

bombardment began after it was reached, and this increasing military aggression has only deepened the humanitarian crisis.

The Aliyev regime has now demanded that Nagorno-Karabakh's government be dissolved and the ethnic Armenian troops be removed. The Azerbaijan Government has made it clear their goal is to erase the historic presence of Armenians in this region.

Until it is proven that this cruel campaign has ended, we must be vigilant. Until the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have what they need to survive and to walk freely in their home once again, we cannot stand to the side.

In the midst of these unthinkable conditions, residents have taken to the streets, calling for an end to the blockade. We must join their chorus—shedding a light on Azerbaijan's actions and addressing the immediate threat of ethnic violence. And I encourage the Biden administration to remember these crimes against humanity when considering where to send aid and to apply diplomatic pressure.

If we continue to let this crisis devolve, then we are complicit in the violence. I call on my Senate colleagues and the Biden administration to stand against the cruelty of the Azerbaijan Government and stand by the side of the Armenian people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motions filed during today's session ripen at 3:30 p.m.; that if cloture is invoked on the Brown nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired at 6:30 p.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from New Hampshire.

AGRICULTURAL DISASTER RELIEF

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to discuss the urgent need for Congress to provide relief for recent agricultural disasters.

I appreciate that circumstances around the appropriations process have changed somewhat since we prepared these remarks, but what I really want to do this afternoon is to highlight the

devastating experiences of New Hampshire growers this year and explain why it is so urgent for them that Congress provide disaster relief.

In New Hampshire, our growers have faced an unprecedented difficult year. A late frost on the evening of May 18 caused enormous damage to fruit crops across New Hampshire but especially to our apple orchards.

These photos really depict what happened to most of the apple crops in New Hampshire. You can see that these almost look like chestnuts as they are so small and stunted and brown. In this, you can barely make out that it is an apple, and you can see the size of them based on the impact from the frost.

This event followed an extreme freeze in February that wiped out virtually 100 percent of our peach crops and other stone fruits.

My office has been hearing from apple growers who lost 80 to 100 percent of their crops this year as well as from New Hampshire growers who lost up to 100 percent of other crops, such as peaches, pears, plums, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, and cherries.

For people who think "Well, you don't have that many orchards in New Hampshire," we have the largest apple orchard of New England in New Hampshire.

This is a big concern for our farmers in the State, and they make up a considerable percentage of our small businesses. What we have seen is total crop losses for some growers and near-total losses for others.

The business impact of such catastrophic damage goes way beyond the direct cost of damage to the crops because, in New Hampshire, we have a strong tradition, as I know they do in other States, of families who visit their local orchards every year to "pick your own" apples and other fruit. For local farms, these visits aren't just about that actual apple picking; it is an opportunity to showcase everything their farms have to offer, to display other products for families to purchase—vegetables that have grown during the season, baked goods, apple cider, applesauce. Everything that can be made from apples is available at those farm stands.

Apple picking marks the start of autumn in New Hampshire. We are currently well into September and what should be apple-picking season. This past weekend should have seen busy crowds at farms across New Hampshire, with families apple picking, eating cider doughnuts, and sipping apple cider, but, sadly, this was not the case.

I heard from growers like Trevor Hardy from Brookdale Fruit Farm in Hollis, who called his counterparts at Meadow Ledge Farm in Loudon, at Poverty Lane Orchards in Lebanon, and other orchards to learn that it wasn't just his farm that lacked the usual bustling energy of children and families on the farm. Local growers across the State, like Windy Ridge Or-

chard in North Haverhill, are concerned that families won't come this season for their annual farm visits, and the total resulting revenue losses will be enormous.

For a lot of families—and my family is no exception—going to the local pick-your-own orchard to get whether it be apples or pumpkins or vegetables is an annual event. My daughter and her four children have had pictures taken in the pumpkin patch in the nearby farm every year that those kids have been home.

I had a chance to meet with a number of farmers last Friday. One of the things they talked about was the concern that they have longtime customers who are not going to be able to enjoy their farms this year because of the impact from the frost. New Hampshire growers are estimated to be facing as much as \$20 million in disaster-related impacts from these freeze events. This estimate doesn't even include the ongoing impacts to vegetable growers and forage crops from flooding and excessive moisture. The total cost for that is still being tabulated.

This is the Brookdale Fruit Farm, which is the biggest orchard in New Hampshire. It is in Hollis. It is the biggest orchard in New England. We can see this is a rainstorm that happened about 2 weeks ago, and you can just see the water cascading through the orchard because of the flooding. The impact that this is having on next year's crop, on vegetables, is really still being tabulated but is excessive across the State.

I am hearing from longtime New Hampshire growers that they have never seen crop damage this bad before. Last week, when I visited with farmers, I went to Apple Hill Farm in Concord along with a number of apple growers from different regions in the State. Chuck and Diane Souther, who own Apple Hill Farm, showed me the severe losses their apple crops have suffered this year. They showed me apples that looked very much like these apples. They told me about the devastating effects of the late frost on their orchards and how they stayed out all night on May 18, during the freezing-cold temperatures, to try to protect their crop and save as many of their trees as they could. They told me in heartbreaking detail about the impact on their businesses and how disappointed they are not to be able to provide apples to their annual customers.

I hope that families in New Hampshire will still visit their local orchards. Some still have some apples to pick, and they still have other products to buy and other activities for kids to enjoy. In a year like this, we need to support our local farmers more than ever.

Before I close, I want to read some comments from a letter that was shared with my office from Ken Merrill, who is an apple grower in Londonderry, NH. His family owns and operates Oliver Merrill & Sons, which is a

fifth-generation farm in Londonderry. They specialize in growing apples and other kinds of fruit as well as other products. I think his comments here really show the experience of so many growers in New Hampshire this year.

Ken says:

I am writing you this letter on Labor Day 2023. Labor Day weekend is usually a busy time on the farm. The farm stand is packed with people buying apples, peaches, and other fruit. Some years Pick-your-own apples is beginning and people are coming to the orchard for outings.

Not this year.

I am sitting in my office, writing this letter, because there are no peaches or other stone fruit, pears, and few apples.

At least 95 percent of the apple blossoms were killed by a severe frost on May 18, 2023. The peaches and stone fruit were killed by an unusually cold night in February.

The consequences of these weather events are dramatic. The farm stand is operating at a reduced level selling the few vegetables we grow.

Most years we hire three to five people for the harvest season to pick, pack and help sell the crop. This year, we have to tell the people that have worked for us for many years that there were not jobs for them.

We have had to cancel all our wholesale contracts with supermarkets, no apples.

We have had to stop selling to other farm stands we have sold to for years as well as telling the New Hampshire Food Bank that we had nothing to sell them this year.

This is the first time in more than 50 years, since I have been associated with the family business, that we have not had an apple crop.

Ken's experience reflects that of almost all of our growers in New Hampshire.

In July, the Secretary of Agriculture declared a Federal disaster for New Hampshire growers as a result of the frost. However, for agricultural disasters, as the Presiding Officer knows, there is no Federal relief that is automatically triggered even after the Secretary of Agriculture has declared a Federal disaster.

Instead, Congress must specifically appropriate funds. There is plenty of precedent for this. In 2023, Congress provided \$3.7 billion for agricultural disasters that had occurred in calendar year 2022, and in 2022, Congress provided \$10 billion for agricultural disasters that occurred in 2020 and 2021.

Federal disaster relief is particularly urgent for farmers like those in New Hampshire who are underserved by existing Federal agricultural programs. In fact, many of our apple growers don't even have crop insurance because they have found that it doesn't really work for their businesses the way it is currently structured.

I hope we can come together to support appropriations bills, but I hope we can also come together to provide the urgently needed relief funding for our farmers—those who have been so affected in New Hampshire and New England.

I urge my colleagues to support this effort and to ensure that agricultural disaster relief is enacted promptly.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

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 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. 282, Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr., for reappointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601: to be General.

Charles E. Schumer, Mark Kelly, Patty Murray, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Angus S. King, Jr., Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Debbie Stabenow, Michael F. Bennet, Richard Blumenthal, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Martin Heinrich, Maria Cantwell, Benjamin L. Cardin, Chris Van Hollen, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz.

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 Executive Calendar No. 282, the following named officer for reappointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601: to be General, Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr., 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.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 89, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 234 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Brown
Barrasso	Booker	Budd
Bennet	Boozman	Cantwell
Blackburn	Britt	Capito

Cardin	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Carper	Johnson	Rosen
Casey	Kaine	Rounds
Cassidy	Kelly	Rubio
Collins	Kennedy	Sanders
Coons	King	Schatz
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lujan	Shaheen
Cramer	Lummis	Sullivan
Crapo	Manchin	Sinema
Daines	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	McConnell	Stabenow
Durbin	Menendez	Sullivan
Ernst	Merkley	Tester
Fetterman	Moran	Thune
Fischer	Mullin	Tillis
Gillibrand	Murphy	Van Hollen
Graham	Murray	Warner
Grassley	Ossoff	Warnock
Hagerty	Padilla	Warren
Hassan	Paul	Welch
Heinrich	Peters	Whitehouse
Hickenlooper	Reed	Wicker
Hirono	Ricketts	Wyden
Hoeven	Risch	Young

NAYS—8

Braun	Lee	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Vance
Hawley	Schmitt	

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein	Murkowski	Scott (SC)
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). On this vote, the yeas are 89, the nays are 8, and the motion is agreed to. The Senator from Alabama.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, 2 hours ago, Senator SCHUMER announced that we will be voting on the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

It is about time. I have called for individual votes on these nominees for almost 6 months. Instead of voting, Democrats have spent months complaining about having to vote. They want to use floor time for things like liberal judges, like the one we confirmed a couple of hours ago.

Senator SCHUMER could have confirmed these nominees a long, long time ago. We have had more than 80 days off this year in the Senate, not including weekends. Yet Senator SCHUMER is outraged that we are voting on these nominations.

As I have noted before, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was given a floor vote in 2018. The current nominee for that position, General Brown, was given a floor vote for his current position not long ago. Despite what Senator REED and others have said, there is nothing wrong with a floor vote on these nominations.

I ran for Senate so I could vote on behalf of the people of the State of Alabama. I didn't come up here just to outsource my job to the Pentagon or the White House. Yet that is exactly what Democrats want to do. That is the current position of Senate Democrats.

The Constitution says we make the laws here in Congress, not in the Pentagon and not in the White House. So this is not about me. It is about the Senate and the Constitution. This is a win today for the legislative branch of government. Voting gives all Senators a voice for their constituents.