

and then served continually for the next 42 years until his retirement last March. His work ethic was tireless, and sacrifices he made for his Nation were immeasurable. He was selfless and giving. He would be the first one to offer to lend a hand, and then would refuse to accept payment for his good deed.

He seemed quiet until you got to know him. Then his laugh made you laugh so hard that, eventually, you forgot why you were both laughing at all.

As a fellow pilot, I especially appreciated the way he gravitated toward machines, the way he loved having the power of an engine, whether it be a snowmobile or a Black Hawk helicopter, at his fingertips. As his commanding officer for my years as a Mad Dog, I couldn't have asked for a better maintenance test pilot, although I always questioned the sanity of anyone who would fly broken helicopters on purpose.

I considered myself lucky that Joe was a member of our battalion when we were in Iraq. Maintenance officers, you see, and especially those like Joe, are a rare commodity, and Joe was one of the best.

When we got back to U.S. soil, after I was wounded and could no longer get from point A to point B like I used to, I was even luckier to have Joe show up at my house one day with his toolbox in tow, ready to remodel my home to make it completely wheelchair accessible.

He combined the grit of a midwesterner with the grace of faith. He combined the resilience of a soldier with the brilliance of an engineer. I know he will be dearly missed. He already is. My thoughts are with his wife Kathryn and his children and his newborn grandson Joe Lemens IV, whom he was able to see. I thank them for sharing Joe with us for all those years and for their own service to our great Nation.

We will all miss Joe, but we will forever catch an echo of his larger-than-life laugh whenever we hear his favorite sound: the smooth rumble of a well-cared-for engine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, last week, like many of us in here—many of my colleagues—I spent time meeting with a lot of great folks back in my home State of Alabama. It was great to be home. It was great to be able to share the progress my office has made in the first 2 years, as well as my vision and priorities for the 118th Congress.

I visited Huntsville, AL, and had the opportunity to meet with some of the leaders in defense, education, and business. This included stops at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center; Alabama A&M University, one of the top HBCUs in the country; and other important sites, including businesses in Madison County, AL.

But I would like to take some time today to speak specifically about one stop on my trip that opened my eyes to a subject we should talk about more often in this Chamber. The National Children's Advocacy Center in Huntsville is a global leader in services, investigations, and counseling for children who suffer physical and sexual abuse. The center's work is important, and I am proud to share that work today.

I think we can all agree that we want our kids to have access to all the opportunities that this great country provides. Unfortunately, many children in Alabama and across the country are robbed of the opportunity to thrive and pursue their dreams because of abuse and neglect.

During my visit, the center's executive director, Chris Newlin, shared that 1 in 10 American children today will be victims of abuse before the age of 18. This is horrific, it is unacceptable, and it is embarrassing to our country. These kids don't know what it is like to have a carefree childhood or loving families who support their goals. They aren't able to devote energy to school, join in team sports, or have fun because their only goal in life is just to survive. Not only are they robbed of their childhood, but many times they are robbed of their adulthood as well.

Studies show that there are several long-term effects of child abuse. These include delayed brain development, lower educational success, and limited career opportunities. Victims are also more likely to suffer from future abuse, drug usage, and medical complications. Additionally, they are less likely to own cars, buy homes, or engage in business, making them less likely to be able to support a family in the future.

Nearly 600,000 kids in the United States were abused in 2021. To repeat that, 600,000 kids in the greatest country on the face of the Earth were abused in 2021, with the most common form of abuse being neglect.

Child abuse cases in Alabama have increased throughout the years, with more than 12,000 victims reported in 2018, costing the State of Alabama \$3.7 billion. Now, that is up \$1.5 billion from just 3 years earlier. The cost is outrageous. And while we are still collecting data from the past few years of COVID—and we know how bad that was—we all know that those numbers are going to be outrageous.

We cannot allow this to continue in the United States of America. Fortunately, we have people in our State of Alabama who have made it their mission to help victims of child abuse.

Founded in 1985, the National Children's Advocacy Center, also called the NCAC, is stepping up to save lives and offer hope to thousands and thousands of young people. The NCAC in Huntsville has established more than 1,000 children's advocacy centers in the United States and in 41 countries around the world.

Their work serves thousands and thousands of kids every year, like 7-year-old Benji, who was found unconscious by his grandmother and rushed to the hospital. There, it was discovered he had broken fingers, a broken rib, countless bruises, and old bones that had been broken but never fixed. Doctors determined Benji was also sexually abused.

That night, Benji left the hospital with Julie, who would eventually become his new foster mom, and arrived at the NCAC the very next morning for evaluation. Thanks to the work of the dedicated and selfless professionals in Huntsville, Benji now has a safe and loving home. He has made tremendous strides in playing with other children and bonding with family members and their new family kitten, and trusting his adoptive mother was a huge benefit.

Benji's therapists say he continues to show more confidence and will likely graduate from therapy in just a few months. There is no telling how many Benjis there are out there in our world today.

The center's reach does not end in Alabama. It has expanded around the country and across the world. In 2021, over 30,000 child abuse professionals from 50 States and 17 countries received NCAC training, and more than 400,000 children were served. That is just in 2021. Alabama's network of children's advocacy centers now includes 47 different locations that have conducted tens of thousands of counseling sessions each year. And, thanks to their work, more abusers have been brought to justice. Communities with children's advocacy centers have seen a 196-percent increase in felony prosecutions of child sexual abuse.

I am confident their work will continue to make tremendous impacts in our local communities in Alabama and around the world.

So we all have a duty to stand up for our kids. That is our responsibility. Children are our No. 1 commodity in this country. They will become the next generation of educators, nurses, doctors, lawyers, engineers—even Senators, and maybe even President.

And if we are going to have a strong future, we must make sure we protect and empower this next generation. I commend the team of the National Children's Advocacy Center for their commitment to giving kids a fighting chance—a fighting chance—to overcome unthinkable hardships that most of us never had to realize.

By stepping up to help those who have been left behind, the Center gives kids the opportunity to dream and pursue better lives. I hope we all join this group in doing our part to rescue child abuse victims. I will continue to fight for kids in Alabama and all across our great country, because they deserve it.

And I want to thank the National Children's Advocacy Center for reminding me that we all have a part to play in protecting and serving those who need it most.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

NOMINATION OF JAMAR K. WALKER

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I rise today in support of Mr. Jamar Walker, whom President Biden has nominated to serve as a U.S. District Court judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Jamar is a fellow Virginian and outstanding public servant. For the last decade, he has been an invaluable asset to Virginia's legal community, bringing both his zeal for public service and his personal life story.

Jamar is a Virginia native, originally from our Eastern Shore. If you ever look at a map of Virginia, you see this strip that may not be completely connected. It literally goes from Virginia to Maryland and Delaware. It is a strip of land that is very rural. Jamar is from that part of our Commonwealth.

He is a two-time graduate of the University of Virginia. Following his time at both UVA as an undergrad and UVA Law, Jamar began his career in public service clerking for the Honorable Raymond Jackson in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, whose same seat he has actually—if we approve him tonight—been nominated to fill.

And for the past 7 years, Jamar has dedicated his professional career in the U.S. attorney's office for the Eastern District of Virginia, where he currently serves as the Acting Chief of the Financial Crime and Public Corruption Unit.

A testament to his ability to try complex cases, Jamar has received five service awards from the FBI for his excellent work in public correction, wire fraud, and bank fraud cases. His commitment to the Commonwealth spans far beyond his day job. Jamar has volunteered for countless collegiate mock trial tournaments and returned to his alma mater time and again to speak out on guest panels.

Once sworn in, Jamar will also be the first openly gay Federal district judge in Virginia. Jamar's community-oriented mindset, career qualifications, and numerous accolades make him an exceptional nominee for the Eastern District of Virginia, a district that is known as the "rocket docket" in terms of moving cases quickly through. His experience, particularly in the U.S. Attorney's office, is well-suited to deal with the "rocket docket."

I know he will serve with distinction and make both our country and our Commonwealth proud. I urge my colleagues, when this vote starts in about 10 minutes, to support his nomination. He came out in a bipartisan vote from the Judiciary Committee. He is an exceptional young man, and I know will do a great job.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 24.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Colleen R. Lawless, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of Illinois.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 24, Colleen R. Lawless, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of Illinois.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tina Smith, Christopher Murphy, Mazie K. Hirono, Tammy Baldwin, Margaret Wood Hassan, John W. Hickenlooper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Catherine Cortez Masto, Brian Schatz, Gary C. Peters, Alex Padilla, Michael F. Bennet.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 35.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jonathan James Canada Grey, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 35, Jonathan James Canada Grey, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tina Smith, Christopher Murphy, Mazie K. Hirono, Tammy Baldwin, Margaret Wood Hassan, John W. Hickenlooper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Catherine Cortez Masto, Brian Schatz, Gary C. Peters, Alex Padilla, Michael F. Bennet.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 39.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination. The legislative clerk read the nomination of James Edward Simmons, Jr., of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 39, James Edward Simmons, Jr., of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Jeff Merkley, Jeanne Shaheen, Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Alex Padilla, Gary C. Peters, Angus S. King, Jr., Mazie K.