

The Constitution says that the Senate is to "advise and consent" to the President's nominations. Over the last 6 months, Democrats in this Chamber have actually complained that the Senate has too much power. Senator SCHUMER made reference this afternoon to proposals by Democrats to make the Senate weaker. Senate Democrats have been more than happy to go along with executive overreach when a Democrat is in the Oval Office.

Democrats have spent the last 6 months attacking me for standing up to an illegal and immoral new policy. Many of these attacks have been wrong on the facts. First, they said I was leaving important jobs open. That is false.

Then they complained that we have acting officials in many important roles. They claim that generals and admirals just can't do the job as an acting official.

Senator REED came to the floor 2 weeks ago and said we "have no effective military leadership" in several branches of the military right now. One member of the House said the military is "paralyzed."

I don't even think the Pentagon would defend these accusations. Democrats still have never shown me one fact to show that we were behind on readiness. It is just not true.

Just last week, GEN Charles Flynn, our top Army general in the Pacific, said he hasn't noticed any challenges because of the hold—not any. Over the weekend, the outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley, said our readiness is better than it has been in years.

This hold is not affecting readiness.

If Democrats want to complain, then they should look in the mirror. I don't control the Senate floor; the Democrats do.

In a typical week, we work 3 days. Those aren't the kinds of hours people are working back in my home State of Alabama. This is one of the least productive Senates in our lifetime.

Democrats can't have it both ways. Either they can confirm these nominees through regular order or they can stop complaining about acting officials.

Democrats say there is a large backlog of nominees. They say it would take a long time. Well, I agree. It has been a big backlog. But, again, CHUCK SCHUMER allowed the backlog to build up over 6 months. It is his fault.

We could have been confirming one or two a week over the last 200 days. It would have taken us just 4 hours of voting each week.

But we didn't do it. We took another angle of just sitting back and watching. CHUCK SCHUMER refused again and again and again.

We don't have a lack of leadership in our military. We have a lack of leadership right here in the U.S. Senate.

Despite the lack of leadership, Senators are perfectly capable of voting. Voting is our job. That is why we were sent here.

So to be clear, my hold is still in place. The hold will remain in place as long as the Pentagon's illegal abortion policy remains in place. If the Pentagon lifts the policy, then I will lift my hold—easy as that. That has been my position from the very beginning.

I am not afraid to vote on these nominees or on all of these nominees. I came here to this Chamber to vote, and I reserve the right to seek another cloture petition on the nominees in the future.

So that is where we stand today. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 6:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:01 p.m., recessed until 6:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WHITEHOUSE).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON BROWN NOMINATION

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

Mr. KAINE. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), 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" and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 83, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 235 Ex.]

YEAS—83

Baldwin	Cornyn	Hoeben
Barrasso	Cortez Masto	Hyde-Smith
Bennet	Cramer	Kaine
Blackburn	Crapo	Kelly
Blumenthal	Daines	Kennedy
Booker	Duckworth	King
Boozman	Durbin	Klobuchar
Britt	Ernst	Lankford
Brown	Fetterman	Lujan
Budd	Fischer	Manchin
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Markey
Capito	Graham	McConnell
Cardin	Grassley	Menendez
Carper	Hagerty	Merkley
Casey	Hassan	Mullin
Cassidy	Heinrich	Murphy
Collins	Hickenlooper	Murray
Coons	Hirono	Ossoff

Padilla	Schatz	Van Hollen
Paul	Schumer	Warner
Peters	Scott (FL)	Warnock
Reed	Shaheen	Warren
Ricketts	Sinema	Welch
Risch	Smith	Whitehouse
Romney	Sullivan	Wicker
Rosen	Tester	Wyden
Rounds	Thune	Young
Sanders	Tillis	

NAYS—11

Braun	Lee	Schmitt
Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Hawley	Marshall	Vance
Johnson	Rubio	

NOT VOTING—6

Cotton	Moran	Scott (SC)
Feinstein	Murkowski	Stabenow

The nomination was confirmed (Mr. KELLY assumed the Chair.)

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

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. 281, Gen. Randy A. George for appointment as Chief of Staff of the Army and appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 7033: 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 the following named officer for appointment as Chief of Staff of the Army and appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 7033: to be General, Gen. Randy A. George, 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), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), 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 92, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 236 Ex.]

YEAS—92

Baldwin	Graham	Peters
Barrasso	Grassley	Reed
Bennet	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Blumenthal	Hawley	Romney
Booker	Heinrich	Rosen
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Braun	Hirono	Rubio
Britt	Hoeven	Sanders
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Budd	Johnson	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kelly	Shaheen
Cardin	Kennedy	Sinema
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cassidy	Lankford	Tester
Collins	Lujan	Thune
Coons	Lummis	Tillis
Cornyn	Manchin	Tuberville
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Cramer	Marshall	Vance
Crapo	McConnell	Warner
Cruz	Menendez	Warnock
Daines	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Moran	Welch
Durbin	Mullin	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murphy	Wicker
Fetterman	Murray	Wyden
Fischer	Ossoff	Young
Gillibrand	Padilla	

NAYS—1

Lee

NOT VOTING—7

Cotton	Paul	Stabenow
Feinstein	Schatz	
Murkowski	Scott (SC)	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 92, and the nays are 1.

The motion is agreed to.
The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO GEORGIA MERRILL

• Ms. HASSAN. Madam President, I am honored to recognize Georgia Merrill of Brentwood as August’s Granite Stater of the Month. For the past 8 years, 14-year-old Georgia has raised tens of thousands of dollars for the New Hampshire Food Bank through her Peach Project initiative.

When Georgia was 6 years old and driving in a car with her grandmother, she saw a homeless person on the side

of the road holding a sign that read, “I’m hungry.” It was a moment that stuck with her and inspired her to give back to her community. She went home and asked her mom if they could set up a bake sale with proceeds going to people like the man she had just seen on the road.

Georgia—along with her mother Erin, her dad Josh, and brothers Owen and Miles—started holding bake sales, with sales going to the NH Food Bank. Georgia’s nickname is Georgia Peach, and so they decided to name the initiative the “Georgia Peach Project.” Georgia’s parents were touched by their daughter’s commitment to helping those in need and worked with Georgia to take the project even further. Georgia started new projects, and they spread the word about them on social media and got other families in their community involved.

Now, the project’s various initiatives include making and selling bracelets with proceeds going to the NH Food Bank, holding a food collection, passing out cards to classmates at school encouraging them to donate, and hosting a community holiday concert. In addition, every year, they organize a holiday stroll partnering with local organizations and families who commit to decorating a part of the walk. The event also includes a bake sale, a silent auction, and live entertainment—with all donations from the night going to the NH Food Bank.

Since the start of the Peach Project, Georgia has raised more than \$66,000 for the NH Food Bank. Her commitment to serving her community at such a young age is an inspiration for all of us. After she saw a neighbor in need, it was clear to her that she needed to bring her community together to do whatever it could do to help. Georgia’s ability to think about the needs of those around her and then act to address them exemplifies the Granite State spirit of generosity, and her work demonstrates that you can always make a difference by getting involved in your community.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. McLaughlin, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 112. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to strengthen benefits for children of Vietnam veterans born with spina bifida, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House disagrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2670) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, and asks a conference with the

Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints the following Members as managers of the conference on the part of the House:

From the Committee on Armed Services, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. Rogers of Alabama, Wilson of South Carolina, Lamborn, Wittman, Austin Scott of Georgia, Ms. Stefanik, Messrs. DesJarlais, Kelly of Mississippi, Gallagher, Gaetz, Bacon, Banks, Bergman, Waltz, Johnson of Louisiana, Mrs. McClain, Mr. Jackson of Texas, Fallon, Gimenez, Mses. Mace and Greene of Georgia, Messrs. Smith of Washington, Courtney, Garamendi, Norcross, Gallego, Moulton, Carbajal, Khanna, Keating, Kim of New Jersey, Mses. Houlahan, Slotkin, Sherrill, and Escobar.

From the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, for consideration of matters within the jurisdiction of that committee under clause 11 of rule X: Messrs. Turner, Wenstrup, and Himes.

From the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for consideration of secs. 636, 651–55, 658–61, 1041, and 1042 of the House bill and secs. 303, 563, 592, 593, 1079, 1090K, 1099JJ, 1726, and 3142 of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Ms. Foxx, Messrs. Owens and Scott of Virginia.

From the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for consideration of secs. 224, 749, and 3121 of the House bill, and secs. 314, 712 of division A, 1087, 1088, 1090A, 1090G, 1099II, 3122–24, 3143, 3144, 6074, 8141, and sec. 11009 of division J of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. Carter of Georgia, Pfluger, and Pallone.

From the Committee on Financial Services, for consideration of subtitle J of title X of division A, sec. 1086, title LXVIII of division F, division I, and division J of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. McHenry and Luetkemeyer, and Ms. Waters.

From the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for consideration of secs. 217, 1009, 1080K, 1210, 1211, 1213, 1214, 1216, 1220, 1220A, 1220C, 1220G, 1220K, 1220L, 1221–24, 1234, 1245, 1250, 1310L, 1505, and 1883 of the House bill, and secs. 212, 1085, 1302, 1397, 1399B, 1399D, 1399E, 1399F, 1399I, 1399J, 1399K, 1399L, subtitles H–K of title XIII of division A, secs. 1634, 6031, 6242, 6293, division F, and secs. 11104 and 11105 of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. McCaul, McCormick, and Meeks.

From the Committee on the Judiciary, for consideration of secs. 542, 822, 1049, 1689, and 3116 of the House bill, and secs. 1041, 1090H, subtitles I and K of title X of division A, subtitle I of title XIII of division A, secs. 6031, 6075, 6082, 6084, subtitle H of title LX of division E, secs. 6813, 6816, 6821, 6831 of division E, secs. 9007, 9011, 9012, 9014, and title LXXI of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Mr. Issa, Ms. Lee of Florida, and Mr. Nadler.

From the Committee on Natural Resources, for consideration of secs. 261, 510, 1853, 1865, 2843, 2844, 2847, and 3515 of the House bill, and secs. 312, 1041, 1090G, 2805, 6711, 11002 of division J, division K, and sec. 11341 of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Mr. Carl, Ms. Hageman, and Mr. Grijalva.

From the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, for consideration of secs. 364, 834, 891, 899C, 921, 922, 1047, 1101–10, 1116–18, 1122, 1221, 1222, 1521, 1523, 1805, and 1880 of the House bill, and secs. 537, 867, subtitle H of title X of division A, secs. 1201–03, 1206–09, 1211–13, 1215, 1512, 11133, 6101, 6202, 6203, 6607, sec. 6831 of division E, 8141, 9005, 11331–33, and secs. 601, 603, 605, 703, 704, 715–18, 802, and 1001