

funded the launch of Leonard Leo's advocacy group the Judicial Crisis Network, also heavily engaged in rightwing political influence focused on the Court.

Leo, the operative behind the current rightwing Supreme Court supermajority, not only organized Alito's trip, he gallivanted off to Alaska with the Justice and the billionaires.

By my count, after yet another story about Justice Thomas, we are now up to six rightwing billionaires attending to the care and feeding of two Justices: Thomas and Alito. And there are all sorts of links among them and with the ubiquitous Leonard Leo. So many Justices, so many billionaires, so many gifts.

But there is even more. Alito was not the first Justice to stay at this particular lodge. Justice Scalia also took a private jet to the lodge, courtesy of billionaire Arkley, and also did not disclose the gift. In one memorable bit of color from that ProPublica story, Scalia was described as mixing martinis made with ice chipped off of a glacier.

There. You thought I had forgotten that, but I didn't.

The evening before the Alito billionaire travel story ran, the Wall Street Journal comes back into the picture again. Alito tried to preempt ProPublica's reporting by taking to the Wall Street Journal editorial page. In the op-ed, Alito argued that he didn't need to disclose the private jet travel under Federal law because the private jet should be considered a "facility" and that his seat on the private jet would have otherwise been empty so it was free and there was no gift.

I won't go into how laughable these arguments are. That is a separate case. What is important is that these arguments were printed on the Wall Street Journal editorial page without investigation or comment by the page, taken at face value.

Oh, and, by the way, the cost of that charter—the private jet travel would have cost over \$100,000 each way.

In that Wall Street Journal editorial page piece from the spring, Alito had said about the Court's collapsing approval:

Well, yeah, what do you expect when you're—day in and day out—"They're illegitimate. They're engaging in all sorts of unethical conduct. They're doing this, they're doing that"?

Justice Alito's complaining has it completely backward. The problem is not that Americans are pointing out the ethical lapses at the Supreme Court. The problem is the ethical lapses at the Supreme Court. The Roberts Court Justices' behavior is crashing public trust in the institution—and justifiably—first, with preposterous judicial behavior that no other judge would indulge; second, with outrageous violations of quite clear rules and procedures judges are supposed to follow about reporting those gifts; third, with preposterous excuses for the bad behav-

ior and the reporting violations; and fourth, with no process to ever even try to get to the truth to establish the facts.

It is a mess.

Ideally, the Justices would start fixing that mess on their own. The Court and the Judicial Conference, which Roberts chairs, have the ability to fix this, but so far, they won't. I suspect there is a lot more to be found out about this mess, and they don't want those further disclosures so they would just as soon pull a rug over the whole thing, but that won't work.

Congress also has the ability to write ethics rules for the Justices. Remember, Congress created the judges' financial disclosure requirements in the Ethics in Government Act. And Congress created the judicial recusal law, which the Justices are also required to follow. And Congress created the Judicial Conference, which administers financial disclosure and code of conduct matters. Clearly, the article I legislative branch can legislate in this area. Clearly, we can oversee Agencies that we have created and laws that we have passed, and indeed we have for decades.

In the coming days, the Senate Judiciary Committee will mark up my Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act. This is a very important step forward in this process, and I thank Chairman DURBIN for his leadership. This bill would put basic ethics guardrails and transparency measures in place to help ensure the American people that they can get a fair shot at the Supreme Court, even if they don't have a private jet.

Today, in the Court that dark money built, the honor system has flagrantly failed. We need to legislate; we need to investigate; and we need to fix this mess for the American people.

To be continued, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, and now for the wrapup.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I rise to provide a brief statement on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Xochitl Torres Small, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. I was unable to attend the vote because I joined a bipartisan congressional delegation to the 2023 NATO

Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Had I been here on Monday, July 10, 2023, I would have voted yea on the cloture motion on vote No. 173.

I rise to provide a brief statement on the nomination votes on July 11, 2023. I was unable to attend the votes because I joined a bipartisan congressional delegation to the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Had I been here on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, I would have voted in yea on vote No. 174, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 178 Xochitl Torres Small, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

I rise to provide a brief statement on the nomination votes on July 11, 2023. I was unable to attend the votes because I joined a bipartisan congressional delegation to the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Had I been here on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, I would have voted in yea on vote No. 175, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 56 Rosemarie Hidalgo, of the District of Columbia, to be Director of the Violence Against Women Office, Department of Justice.

I rise to provide a brief statement on the nomination votes on July 11, 2023. I was unable to attend the votes because I joined a bipartisan congressional delegation to the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Had I been here on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, I would have voted in yea on vote No. 176, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 33 Kymberly Kathryn Evanson, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

I rise to provide a brief statement on the nomination votes on July 11, 2023. I was unable to attend the votes because I joined a bipartisan congressional delegation to the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Had I been here on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, I would have voted in yea on vote No. 177, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 56 Rosemarie Hidalgo, of the District of Columbia, to be Director of the Violence Against Women Office, Department of Justice.

I rise to provide a brief statement on the nomination votes on July 11, 2023. I was unable to attend the votes because I joined a bipartisan congressional delegation to the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Had I been here on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, I would have voted in yea on vote No. 178, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 33 Kymberly Kathryn Evanson, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

I rise to provide a brief statement on the nomination votes on July 11, 2023. I was unable to attend the votes because I joined a bipartisan congressional delegation to the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Had I been here on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, I would have voted in yea on vote No. 179, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 8 Tiffany M. Cartwright,

of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND KENNETH MARTIN

• Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise to commend Rev. Dr. Kenneth B. Martin of Antioch Baptist Church in Augusta on his retirement and lifelong service to the Augusta community.

For 37 years, Rev. Martin has led a life of service and devotion as Antioch Baptist Church's longest serving pastor. He also served as a former president of the 10th district of General Missionary Baptist Convention. Under his leadership and spiritual guidance, the Antioch Baptist Church community has been able to establish more than 30 ministries that give members of the community access to vital transportation, nutrition, and healthcare services. Rev. Martin has made it his mission to serve those around him, and his inspiring work, rooted in spiritual growth and development, has transformed the lives of many in his community.

As Georgia's U.S. Senator, I commend and recognize Rev. Dr. Kenneth B. Martin for his service to the Augusta community and the State of Georgia and join his family, friends, congregation, and the entire community in celebrating his retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO WANDA OKUNOREN-MEADOWS

• Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise to commend Wande Okunoren-Meadows for her commitment to early childhood education and development for families in Forest Park and across metro Atlanta.

As executive director of Little Ones Learning Center, Ms. Okunoren-Meadows oversees the early childhood education center providing services to more than 175 children. Her passion for childhood development has allowed her to create programs to promote wellness and boost education for the youngest members of the community.

A graduate of Emory University, Ms. Okunoren-Meadows' leadership has produced invaluable preschool, after-school, and pre-kindergarten education programs for the children of Forest Park, providing them valuable knowledge and skills for a brighter future.

As Georgia's U.S. Senator, I commend and recognize Wande Okunoren-Meadows for her dedication to Georgia's youth and years of service to her community.●

REMEMBERING MAXWELL "MAX" EMERSON

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to the remarkable

life and enduring legacy of Maxwell "Max" Emerson, a cherished teacher, coach, mentor, and dear friend to many whose compassion, kindness, and dedication touched the hearts of all who knew him.

Over the recent Fourth of July weekend, Max, a vibrant 25-year-old teacher and coach at his alma mater Oldham County High School, traveled to Washington, DC, for his upcoming professional development hours at the Library of Congress. He was assigned these hours to fulfill the requirements for a grant he had been awarded, which would afford him the opportunity to immerse himself in Vietnam's educational system. With both his father, a retired principal of South Oldham High School, and his mother, a dedicated teacher at Oldham County Middle School, education was truly in his blood.

On the morning of July 5 in Washington, DC, Max set out for his professional development hours, but he never reached his destination. Instead, his light was tragically extinguished. Max fell victim to a senseless act of violence, robbed at gunpoint on the campus of Catholic University, ultimately losing his life.

Max was the true representation of a champion to the Oldham County community. He was a beacon of inspiration and led his very accomplished life through kindness, dedication, and faith. Max was a natural-born leader and a talented athlete who was admired by all who had the privilege of crossing paths with him. His unwavering dedication and genuine care for his students, athletes, friends, and community were evident in every action he took. Countless individuals can testify to Max's willingness to lend a helping hand and put a smile on their face.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Max took on the responsibility of overseeing the credit recovery program, ensuring that no student fell behind and that everyone remained on track academically despite the school closures. It is worth noting that Max achieved an outstanding 100 percent pass rate.

Max devoted his life to serving others, and his extraordinary impact will forever remain etched in the Oldham County community. Anyone who had the privilege of meeting Max can attest to the profound positive influence he had on their lives. His legacy will be remembered by the very phrase he lived his own life by: "Champions Find a Way!"

While his untimely departure has left an immense void that will be challenging to fill, his students and athletes carry his memories and legacy forward. Today I stand in solidarity with his grieving family, friends, and the entire Oldham County community as we mourn the tragic loss of a remarkable soul.●

RECOGNIZING THE KENTUCKY CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the Kentucky Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners—NAWBO—connects women to resources, people, information, and organizations that can help them achieve their personal, business, or political goals. It is composed of women of all ages and levels of experience from all sectors of the marketplace.

Each year, NAWBO Kentucky recognizes women for their achievements in business and this year is no exception. In addition to their annual recognitions, they have added a new award, the Legacy Award, which will be presented at this year's ceremony. The Legacy Award is to be given to a woman who is a role model to other women, has achieved excellence in her field, has promoted other women, has broken barriers for women in her field, and has held leadership roles in her community. The inaugural recipient of this award is Ann B. Bakhaus, former president of Kentucky Eagle, Inc.

Ann Bakhaus served as the president of Kentucky Eagle, Inc., a total beverage and spirit distributor based in Lexington, and ran day-to-day operations for the company for 20 years before passing the business to her daughter. She still owns the company and serves as the chairman of the corporation board. This company has been in the Bakhaus family since 1948, and Ann is glad to be able to carry on the family legacy.

In her role with Kentucky Eagle, Inc., Bakhaus achieved many goals including the expansion of product distribution and the construction of the company's new headquarters which was the first official Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Anheuser Busch distributorship in the country.

Beyond serving on the board for Kentucky Eagle, Bakhaus is also heavily invested in community development. One of her biggest passions currently is the addition of Town Branch Park to downtown Lexington and the benefits it will provide to the community. Her desire is to see the Lexington community continue to flourish and is committed to being a part of that progress. I am proud to recognize the Kentucky Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners and to honor Ms. Bakhaus for her many achievements.●

CELEBRATING ALASKA RAILROAD'S CENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY

• Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, the Alaska Railroad Corporation—ARRC—is a renowned institution in my State, and I would like to first congratulate the Alaska Railroad on its 100-year birthday and take a few minutes to discuss the immense impact the railroad has had not only within Alaska, but