wild-eyed leftist" Democrats just confirmed to the bench last week, Ms. Merle went after the State of Alabama for daring to verify the identities of people who cast ballots in elections. Meanwhile, Ms. Merle has found time to attack what she calls "unfounded yet repeated public assertions that there is a widespread lack of respect for law enforcement" and criticize efforts to promote law and order as "an illegal attempt to advance a false narrative that law enforcement was being attacked."

Well, Madam President, President Biden's first year in office saw the largest number of law enforcement deaths in the line of duty in 20 years. But Ms. Merle doesn't appear to like grappling with facts that don't suit her narrative. Normally, a record like this would be shockingly disqualifying, but under the Biden administration, it is not an outlier. It is an essential qualification.

Unfortunately, the President's affinity for radical nominees applies to folks already on the job as well. Last week, Democrats on the EPW Committee rammed through the nomination of Jeffery Baran to another term as Commissioner at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Mr. Baran already has an extensive record as the NRC's resident liberal obstructionist. While his colleagues collaborate on regulatory frameworks that encourage safe and efficient energy production, this

nominee prides himself on being a stick in the mud.

Even leading climate activists understand that Mr. Baran's dedication to hindering nuclear development "harm[s] the environment in the process." They know that reducing carbon emissions means embracing safe nuclear energy. Mr. Baran, however, does not.

At every opportunity, this nominee has opposed commonsense efforts to revise regulations and keep pace with the smaller and more affordable nuclear technologies of the future. He has shown that his blanket antinuclear approach is both a tired relic and an active obstruction to American prosperity.

So no wonder even some Senate Democrats are thinking twice about rubberstamping Mr. Baran's nomination. I would urge each of our colleagues to oppose it.

CHINA

Madam President, now on an entirely different matter, over the weekend, the Secretary of State traveled to Beijing and engaged senior Chinese officials, including President Xi, in meetings intended to reduce our differences. Managing and reducing tensions with America's adversaries is a typical responsibility, of course, for the Secretary of State. But this isn't necessarily an end in itself. It is a means of advancing other key interests.

Reports of the Secretary's meetings suggest Beijing blamed America for increasing tensions. Well, I certainly hope Secretary Blinken responded by holding up a mirror to the PRC.

Madam President, it is China that has increasingly threatened the people of Taiwan with military force. It is China that continues to test the limits of cyber espionage around the world. It is China that has stepped up threatening and unsafe interactions with U.S. vessels and aircraft operating legally in international waters. It is China that continues to do business with Iran, enriching the world's top state sponsor of terror. It is China that continues to provide cover for Russian aggression in Ukraine.

It is China that continues to wrongfully detain innocent foreign citizens, including Americans, while repressing its own citizens. And as just reported today, it is China that wants to build a military training facility in Cuba, 100 miles from U.S. soil.

China's conduct threatens stability across the Indo-Pacific. And it calls into question Beijing's willingness to behave responsibly, especially as the PRC rejected U.S. efforts to reestablish military-to-military communications to deescalate and prevent incidents.

These are the plain facts. One side is ramping up its provocative behavior. And this week, the Senate Armed Services Committee should reflect on Beijing's behavior as it considers the National Defense Authorization Act.

The NDAA is our primary opportunity to set Congress's national security priorities. It is a critical chance to