

speak for 6 minutes, Senator LUJÁN for 5 minutes, and Senator CANTWELL for 5 minutes.

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

NOMINATION OF ADRIANA DEBORA KUGLER

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, every so often, this Chamber is granted an opportunity to alter the course of American history. These rare opportunities allow us to pick up the torch, hoist it high like those who came before, and carry it forward as we strive to create a more perfect Union.

Today, we have such an opportunity. In a few minutes, this body will consider the nomination of a preeminent economist, Dr. Adriana Kugler, to serve on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve. Already, she has broken barriers and blazed new trails—the first Hispanic American ever nominated to serve in that critical role.

But for my colleagues who will soon cast their votes on her nomination, I would just like to highlight what this means for the 62 million Latinos who call America home. Simply put, we see ourselves reflected in her story and her nomination.

Dr. Kugler is a first-generation American, the daughter of immigrants from Colombia. To hear her tell her story is to listen to the American dream come to life, from her grandparents who overcame tremendous obstacles—whether it was fleeing religious persecution, being orphaned at the age of 3, or dropping out of high school to help a widowed mother raise five siblings. Dr. Kugler's family instilled in her the importance of grit and resilience alongside an unwavering work ethic. As a result, her life's work has been to help others similarly rise above their station.

For more than 25 years as an economist, she has conducted essential research on labor markets, worker mobility, and firm productivity—three areas that are essential to the Federal Reserve's mandate.

She currently serves as U.S. Executive Director at the World Bank after previously serving as Chief Economist at the Department of Labor, bringing a domestic and international perspective at a time when global economies have never been more connected. Because of this work, because of her sterling credentials and outstanding reputation, Dr. Kugler's nomination has earned the endorsement of 33 peer economists from across the political spectrum. In a joint letter, they called her “a brilliant, objective economist who takes an evidence-based approach to decision-making and is an expert in policy evaluation.”

Make no mistake, Dr. Kugler is eminently qualified for the role she has been nominated for. At her confirmation hearing, she reaffirmed a fundamental commitment to the Federal Reserve dual mandate, pledging to continue its efforts to bring down high inflation that is hurting workers and businesses alike.

In addition to her qualifications and balanced approach to decision making, Dr. Kugler has demonstrated time and time again that she will uphold the Federal Reserve's long legacy of independent decision making. It is precisely because those decisions affect every community in our country that I am especially proud that Dr. Kugler will finally bring lived experience of being Latino in the United States to the Federal Reserve leadership.

That is right. In the nearly 110-year history of the Federal Reserve, there has never, ever been a Latino serving on this Board of Governors. Not once. Simply put, it is an affront to the 62 million Hispanic Americans who meaningfully contribute to our economy. It is out of step with the fact that our economic input as a community is nearly \$3 trillion. And it violates the idea that the hopes and dreams of Latinos are essential to the promise of America.

So it is time for Latinos to serve the highest levels of the Federal Reserve. It is time for Latinos to be taken seriously as an essential part of our American family and economy. And it is time for us to confirm Dr. Adriana Kugler as a meaningful step towards that goal. Never again should a Latino or Latina have to wonder if they can rise from humble beginnings to occupy seats of power. Today's vote helps us do just that.

At its core, it is about changing the face of leadership so that our institutions, these bodies that we entrust with the future wealth and prosperity of our country, can fully reflect the Nation that they serve. In no uncertain terms, Dr. Kugler is a remarkable economist and a fantastic nominee to serve as the first Latina on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve. I am proud to have championed her historic nomination, and now it is time that we turn it into a historic confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

NOMINATION OF ANNA M. GOMEZ

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam President, communications and technology are at the forefront of policy today. From protecting consumers to establishing competitive and open markets to using spectrum and fiber to close the digital divide, the Federal Communications Commission is the expert Agency to establish regulations, policy, and recommendations to Congress.

Before us today is a genuine and passionate public servant. Anna Gomez has proven herself to be a prominent leader in technology and telecommunications, and I urge my colleagues to support her confirmation.

Ms. Gomez is more than ready to assume her next role in public service as our fifth and final FCC Commissioner. As I often say, folks know the difference between fast internet, slow internet, and no internet. I rise today before my colleagues to voice my sup-

port for a deeply qualified person who knows the difference between fast internet, slow internet, and no internet. She has the experience to bridge those divides.

Today, one in five families in New Mexico are living without a reliable connection to the internet. Ms. Gomez has worked on bringing more reliable and affordable ways to connect Americans to the internet almost as long as the term “digital divide” has been around. I was a strong advocate for the President to nominate Anna, and her reception here in the Senate is proof that she is the right choice. Anna's professional record is impeccable, and her path is an inspiration.

During her confirmation hearing, Ms. Gomez shared her story of scraping, borrowing, and working her way through college and through law school. Beyond law school, Ms. Gomez's experience in the White House, the State Department, the U.S. Senate, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and the FCC shows us all that she is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get to work.

I am confident that with her issue-oriented experience at every level of the congressionally mandated responsibilities of the FCC, she will be ready on day one. Protecting the public interest and advancing universal service for broadband and broadcast services is a passion for Ms. Gomez.

Anna's voice as the first Latina to serve on the Commission since my fellow New Mexican, Gloria Tristani, is very welcomed. I know that many of my colleagues here know that numbing sense of fear one can have when your constituents are in the midst of danger from a wildfire or a hurricane or a flood, with no way to reach them. Having reliable access to broadband connectivity during an emergency can mean the difference between someone coming home or not.

Anna Gomez has worked on securing reliable communication access for our first responders all across the country. As we continue to encounter more and more climate disasters, these efforts made by Ms. Gomez will continue to play a critical role.

Moreover, the Federal Communications Commission has never been more important in our Nation's history. These technologies have proven their value and demonstrated huge potential. However, the complexities of these ever-evolving technological wonders are multifaceted, intersectional, and complex.

Americans need the force of a fully appointed Federal Communications Commission to protect consumers, to guarantee competition, and foster innovation. The mission and work of the FCC has never been more important to the future of our Nation.

Anna Gomez will play a pivotal role in setting the course for our country into the next digital generation. I urge my colleagues to work together to bridge these digital divides; and today,

I urge you to vote yes on the confirmation of Anna Gomez to be a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON KUGLER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJN). Under the previous order, The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kugler nomination?

Mr. SCHATZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 220 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—2

Booker Moran

The nomination was confirmed.

(Mr. KING assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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. 253, Anna M. Gomez, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2021.

Charles E. Schumer, Maria Cantwell, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Jack Reed, John W. Hickenlooper, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mazie Hirono, Tina Smith, Edward J. Markey, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Anna M. Gomez, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2021, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall vote No. 221 Ex.]

YEAS—55

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

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—2

Booker Moran

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 43.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Anna M. Gomez, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2021.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2738

Mr. VANCE. Mr. President, all of us have lived through the failed experiment of mass mandatory masking. Today, I want to ensure that we do not subject the American people to this tyranny again for the sake of nothing.

We have recently seen a seasonal uptick of COVID cases across the country. This is not something to worry about. I don't like this fact that COVID is here to stay. Seasonal upticks in a respiratory virus are exactly to be expected. They shouldn't cause panic from our leadership or from our country, and they shouldn't cause us to reimpose a policy that has failed time and time again.

Many are now calling to bring back mask mandates and regulate social gatherings. I have heard some of my friends on the opposite side of the aisle saying that no one is trying to do this, but let's just recapture and summarize the last couple of weeks in August. Lionsgate studios asked its employees to wear masks at their filming facility. Last week, Kaiser Permanente reimposed a requirement of staff and visitors to wear masks at its Santa Rosa, CA, facility. Schools such as Morris Brown College in Atlanta, and even local public schools here in the DC area, have reimposed mask mandates.

Now, it is not just that masks—according to randomized control studies—do no good; it is that they could actively cause harm. We know a generation of school children have suffered significant speech and developmental disabilities because this country panicked instead of using its brain and forced toddlers and small children to wear masks. We cannot return to the failed policies of the COVID pandemic.

I am not mad that we screwed up. I made mistakes. Many people in this body made mistakes. What I do think that we should avoid is repeating the mistakes in 2023. Let's learn from the mistakes that we made instead of just doubling down on them.

This policy does not set anything for an unlimited period of time. It says that for the next 15 months, the government can't force you to wear a mask on planes, on public transit, or in public schools. Taxpayer dollars cannot be used to force and enforce a mandate against our people. It is not setting a policy that we cannot deal with pandemics in the future. If something else comes—God forbid—then let this body deal with it at that time.

But now, let's heed the message from the American people, and let's learn the lessons of the past couple of years. Mandatory masking was a failure. It had costs for very little benefit, and we shouldn't repeat it.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the