

INFLATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I grew up in a wonderful small town in Louisiana called Zachary.

Now, today, Zachary is a city. It is five times larger than in the days I spent there growing up because Zachary, a number of years ago, got very serious about improving elementary and secondary education. The Presiding Officer knows something about that. So Zachary is much larger today, and if anyone ever doubts that growth and economic development is centered around quality public education, all you have to do is look at Zachary.

But when I grew up in Zachary, it was very small—one stoplight. We were so small, we didn't have a town drunk; several people had to take turns. But I loved it. I loved Zachary High School. You know, some people did not like high school. I am not one of them. I cared about two things: basketball and cheerleaders. And I wasn't very good at either one, but I had fun trying.

I also loved baseball, in part because my dad, my late father, was a baseball fan. And I was an OK fielder in baseball, but I had to quit the sport because I couldn't hit a curve. I was OK with the fastball, but I couldn't hit a curve. And I remember my coach telling me: KENNEDY, keep your eye on the ball, OK? Keep your eye on the ball.

And I tried, but I just couldn't do it.

My purpose in rising today is to suggest that we should keep our eye on the ball. We are faced with many difficult issues in the Senate today. We always are, but I think that is especially true today. My colleague Senator CORNYN just talked about one: immigration. Of course, the war in Ukraine is on everyone's mind. And I could go on and on and on.

But I don't want my colleagues to forget about one of the most important issues of all facing the American people today, and that is the cost of living in our extraordinary country—inflation. In my State, the median household income for a family of four is about \$55,000. That means half of our families make more and half of our families make less. But the mean is \$55,000 for a family of four.

As a result of President Biden's inflation—and, as an aside, I would note, I say this with no joy whatsoever—inflation in America today is manmade, and that man's name is President Joe Biden. In my State, where the mean household income is \$55,000, the average American family is paying \$800 a month more—a month; not a year, a month more—to live in this wonderful country as a result of Bidenomics. That is \$9,600 a year that a family of four making \$55,000 a year has to find.

And my people, they have maxed out their credit cards, and they have spent their savings. And they borrowed money, and they have had to take money out of their children's 529 college savings program. It is strangling my people. It is not any better in other States.

I looked at the numbers this morning. What we call overall inflation right now is about 3.7 percent. Core inflation, if you take out food and energy prices, as many of the economists like to do, is 4.3 percent. So 3.7 percent overall, 4.3 percent if you take out food and energy. Now, we are doing better. A year ago, those numbers were double. And I am so pleased that inflation has fallen just a bit, but I want you to understand what that means.

Falling inflation just means that prices—they are still rising, but they are not rising as fast as they were. Let me say that again. Falling inflation just means prices are still going up every month, every day, but they are not going up as fast as they were. We call that disinflation. Falling inflation also means that prices overall are not going down. That is deflation. My point is, even though inflation is falling—and I am so glad it is—all that means is that prices are not going up as fast as they were.

And we are going to be stuck with these high prices. They are going to be permanent, even if inflation goes to zero. What does that mean? Well, let's look at basic goods. Even if inflation goes to zero tomorrow, since February of 2021, electricity is up 24 percent. We are stuck with that. When inflation falls, electricity is not going to go back down to where it was. We are going to continue to pay 24 percent more. And gas—in Louisiana, gas is up 71 percent. We are stuck with that, even if inflation falls to zero. Eggs are up 28 percent; potato chips are up 28 percent; bread, 28 percent—permanent—coffee, 30 percent; rice, 28 percent; flour, 29 percent; milk, 17 percent; ice cream, 20 percent; chicken, per pound, 24 percent. And that is why the American people, in large part, are struggling so economically.

You should not have to sell blood plasma in America, the wealthiest country in all of human history, in order to go to the grocery store. It is not any worse, our inflation—which I am afraid these high prices, as I said, are going to be permanent. It is not any better if you look at necessities by category. All goods—as a result of President Biden's inflation, starting in February of 2021 and running through today, all goods are up an average of 17 percent.

How many American families have seen their income go up 17 percent? Not many. Food—all food, average—an average—is 19 percent. Housing is up 16 percent. Clothing is up 10 percent. Used cars and trucks are up 32 percent. And even if we can get inflation down to zero, we are going to be stuck with those prices. New cars are up 20 percent. Mortgage rates are up 161 percent.

Let me end as I began. We have a lot of issues that we are struggling with right now, but among the five things that moms and dads in America worry about when they lie down to sleep at night and can't is the cost of living in our wonderful country.

And these are the people who made this extraordinary country. America is not great because of the Federal Government. America is great because of ordinary people doing extraordinary things—people who just get up every day, go to work, obey the law, pay their taxes, and try to do the right thing by their kids.

President Biden's inflation is strangling a free people. The American people deserve better. And I don't want us to lose sight of that fact as we grapple with other important issues.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. ROSEN).

SECURING GROWTH AND ROBUST LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN AVIATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. REED. Madam President, many of us in this Chamber, on both sides of the aisle, work hard to govern responsibly, and we are deeply frustrated by those who are deliberately attempting to shut down the Federal Government.

A fringe element of extremist House Republicans has pushed Congress to the brink of another costly, wasteful shutdown. A government shutdown of any duration would harm hard-working Americans and our economy. Shutdowns cost taxpayers billions of dollars per week. They cost businesses money. They could even cause a downgrade to the Nation's credit rating, and they force an unnecessary disruption of many vital services.

Federal workers in all 50 States who perform essential work, like food inspectors, TSA agents, or park rangers, would stop getting paychecks. A Federal shutdown can halt projects and cause Federal lending to cease. Clinical trials and research at the NIH could be forced to stop. Effective programs like the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program would be left in a vulnerable state.

As for national defense, a government shutdown would be extremely damaging; and in the midst of the blockade of key military promotions, it would be another Republican-inflicted wound.

A shutdown could halt our munitions production lines as it did in the 2013 shutdown. This would be very shortsighted—very shortsighted—at a time when we are focused on ramping up munitions production for Ukraine and with an eye on future needs in the Indo-Pacific.

There are several other areas where a shutdown would be harmful.

I urge my colleagues to consider the impacts of a shutdown on our military men and women, their families, and our defense civilians. Hundreds of thousands of troops could see delays in their paychecks, and many civilians could lose their contracts. If the shutdown extends, the Defense Department will have to reduce its recruiting, training, and family movement activities.

A shutdown would also include delay-needed investments in military infrastructure, including barracks and childcare centers. Dozens of new projects would not go forward.

This would prevent the Defense Department from effectively modernizing and investing in new programs. There could be no new starts in acquisition programs or military construction projects. Hundreds of new start efforts in procurement and R&D would be prohibited during a government shutdown. As such, the Department could be forced into funding legacy systems that are outdated and inefficient. That is simply congressionally mandated waste.

As Gen. C.Q. Brown, the incoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said about a shutdown, "All the money in the world cannot buy more time; time is irrecoverable, and when you are working to keep pace against well-resourced and focused competitors, time matters." We could easily avoid this outcome by passing a short-term patch while we continue working toward a broader funding agreement.

I commend the leaders of the Senate Appropriations Committee—Senator MURRAY and Senator COLLINS—who hammered out the bipartisan continuing resolution before us, and also the leadership on both sides of the aisle. They have successfully reported out all 12 funding bills—Senator COLLINS and Senator MURRAY—by wide bipartisan votes so that our appropriations process is working on a bipartisan basis and working on a reasonable and responsible basis. In fact, seven of these appropriations bills were voted out unanimously. They are well-crafted and free from policy poison pills.

They fit within the bipartisan agreement among the chair, the vice chair, and the leaders on overall funding levels. More importantly, those bills meet the funding level that Speaker MCCARTHY demanded as the price of preventing the default of the U.S. Government just this summer.

We should pass these bills, and we could pass them but for the objections of some Republican Senators who are working in concert with the House to obstruct the appropriations process from moving forward on a bipartisan basis. Their wanton nihilism is damaging our country.

But we have before us a continuing resolution, or a CR, which, barring any dilatory tactics, should clear the Sen-

ate by a wide margin. I want to emphasize that this CR is nothing more than a patch. For a few more weeks, it keeps the government open; it keeps the aviation system operational and funded; it keeps the Flood Insurance Program authorized; it ensures that we will continue to take care of disaster victims throughout the country; and it will ensure that the Ukrainian people have the resources they need to win their fight for freedom.

This is not extravagance; it is the bare minimum. The question is, What will House Republicans do?

After creating a default crisis that brought the entire economy to the brink of disaster in June, they have accomplished virtually nothing. For months, House Republicans have only been able to pass a single funding bill. The rest of their highly partisan bills have been bottled up in committee or blocked from passing on the floor by Republicans themselves.

In the midst of their palace intrigue, House conservatives seem to be trying to one-up each other with one drastic, unpopular, and irresponsible cut after the other. It seems to be a competition over whose unworkable proposal can inflict more pain. Perhaps they mistakenly believe that their extreme ideas are popular or that they will somehow hurt the President.

But who suffers if title I education funding for low-income schools is cut by 80 percent? Who is harmed when 1.3 million low-income individuals are kicked out of the SNAP program and when food assistance for seniors and kids is cut by 14 percent? How do we address the lack of affordable housing when the HOME Investment Partnership is slashed by \$1 billion? How does Ukraine win when Congress withholds critical funding?

And let me pause here to underscore the significance of funding for Ukraine.

The assistance package the President is seeking for Ukraine will provide much needed military assistance as well as aid to displaced Ukrainians whose cities and towns continue to face indiscriminate bombardment by Putin's forces.

We know, if Putin is successful in seizing Ukraine, he will not stop there. Unless the United States and the international community continue to stand with Ukraine, Putin will continue to look for opportunities to inflict violence and violate the sovereignty and security of our allies and partners around the world. And if Putin succeeds because we have failed to help, our other adversaries and competitors will be emboldened too. Indeed, if Putin succeeds, he will not stop with Ukraine. He will threaten NATO countries.

The bottom line, frankly, is the probability that American military personnel will be engaged in combat goes up. Frankly, one of our major missions should be to ensure, through our efforts, that that probability constantly goes down. We do not want to sacrifice

American military personnel needlessly. Congress should send a strong message to Putin that we stand with the Ukrainians as they bravely fight for their homeland.

This is the second manufactured crisis that House Republicans have created this year. First, they threatened to default on our Nation's debt. So President Biden sat down with the Speaker and negotiated an agreement that set spending levels for this year. Now House Republicans are walking away from that agreement and threatening to shut down the government. It won't work. The American people can see this charade, and if there is a shutdown, they will know who is responsible.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PREVENT GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS ACT OF 2023

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I have come to this floor several times over the past many years and several times even recently to talk about a bill that Senator HASSAN and I have together that we have worked on very hard to end government shutdown threats forever.

This whole conversation that is happening right now in Washington, DC, about a government shutdown is not something that has always happened in our Republic. This conversation of a government shutdown has only really been since the mid-1980s to the present. Before that, there were no government shutdowns. Even when appropriations lapsed—and we had multiple times when appropriations lapsed in the past—we didn't have government shutdowns at that time. It wasn't until there was actually an executive opinion back in the seventies that there was created this moment to say, no, we are going to end up having a government shutdown if appropriations lapse.

We are in this moment again. This is a distinctly modern issue in American history that we need to bring to a close, this chapter. There is a way to do it.

In conversations that we have had for years of how do we actually stop government shutdowns, there have been very partisan bills on both sides, and Senator HASSAN and I sat down 5 years ago and said: Let's just have a dialogue. How can we stop government shutdowns without having a partisan bill at the end of it? It would be a way to be able to fix this that both sides of the aisle can say: That is a good way to be able to end it.

We have a very simple goal: End government shutdowns. Do appropriations bills.

That shouldn't be a radical concept. That should be a head nod from everybody, quite frankly, in this room to

say: Sure, we can agree to end government shutdowns and to do appropriations bills on time.

Our simple idea was this: If you don't finish your work during class, you have to stay after class to finish your work. It is just not that hard. It is something all of us experienced growing up in school.

If I can make it even simpler, when my older brother and I would get into an argument, my mom would put the two of us in a room and would say: You two guys have got to go in this room. Once you solve everything, then you can come out.

That is the genesis of this simple bill. It says: If we don't have our appropriations work done and we are still arguing about appropriations, the government continues to function as it has in the past year—exact same budget line. Everything continues as normal. The American people are held harmless. Federal workers, Federal contractors—all of them—still continue as they have.

But we experience the shutdown here in Washington, DC, not the rest of the country. We would be in session 7 days a week. We could not move the bills other than the appropriations bills. So we are locked in a box to say: If you haven't finished your appropriations bills, you have to stay overtime to finish those appropriations bills, and you can't move to something different than appropriations bills. You have got to be able to do those.

But, again, the American people wouldn't feel it. The Federal workers wouldn't feel it. The Federal contractors wouldn't feel it. We would.

If we didn't get our work done, why are the Border Patrol agents along the border—why are they being punished for us not getting our work done, because the Border Patrol agents, if we don't get this done, next week, they don't get a paycheck, when they have been working overtime hours managing 11,000 people a day coming across the border in chaos that is currently on our border. Those folks have been working as hard as they can, but because we haven't gotten our work done on the budgeting, now they don't get paid. Oh, but we are still asking them to go on the line and to risk their life for their country anyway. That doesn't make sense to me.

So our simple bill is: If the problem is up here, then the problem should remain up here, and we should get this resolved but not actually put the consequences on those folks who are serving us all around the Nation.

As I came through TSA, flying back to DC, as probably most of my colleagues did coming back this week, TSA agents whom I pass by every week—and we have great conversation as I pass by them in the airport every week. As my bag is being checked and as I am going through the scanner, like everyone else, the TSA agents were smiling at me saying: Am I going to get a paycheck next week?

It is not an unreasonable question from them. All they want to know is: I am here defending the Nation. Am I still going to get paid?

Listen, right now on the border—right now—they are being absolutely overrun with people coming across the border in big numbers—huge, overwhelming numbers. It used to be a thousand people a day. That was an overwhelming number. Yesterday, there were 11,000 people who crossed our southern border. They were literally just checked in, as much as could be done to be able to manage them and to be able to put them through.

If we have a shutdown, they are going to lose some of their support help, and we are going to have even more people come just across the border.

Here is what is happening. Anytime that the Border Patrol actually comes in and checks in, they are trying to manage the number of people coming between the borders. With the numbers that are coming across right now, those Border Patrol agents who should be in the field—who should actually be monitoring what is happening with the movement of illegal drugs across our border, illegal weapons across our border, and all the dynamics that are there from criminal elements moving across our border between ports of entry—they are not getting the opportunity to be able to chase those down because they are processing individuals.

The vast majority of our Border Patrol agents, by the end of their time each day, are in the station, not on the line. That only gets worse when we have a shutdown, and they lose part of their help.

By the way, during a shutdown, “nonessential” is also declared for the recruiting folks, which means we are not out there actually recruiting more agents to be able to join them to be able to get more help. There are more and more administrative duties being done by Border Patrol that we desperately need on the line. And we are grateful for them on the line.

Last week, I got a notification that rail traffic had stopped in Eagle Pass, TX. Most folks don't even know about the truck and train traffic that happens around the country. They just know they go to the grocery store, and they buy groceries. They go to the store and buy clothes and furniture. They just know it is there. But that is being moved by a truckdriver. That is being moved by rail very often.

Last week, in Eagle Pass, TX, DHS shut down all rail traffic there because a thousand migrants were riding the Mexican rail coming up through Mexico. They had climbed on the freight trains, and they were riding it all the way to the north—a thousand. But the response from DHS was just to shut the station down entirely. Then they took the CBP folks who are at that station and normally handle legal traffic coming north and south in and out of Mex-

ico into the United States and out of the United States to Mexico. They took those CBP agents, and they moved them over to driving migrants to different stations for their processing.

So it started out that there were a lot of folks riding the rails to be able to come to the United States, and it ended up being that we have so many people here that they literally shut it down.

What was the effect of that? We had American train traffic going south into Mexico that was backed up from Eagle Pass all the way to Nebraska, before it was said and done.

I was on the phone with Secretary Mayorkas saying: We have to get that station back open again. Do we have people illegally crossing the border riding the rails?

And his answer was: No. But those agents were needed to be able to move migrants who were illegally crossing in other areas.

The migration that is happening right now is not only affecting our national security because of the 11,000 people a day who are crossing our border. Those individuals, by and large, are not being checked. They are not being vetted. We are checking to see if they are on the terror watch list. For many of them, we don't have a name or an ID or a reliable country of origin other than the one they just tell us is their name or tell us is their country of origin. We have no idea.

They are being quickly paroled into the country, awaiting a hearing that is often 8 to 10 years in the future—8 to 10 years before they even get the hearing to determine if they are even eligible to be able to ask for asylum. This is insanity.

But it doesn't get better if Border Patrol loses all of its help during the government shutdown. It gets worse.

So we have got to be able to do a couple of things at once. We have to deal with the real fiscal problems that we have. We have over \$2 trillion in overspending this year. That is a real issue we should have grownup conversations about on this floor.

We have to deal with the immigration crisis and call it what it is. When 11,000 people a day illegally enter your country and Members of this body just look the other way, that is a problem. And when there is a national security crisis based on it, and we have Governors and mayors across the Nation crying out to this body and saying, “Make it stop”—they are not Republican and Democrat Governors and mayors; they are just Governors and mayors who are trying to manage their towns and their States. They are saying: Why isn't the Federal Government doing its job? The Federal Government has a responsibility for managing the border. Do it.

We have got to deal with the issue of government shutdowns. They hurt us more than help us. It spends more money than it saves, and it dramatically affects a lot of Federal workers

around the country who just want to be able to serve their neighbors or to be able to do law enforcement and actually get paid for it.

And I hear some of my colleagues and others say: They will eventually get paid.

Do you know what? That might be simple for some Members in this body, that they are not worried about living paycheck to paycheck. But there are an awful lot of folks who live paycheck to paycheck, that just missing a couple of paychecks is a really big deal. And all of those Federal contractors, they don't get backpay. They just don't get paid at all.

So we can't just say: They will all get paid later. They won't. Federal workers will eventually get backpay, but Federal contractors never do, and it really hurts for them. This shutdown is not their fault; it is ours.

So MAGGIE HASSAN and I just have a simple idea: Let's keep working on the problems, but let's not have a shutdown at the same time. Let's actually work out our problems in here and not hurt people all over the country who have no way of affecting what our debate is here. They are just trying to serve their neighbors. That is what I am looking for.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The junior Senator from Nevada.

ANNIVERSARY OF ROUTE 91 HARVEST FESTIVAL SHOOTING

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, it has been nearly 6 years since my hometown of Las Vegas experienced an unimaginable tragedy—an attack that ripped families apart, destroyed lives, and left its mark on our State forever.

During any given weekend, our city is just buzzing with tourists and visitors from all across the country and all around the world.

And on the night of October 1, 2017, tens of thousands of people came to attend a music festival. But that night—that night—would be different—a night that would forever change our city, because that night a gunman opened fire on a crowd of concertgoers. In just 10 minutes—10 minutes—58 innocent people were struck down, hundreds of others were injured by gunfire, and hundreds more were hurt in the chaos that followed.

In the years since, we lost more individuals as a result of this tragedy, the deadliest mass shooting in American history.

Just think about what that means. It means families will forever have an empty chair at their kitchen table—families who will relive this horrific night each and every year, families who didn't get to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and families who never got to say good-bye to their loved ones.

That night also changed the lives of everyone here. People who were attending or working at the festival and first responders—well, they ran towards the

danger. The full extent of the damage caused by this brutal attack can never truly be measured.

But in this dark moment, we saw our community go above and beyond to help others. Las Vegas—actually our entire State—we rallied together not just in the immediate aftermath but in the days, weeks, months, and even years after.

In the chaos and confusion of that night, our heroic first responders—police officers, firefighters, paramedics—ran into the scene to help. And their efforts that night saved lives.

And on the following day, we saw lines of people—lines of people—around entire blocks willing to donate blood.

And one story really sticks out to me. I remember speaking to a woman waiting to give blood in line. And when I went up to talk to her, she lifted up her arms like this to me, and she had tears in her eyes, and she said: I don't have much, but I have my blood to give. This is what I can give.

I remember her face to this day. It stays with me. And this kind of selflessness, this really embodies the incredible spirit of our community. And that woman's donation and the stories that she will tell and me meeting her has left an indelible imprint on me.

We come together to mourn those we lost and to support those who survived. This horrible moment showed the country why we are Vegas Strong. And I am here today to honor the memories of those who were impacted by that terrible night.

So as we remember and reflect on this event, we must also commit ourselves to action. And in the years since, we have made some progress. After decades of inaction, Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together to pass the most significant gun safety legislation in almost 30 years.

This bipartisan law is making a difference, but we can—and we must—do more to stop mass shootings. No community—no community—should ever have to experience the same pain and suffering that we went through in Las Vegas. So we can take commonsense bipartisan steps like permanently banning bump stocks and high-capacity magazines. These things allowed the shooter to fire so many rounds and cause so much carnage. And doing nothing is not an option.

We owe it to those who have experienced the pain of gun violence to do more. And we owe it to future generations to do more.

And at the end of the day, what this really is about is about keeping people and communities safe. It is about people and communities—keeping them safe and keeping us safe. And we must keep working to prevent these tragedies.

And as we approach the 6-year mark since this horrific shooting, I ask all of my colleagues in this Chamber to remember and honor the victims of October 1, their lives, their legacy, and their families.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from California.

EL MONTE THAI GARMENT WORKERS

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, there are moments in history that shock our national conscience, news so heartbreaking that we will always remember exactly where we were when we heard the news. One of those moments is the day the El Monte Thai garment workers were found enslaved in California.

As recently as August 2, 1995, there was 72 Thai women and men who were discovered held against their will in the city of El Monte, CA, just outside the city of Los Angeles. There, in a series of apartments-turned-sweatshops, packed in between sewing machines, forced to work 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, and hidden behind barbed wire fences and armed guards, some of them believed help would never come.

They were lured by recruiters with the promise of their own American dream. Seventy-two Thai women and men arrived into the United States only to find a nightmare.

When they were liberated by Federal agents on that day, that nightmare wasn't over. Instead, they were placed into holding cells, where they feared they would actually be deported after the horrific experience. It wasn't until a 26-year-old staff attorney for the Asian Pacific American Legal Center by the name of Julie Su, among others, took on their case for backpay and for dignity in this country that they had once only dreamt about.

When the 72 Thai nationals were finally, truly freed, they actually owed nothing to this country. Yet they stood up and they fought to protect others from going through the hell they had endured. Their advocacy led to meaningful protections in America, including the landmark Federal Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act, which created a new class of visas for victims of crimes like forced labor and trafficking and strengthened the penalties for trafficking crimes.

Just last week, now-Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su—yes, the same Julie Su—had the opportunity to induct the El Monte Thai garment workers into the Department of Labor's Hall of Honor, honoring the courage they have shown and the progress they have made to protect other workers.

I also had the privilege of getting to meet them in Washington last week, and I was proud to join Senators Duckworth and Feinstein in introducing a resolution to honor them by the U.S. Senate.

But, as each and every one of them has shown us, the best way to respond to the atrocities they went through, the best way to honor them is through our action—by keeping up the fight to end human trafficking, by working to end wage theft that exploits far too many workers in the garment industry and passing the FABRIC Act, and by, in my opinion, finally confirming a champion for workers and worker

rights like Julie Su to be Secretary of Labor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONSTITUTING THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 370, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 370) to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Eighteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 370) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD (Legislative day of September 22, 2023) under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

SECURING GROWTH AND ROBUST LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN AVIATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from California.

CONFIRMATION OF RITA F. LIN

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I also rise today just a week after the Senate confirmed Judge Rita Lin to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

Today, I would like to take a moment to celebrate her confirmation and share with the people of California a bit more about the outstanding public servant and jurist they have gained on the Federal bench.

Now Judge Lin earned her undergraduate degree from Harvard College and her law degree from Harvard Law School. After clerking on the First Circuit Court of Appeals for Judge Sandra Lynch, she started out her legal career as an associate and later became partner at the firm of Morrison Foerster in San Francisco.

But in 2014, she left private practice to pursue a career in public service, joining the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California.

Four years later, Governor Brown appointed Judge Lin to the San Francisco

County Superior Court, where she presided over both felony and misdemeanor trials.

At every step, Judge Lin's career has been guided by her dedication to public service, whether by maintaining an extensive pro bono practice in the early years of her career or by leaving behind the promise of a very lucrative career in private practice to serve in the Northern District U.S. Attorney's Office. Judge Lin has proven she has the heart and mind worthy of a Federal district judge.

And as someone who has lived her entire life with a hearing disability, she also brings a unique perspective from a community not often represented in our Nation's Federal judiciary.

The State of California is now lucky to have a Federal district court judge not only with the judicial qualifications of Judge Lin but with the voice, the personal experience, and the passion for public service she brings each and every day.

So I want to thank my colleagues for confirming her nomination, and I want to congratulate Judge Lin once again on her confirmation.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 266, Tara K. McGrath, to be the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VANCE. Madam President, reserving the right to object. I will continue my hold on unanimous consent for Department of Justice nominations so long as I feel like the Department of Justice is being used for politics instead of justice.

My arguments on this point have already been made, but I will repeat them for the benefit of anybody who hasn't heard me before. From a Catholic pro-life father of seven who was arrested in front of his children like a common criminal for exercising his First Amendment rights to parents who were investigated by the FBI for exercising their First Amendment right to protest at a school board meeting to the leader of the opposition and the likely challenger to President Joe Biden, former President Trump, we have a Department of Justice that has run amok with a focus on politics instead of on justice.

Now, my colleagues make some good points. I agree with my colleagues that U.S. attorneys play an important role. I agree with my colleagues that we need a Department of Justice that is

fully staffed to do its job. But I don't think the solution to the politicization of the Department of Justice is to let these guys through on a glide path. I think it is to provide proper consent, proper advisement, and proper scrutiny of each one of these nominees which we can't let them do if we allow them to sail through unanimous consent.

I will continue this hold, but let me just make one final point before I allow my colleague to respond.

I am the new guy, and I recognize that I am a little naive when it comes to matters of the procedures of the U.S. Senate. But I have had a lot of jobs in my life; and yesterday we passed one vote and today we have passed zero votes. The time that we have spent debating whether we should have unanimous consent over these nominations, we could actually use to vote on these nominations and end this charade and call it out for what it is. If we believe that these nominees must go forward, let's just have a vote on it. Allow me to scrutinize them. Allow my colleagues to vote them up or down. That is a totally reasonable thing to ask of this Chamber and to ask of this leadership; and because of that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, it has been 2 months since I first came to the floor to call for the confirmation of Tara McGrath, President Biden's nominee to serve as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California.

On that day in July, my Republican colleague from Ohio chose, as he does today, to put political gamesmanship over the safety of the American people and to hold her nomination hostage to leverage completely unrelated issues.

Two months later, clearly, nothing has changed. And as a result, since early August, the Southern District of California has gone without a confirmed U.S. attorney. That is despite the fact that a highly qualified candidate was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee after a confirmation hearing, after the proper vetting and review, and is awaiting a full vote on the Senate floor.

Yet, because my Republican colleague has chosen to politicize our Justice Department and the confirmation process and hinder the work of multiple law enforcement offices as they await confirmation of their leadership, law enforcement is now forced to work harder than necessary to keep our communities safe. That includes the Senator's own home State of Ohio where the Northern District is currently without a Senate-confirmed U.S. attorney for the longest stretch in that office's history.

Now, in my own State, the Southern District of California has become tangled in this political mess.

Make no mistake, these delays damage the effectiveness of U.S. Attorney Offices across the country. Like the