

well-equipped to represent U.S. interests in spectrum policy.

Some of my Republican colleagues have complained that they did not have an opportunity to meet with the nominee or that we should not confirm her until the World Radiocommunication Conference is over.

It has been 100 days since Ms. Gomez's nomination and 57 days since the committee's vote. Ms. Gomez has been available, willing, and eager to meet with all Senators to discuss her qualifications for the role.

The State Department also has extremely qualified experts who can step in for Ms. Gomez, just as she has planned for.

Anna Gomez has the knowledge, skills, and qualities to be an FCC Commissioner. I am proud to support Ms. Gomez's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Anna Gomez, President Joe Biden's nominee to serve on the Federal Communications Commission.

The FCC is one of the premier, expert Agencies in the Federal Government, responsible for overseeing the wires and the radio waves that have become the backbone of our economy and our communities.

But since the beginning of the Biden administration nearly 1,000 days ago, the Agency has been hamstrung in implementing critical communications priorities due to the absence of a fifth Commissioner. With Ms. Gomez as a Commissioner, that will finally change. The Federal Communications Commission will have the power to take on the big-dollar interests that seek to block critical consumer protections at every turn.

I support Ms. Gomez's nomination because I know she is ready for these fights. She knows that today broadband is not a luxury. Like running water or heat, broadband is an essential utility. Without high-quality and affordable broadband, students cannot learn, small businesses cannot reach new customers, entrepreneurs cannot innovate, and seniors cannot access telemedicine. The FCC's authority must reflect the essential nature of the internet in American life, and that is exactly what Ms. Gomez will provide.

With three Democratic Commissioners, the FCC can act swiftly to restore net neutrality and protect a free and open internet. My Republican colleagues will say that Congress should act on net neutrality instead of the Federal Communications Commission, but their Big Cable and Big Tech industry allies will be in their ear with crocodile-tear arguments about an out-of-control Agency usurping the will of Congress.

Well, if Republicans really want to take on this problem through legisla-

tion and not administrative action, then they should be prepared to join me when I reintroduce my net neutrality legislation in the coming weeks. They can be on record supporting internet freedom or siding with the broadband behemoths.

It has been nearly 6 years since the Trump FCC repealed net neutrality. We cannot wait any longer for Republicans to come to their senses. We must confirm Ms. Gomez so that the FCC can act without delay.

We must also confirm Ms. Gomez because the FCC must address other critical communications issues, including technology accessibility for people with disabilities, protecting local community media, and closing the homework gap.

I am particularly concerned about the future of the \$7 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund, which I passed during the pandemic. Over the past 2 years, thanks to the Commission's hard work, the Emergency Connectivity Fund has provided laptops, tablets, and internet services to more than 17 million students and teachers. Those resources are particularly critical for Black and Brown and immigrant and low-income populations who often lack access to the internet at home.

Unfortunately, this program will soon be out of money, potentially disconnecting millions of students and driving a deeper wedge into the digital divide. We cannot let that happen.

I stand ready to work with my colleagues to extend this essential funding, and I know that Ms. Gomez, like Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, will be a fierce advocate for students at the Commission so that we can keep closing the homework gap and provide every child with access to the 21st-century tools they will need.

We stand at a critical moment to ensure a just broadband future for everyone. We need Anna Gomez on the Federal Communications Commission. She has the knowledge, the values, and the judgment the Commission needs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting her nomination.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON GOMEZ NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gomez nomination?

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, 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 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 222 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	Hoeben	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 nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). 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.

The President pro tempore.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

EASTERN WASHINGTON WILDFIRES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, last month, the Gray and Oregon Road wildfires in Eastern Washington caused serious devastation and forced thousands of people to evacuate, including members of my family and members of my staff. While folks on the ground are still assessing the awful scope of the damage and what resources our communities need to recover and rebuild in the aftermath, we already know that these fires burned tens of thousands of acres; destroyed hundreds of buildings, including over 350 homes; and, tragically, the fires were responsible for two deaths.

My heart goes out to the many families whose lives have been upended by these horrific fires, including our selfless firefighters, some of whom lost their homes to the flames while they were working hard to defend others'. I am incredibly grateful to all of our firefighters who have worked around the clock for weeks to get these fires under control. And I am also grateful to so many other first responders who helped keep our families safe from the blazes—law enforcement officers who raced door-to-door warning people as the fires approached, dispatchers who

worked so quickly to coordinate emergency response efforts, and everyone who helped those in danger, from evacuating families to conducting boat and helicopter rescues, to all of the volunteers who chipped in for the recovery effort.

We are all relieved that those fires are now under control, thanks to the heroic efforts of so many firefighters, but communities in Eastern Washington have a long way to go on the road to recovery. So I will absolutely be staying in close touch with folks in my State and on the frontlines and making sure that our families and communities have the support they need to get through this.

I am also going to continue to push to bolster our national efforts to prevent and mitigate and respond to wildfires and other extreme weather events, and that has to include more action on climate change because it is painfully clear—and it has been for a while now—that the climate crisis continues to make wildfires like this more common and more severe.

Beyond the recent fires in Eastern Washington, my State has seen devastating fires in the Sourdough fire in the North Cascades; fires on our Olympic Peninsula, on Tribal lands, in the Columbia River Gorge; and we have seen high risks for catastrophic fires in literally every corner of my State.

Over the last few years, Washington State has seen drier and hotter summers, which means longer and more dangerous fire seasons. And we are not alone. My heart breaks for the communities in Hawaii where the Presiding Officer has seen the impact firsthand. They were hit hard by devastating, unprecedented wildfires last month and are still suffering from that damage.

We have to do more to address the climate crisis that is driving increasingly severe disasters. And on another important note, we absolutely must provide more resources for the critical work being done by FEMA and our Federal wildland firefighters to respond to fires across the country.

FEMA's disaster relief fund is running dry. The Agency has already been forced to begin prioritizing immediate response efforts over longer term recovery projects. So it is absolutely essential that we deliver the additional resources FEMA needs as soon as possible because leaving behind communities struck by disaster is simply not an option.

And we absolutely cannot let Federal inaction result in a salary cut for Federal wildland firefighters at the end of this month. After all they do for our communities, the last thing our firefighters need is to see their pay slashed.

I know there is bipartisan support for providing the resources FEMA desperately needs in making sure wildland firefighters do not face a pay cut. I am talking with colleagues on both sides of the aisle about how we can make sure we get this done by the end of the month.

But as the Presiding Officer knows, people are hurting right now. But they are also coming together to support survivors and gather donations and rebuild our communities. We need Congress to come together as well so we can tackle the climate crisis, support our wildland firefighters, continue to build on our investments in wildfire prevention and mitigation in a big way, and make sure FEMA has the resources it needs to help our communities.

As the Presiding Officer well knows, when there is a fire, you don't ask what someone's politics are; you grab a bucket and go to work. That is what we need to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, before talking about some good news, I think, for so many of us across the country, I want to just thank Senator MURRAY for all of her leadership in the devastation she is describing in Washington State. I know that our Presiding Officer, with what is happening in Maui—the people of Hawaii are so fortunate to have you and Senator HIRONO, who are out every day describing what needs to happen and pushing hard to make it happen.

We have a lot of issues that are really important, a lot of devastation, a lot of extreme weather events; and we certainly understand that the climate crisis is adding to all of what we are seeing right now and the devastation. And it is critical—it is critical—that we keep focused on that.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. President, I want to take a moment today to talk about what is going right. We have a lot of challenges to work on. At the same time, I am really excited about the fact that we are seeing evidence of the right policies, the right funding, that are actually creating jobs in my home State of Michigan and across the country.

All across our country, manufacturing facilities are opening. We are seeing a lot of those in Michigan. I have always said we don't have an economy unless somebody makes something and somebody grows something. That is what we do in Michigan. That is what we have traditionally done in America; but we have lost, over decades, so many of those jobs going overseas for a number of reasons.

Now we are bringing them back, and that is exciting to see. Last month, 187,000 jobs were created just in August, 13.5 million jobs since President Biden has taken office. This is good news. Over 800,000 of those are in manufacturing. In fact, we are witnessing a rebirth of American manufacturing, and this is part of how we are going to also tackle the climate crisis, with the clean energy efforts and the new opportunities for us in good-paying jobs that also address clean energy.

Unemployment has been under 4 percent for 19 months in a row. I am not

sure when else I could have stood on the floor to say, 19 months in a row, unemployment under 4 percent, the longest stretch in over 50 years. We are seeing the lowest unemployment rate for American women in 70 years; and as a caveat, I would say that if we addressed childcare costs, unemployment would be even lower for women who want and need to work in the workplace. And the highest share of Americans aged 25 to 54 are now in the workforce. It is the highest share since May of 2002—quite a while ago.

So wages are up, and costs for the things people need continue to go down. We have got more work to do. I am not saying we are done by any stretch of the imagination, but things are moving in the right direction.

And, certainly, in lowering costs, I am so proud of what we have done regarding prescription drugs: a \$35 cap on insulin for seniors and others on Medicare, \$35 a month—not \$600, not \$800, not \$1,000, like many people have experienced, but \$35. And we are seeing a cap on overall out-of-pocket costs for seniors. In another year, next January, it goes down to a \$3,200 cap altogether; and then, after that, \$2,000 for everything—not the \$14,000 that is the average right now in America but a \$2,000 cap for a year of prescriptions—huge difference; huge, huge difference.

And I have to say, I am proud of the fact that we have taken on one of the most powerful special interests in our country, Big Pharma—pharmaceutical companies—and made sure that we are lowering prices for people in our country. There is more to do. It is disappointing for me to say that not one of our Republican colleagues joined us in that effort. Not one. But we are continuing to push forward and lower costs.

I would also say none of this is by accident. It is a very different way of viewing the economy and what is good for Americans. Democrats are growing our economy from the middle out, the bottom up, not the top down. It is the opposite of trickle-down economics that, for decades, we have been hearing that if we only give it to the top—wait, wait, wait—it will trickle down. People in Michigan are still waiting for that to trickle down.

We are doing something different. We are aiming at the middle class of our country, making smart investments in America, bringing jobs home from overseas. We are empowering workers with higher wages and better training, more support for unions that can do collective bargaining, that can make workplaces safer, and raise wages as well.

And it is so interesting to see that job satisfaction surveys are saying they are at the highest ever recorded. Right now, we are enjoying one of the strongest job-creating periods in the history of our country—not by accident. It is a different view.

For our friends on the other side of the aisle, basically, if the economy is