

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Kalpana Kotagal, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2027, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 183 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Ossoff	Welch
Fetterman	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Reed
Hassan	Reed	Wyden

NAYS—50

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

(Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President and Madam Vice President, I want to note that this is a history-making moment for the United States Senate.

Today, Vice President KAMALA HARRIS matches the record for the most tie-breaking votes ever passed in the United States by a Vice President.

The Constitution says that “the Vice President Of The United States shall be the President of the Senate,” and with that comes the immense burden of casting votes whenever this Chamber is evenly split.

When it has mattered most, Vice President HARRIS has provided the decisive vote on some of the most historic bills of modern times, from the American Rescue Plan to the Inflation Reduction Act, to so many Federal judges who now preside and provide balance on the Federal bench. She has carried out her duties with supreme excellence, and today, all of us—all of us—thank her for making the work of the Senate possible.

We also thank Vice President HARRIS for doing all this work despite all the

other demands she faces as the Nation’s Vice President, from leading the charge on protecting freedom of choice to speaking out on criminal justice reform and gun safety, to pushing for climate justice. Our Nation is stronger, fairer, and more prosperous because of the work of the Vice President.

So, Madam Vice President, on this historic day, thank you. Thank you for your leadership and your service to this institution and to the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

VERMONT FLOODS

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I would like to address the Senate.

Today was an inspiring day but also a sad day. Vermont, in the past few days, has suffered a severe flood from a storm that in some places dropped 9 inches of rain. It tumbled down off the mountains into our streams, flooded those streams and rivers, and overflowed into our villages and some of our major cities.

To my right, we are looking at a depiction of downtown Montpelier, the capital of Vermont. Here, we are seeing damage in what is called the Northeast Kingdom to infrastructure. There are scenes like this everywhere.

Senator SANDERS, Congresswoman BALINT, and the entire Vermont delegation with me toured Vermont with the Governor of Vermont, Phil Scott, and with our FEMA Administrator, Deanne Criswell. It was an inspiring day because we saw firsthand the extraordinary response of our government.

President Biden immediately declared a state of emergency that unleashed the ability of FEMA to provide resources. We saw our Governor and our first responders in Vermont, our National Guard, our medical personnel—our first responders who did so much to rescue people and animals.

We saw Vermont volunteers who were along the Main Street of Montpelier when Senator SANDERS and Congresswoman BALINT and I were there coming out of their homes to help folks whose businesses had been devastated.

We saw the press, the Vermont press, reporting constantly and giving detailed information about every location in Vermont that was underwater, giving an update in a report about how things were coming and where people could help.

By the way, it is just a testament to the vital importance of local journalism. We are grateful as well for the hard work that our news organizations and the reporters did, oftentimes put-

ting themselves in some significant peril. That was very inspiring.

What is sad is that the damage of these storms and this particular storm is just overwhelming. Meeting homeowners in Barre who—one man we spoke to had lived in his home, a very modest home but very beautifully taken care of, where he raised his child and where he tended his garden. He had 4 feet of water in his basement, and that was the good news because the water had been up to his first floor. He was desperately trying to get the water out to try to get the place in a position where it was not going to have mold in his lifelong home, which means so much to him and will be repaired.

We saw a woman who lived in a mobile home. All of us know that when these weather catastrophes occur, it is oftentimes the people with the least who suffer the most. She came out of her mobile home and walked across a steep, mud-drenched field in Barre, VT, toward us and the Governor with a little pail that represented toys of her children, and she really had no place to go. Her mom had suffered flood damage as well, and they were huddling together with her partner and her kids.

What is so hard is—it is easy to understand the challenge that father had and that mother had, and we were there, and it is hopeful for them that we show up, that our Federal FEMA Administrator was there with her team, but what we know is that tomorrow, when the Sun is shining hopefully, because more rain could be forecast, her life has to go on, but it is without the foundation that she built and that father I mentioned built over 30 years.

So that is the hard part. It is really, really hard for folks who have established stability in their lives to see that business that they had committed themselves to and worked so hard to establish or that home they cared for and tended—that home where they provided security to their families. The mystery to them is what is going to happen.

It is why it is so important for us—and I am asking my colleagues for their support—that we do the minimum. The minimum is to at least get those Federal resources from FEMA back to Vermont, which is in a state of emergency and where so many Vermonters have suffered a very significant loss. They are willing to face it. People do that. They know they have got to clean that house up, but they have got to have some help. It is the help they get from their neighbors, but it also has to be the help they get from the government. It has to back folks up when, through no fault of their own, there is a catastrophic weather event and it does so much damage to the lives and livelihoods of so many.

Senator SANDERS and Congresswoman BALINT and I certainly were very proud of the Vermont response,

from the Governor to the Administrators, to our press that is on the case, but we have got a job here.

I am going to be asking my colleagues for us to do that which only the Federal Government can do, and that is to provide those financial resources to help folks when there has been a weather emergency where they live.

If there is any base-level function of government to try to bring us together as a community, as a United States of America, it is to stand up and help folks, whether it is in Vermont or it is in Louisiana or it is in deep Texas. Wherever it is, when there is an event through no fault of their own where the weather is doing so much damage, I think each of us reveres the opportunity we can have to help our colleague and the folks whom our colleague represents. Vermont needs help now, and Senator SANDERS and I will be seeking to obtain that help on behalf of Vermonters.

I want to wind down here a little bit by describing a photograph of a sight I saw, and I took a photograph that we don't have here.

Along the river in Barre, where the mud had come down and the silt had settled way outside of the banks of the river, there were three beautiful bicycles that were in a tangled mess and half-buried. What it represented clearly were the bikes of three young kids, of boys and girls who looked forward at the end of the day, on a beautiful Vermont summer day, to riding those bikes and having some fun. They don't know where those bikes are. They are buried, they are twisted, they are out of their reach, and it is having an effect on their lives.

I know Vermonters are going to respond, and I hope our Federal Government responds. We have got to get bikes for those kids.

One of the things we have to do is to make some contributions to funds that Vermonters made before when we suffered Tropical Storm Irene—when we were trying to get families the help they needed—to be able to have those kids back out on those bicycles in the beautiful Vermont summer that can, after this storm, resume.

What I hope we do here—and I am going to be, as I mentioned, joined fully by Senator SANDERS, who led today's delegation—is seek the assistance of our colleagues so that this government can be a friend at the time of need for the Vermonters who in times of others' needs have always been there.

I want to thank many of my colleagues who have approached me, Senator KENNEDY foremost among them, who has had a lot of experience with natural disasters in Louisiana. There has been one colleague after another saying: PETER, if there is anything we can do, we want to help. So I take everyone at their word.

I want to end where I began, and that is with my expression of gratitude to

the response from Vermonters, from President Biden, from Administrator Criswell, and from my colleagues as well.

Vermont is strong, and we will get through this. But make no mistake—it is asking so much of a family who has lost a home. It is asking so much of kids whose summer expectations are that they are going to be able to ride on those Vermont country roads and enjoy being out with their friends and no longer have the bikes. It is asking a lot of families who are wondering what is going to happen now after mom's business has closed. It is going to ask a lot of Vermonters who are trying to figure out how in the world, even with help here, they are going to navigate the paperwork that is necessary in order to get that assistance.

What we are going to do here, in addition to seeking the assistance that is required, is that Senator SANDERS, Congresswoman BALINT, and I are coordinating our casework response because there are a lot of concrete challenges that folks face. We want them to absolutely call us, and we are going to work it out between the three of us to make sure that we can help the most Vermonters as quickly as possible get access to things that will be helpful to them to rebuild their futures. We will be strong. We will recover.

I just want to end by acknowledging the sadness I feel for so many families who and businesses that have been so hammered by this storm. This storm, by the way, was dropping so much rain as a result of the change in our climate that this point is undeniable. The warmer temperatures over the ocean create much more moisture in the air, and what was going to be a "normal" rainstorm becomes a deluge as 3 inches turn into 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 inches.

We do owe it to the future to act with alacrity, effectiveness, and determination and address the climate factors that are going into creating these mega storms.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Will the Senator withhold his suggestion of a quorum?

Mr. WELCH. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO ELVERDA LINCOLN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is my favorite time of the week here in the U.S. Senate. I like to come down on a regular basis and talk about the Alaskan of the Week. The Alaskan of the Week can be someone who is doing something great for their local community, their State, their country. Maybe it is someone who is helping to actually save the world. That is who we have today—someone who literally helped to save the world.

Before we begin, I know we have some Alaskans in the Galleries here. Today, the Boys & Girls Club is in town, and we have some of our great,

young leaders from my State who are here, and I am really glad to see them. It is appropriate, I think, as some of the Boys & Girls Clubs' awardees can probably be Alaskans of the Week soon, right?

But I always like to begin my Alaskan of the Week remarks by just giving a little update of what is going on back home in Alaska. We are having a great summer. It is actually a really cold summer for us. The Sun is high in the sky. People are fishing. Tourists are flocking to our State.

By the way, if you are watching on TV, come up to Alaska, and you will have the best vacation of a lifetime, I guarantee it. The midnight Sun is out, and the scenery is spectacular. Of course, we are a place of big skies, big places, a big ocean, big rivers, some of the most resilient, interesting, special people in the world, and some of the most patriotic. We have more veterans per capita than any State in the country.

I have the pleasure of frequently speaking about our veterans in Alaska, about our military in Alaska. Many of them have been honored by being Alaskans of the Week. That is going to happen again today with a very special veteran, Elverda Lincoln.

So let's talk a little bit about our Alaskan of the Week. She served in the U.S. Navy during the Second World War. And I am going to talk a little bit about a program, the WAVES Program. It is a very famous program, the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. That is the acronym, WAVES.

Elverda is a World War II vet, an Alaskan pioneer literally. She is an author, a mother, a grandmother, a great-great-grandmother. She has such an amazing story, and here is the deal: She is turning 100 in a couple of days—100—and is still going strong.

So let me spend a few minutes talking about this extraordinary woman who is such an inspiration to so many in Alaska and hopefully, after millions of Americans listen to this speech, to so many Americans across the country.

Elverda was born in 1923 in Minnesota as the oldest of 14 kids. She was about 6 years old when the Great Depression began. Of course, it was a very tough time for most Americans. In her words, there was no work. Her family literally did not know where the next meal was coming from. They ate a lot of soup, she said, and when there was not enough to go around for the 14 kids her parents had to take care of, they just added water to the soup. They were tough times, but she and her family survived.

She said, "We," like so many other Americans, "were all in the same boat."

After graduating from high school, Elverda worked for some time in Washington State, from working in a fruit cannery to waitressing, but none of these jobs gave her a sense of fulfillment or adventure or satisfaction.