

Each day, 44,000 FAA employees oversee the safety of 25,000 daily commercial flights, 2.5 million travelers, and over 5,500 airports.

These Agencies set the safety standards for aerospace manufacturing, and safety starts at the top with the Administrator. America's safety system is under stress, given the changes to FAA and the innovation that we are seeing in new technology. We have challenges in the post-pandemic rebound of air travel and making sure that we have a workforce.

And the FAA's workforce, I know that Mr. Whitaker, in his confirmation hearing, committed to making this a No. 1 priority: build a strong safety culture, attract new talent, and keep pace with technology transformation.

Mr. Whitaker must build an organization that meets the challenges of incorporating new users and technologies like drones and advanced air mobility, electric propulsion, commercial space, and just the continued growth of the busy aviation aerospace around the globe.

Among the most pressing problems is addressing air traffic controller hiring and training, and Mr. Whitaker has stated this will also be a top priority.

Finally, the FAA must be among the global leaders in aviation safety. Mr. Whitaker must work internationally at the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, and through bilateral partnerships to lift the baseline for aviation safety regulation throughout the world.

This work of rebuilding leadership starts here at the FAA, and he is committed to implementing the critical safety reforms that were part of the Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act. These are strong challenges, but no doubt this Administrator can meet those challenges and live up to these commitments.

I am confident that Mr. Whitaker's abilities will make sure that this legislation is fully implemented.

In addition, yesterday, the President of the United States and the Secretary of Commerce announced a series of tech hubs in response to the legislation that we passed, the CHIPS and Science Act. I know the Presiding Officer, I think, is pretty happy about that because I think one of those tech hubs was in his State. And certainly there was one in Washington that is really about the next generation of advanced materials in aviation.

The designation made possible by CHIPS and Science is to think about lab-to-market testbeds on thermoplastic composite fabrication equipment and help the United States stay in a leadership position in the next generation of aerospace workforce.

The United States leads in ideas, but we don't always lead in the implementation of the innovation, particularly at a time where now everyone, in an internet age, is reading about our innovations and trying to implement the same things.

The tech hub idea can leverage a lot of ideas across the United States and help translate the science faster into real application and real competitiveness for our Nation and grow jobs and help grow actually rising incomes in various parts of our country as well.

The tech hub, in this instance, in the aerospace ecosystem where we have millions of people employed nationally and we have leading institutions that are doing aviation research—we need to show that innovation can move beyond just where we are today on composites but on next-generation research that then gets translated to the workforce and the skilling of the workforce.

This means creating more patents, translating discoveries, and keeping U.S. manufacturing competitive. I know that many of my colleagues here in the Senate were very pleased to hear this announcement by the President and the Secretary of Commerce.

With over 30 years of diverse experience in these issues, like aviation, Mr. Whitaker will be able to help, I think, in this next-generation aviation technology: thermoplastics.

This is also important for our space companies that want to get into a more rapid production of thermoplastic piece part production, and I think this kind of R&D alliance will help for the future.

So I thank our colleagues for the time today. I hope they will support Mr. Whitaker. I hope that we will move quickly on this nomination, and I hope that it will give us a chance to have an FAA Administrator who will also help us move quickly to resolve the FAA authorization issues and get that authorization before both bodies before the end of the year.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

NOMINATION OF JESSICA LOOMAN

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Jessica Looman to be Administrator for the Wage and Hour Division at the Department of Labor. And I want my Senate colleagues to know a little bit about Jessica, whom I have had the opportunity to know well and to work with since 2011.

Jessica is from St. Paul, MN. She has worked as an attorney and advocate, as a labor leader heading the Minnesota building trades, as a public sector leader, and as a lifelong champion for workers. And in all her roles, Jessica has earned the reputation for being thoughtful and innovative and fair. She is respected for her skill leading large, complex organizations and getting results and working productively with diverse groups of people to find good solutions and common ground.

Before I was Minnesota's Senator and Lieutenant Governor, I served as chief of staff for the Governor of Minnesota, Mark Dayton. And when we needed a leader who was trusted both by business and by labor to be a leader at Min-

nesota's Department of Labor and Industry, we selected Jessica, who served both as assistant commissioner and also as deputy commissioner. And Jessica impressed me and everyone with her leadership, her competence, and her commitment to fairly and diligently enforcing the law.

She led Minnesota's efforts to ensure safe, fair, and healthy workplaces and labor standards. And she led our effort to expand apprenticeships. Jessica was respected by business and labor alike for her commitment to establishing reasonable, effective workplace rules and regulations.

A couple of years later, when we needed a strong leader to take on Minnesota's Department of Commerce, Jessica was our first pick. In that role, she again showed her skill as an executive leader, leading successful statewide initiatives and growing Minnesota's clean energy jobs. So I have no doubt that Jessica will be a fair and pragmatic Administrator for the Wage and Hour Division, which is responsible for enforcing some of our Nation's most important laws governing minimum wage and overtime pay and child labor standards.

As Administrator, Jessica will have direct impact protecting the interest of hard-working Americans, like the waitress whose boss is stealing her tips, or the building trades' carpenter or laborer who has the right to earn the prevailing wage on Federal projects so that they can support their families, or the worker who isn't being paid for the overtime hours that they have worked. Ms. Looman's values are rooted in fairness and the promise that all work has dignity and should be respected.

One of the things that I have learned in my time in public service is that, if you understand both sides of an argument and you really listen, you can usually find a solution that works. Jessica exemplifies this approach. In all of the years that I have worked closely with her, she always approaches issues with that keen desire to understand what both sides need and what they want and then to find a solution that both sides can agree is fair.

And let us be honest, sometimes regulations can seem subjective and hard to understand. And Jessica gets this, and so she is always looking for a path that is reasonable, that protects people's rights, and that follows the law but that is reasonable. I think that this is why she is respected both by employers and by labor, first in Minnesota and now at the U.S. Department of Labor, and it is why she will make a strong, respected, and trusted Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division.

I urge my colleagues to support her confirmation. Her reputation as a respected, effective leader has been built over years of hard work, fighting for working people, and she has a track record of successfully building coalitions and consensus, even when there are real and difficult challenges to bridge.

RECESS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:23 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

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. 364, Michael G. Whitaker, of Vermont, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years.

Charles E. Schumer, Maria Cantwell, Christopher A. Coons, John W. Hickenlooper, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher Murphy, Alex Padilla, Gary C. Peters, Chris Van Hollen, Brian Schatz, Jeanne Shaheen, Patty Murray, Catherine Cortez Masto.

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 Michael G. Whitaker, of Vermont, to be Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration for the term of five years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 94, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 262 Ex.]

YEAS—94

Baldwin	Brown	Collins
Barrasso	Budd	Coons
Bennet	Butler	Cornyn
Blackburn	Cantwell	Cortez Masto
Blumenthal	Capito	Cotton
Booker	Cardin	Cramer
Boozman	Carper	Cruz
Braun	Casey	Daines
Britt	Cassidy	Duckworth

Durbin	Lummis	Schmitt
Ernst	Manchin	Schumer
Fetterman	Markey	Shaheen
Fischer	Marshall	Sinema
Gillibrand	McConnell	Smith
Graham	Menendez	Stabenow
Grassley	Merkley	Sullivan
Hagerty	Moran	Tester
Hassan	Mullin	Thune
Hawley	Murkowski	Tillis
Heinrich	Murphy	Tuberville
Hickenlooper	Murray	Van Hollen
Hirono	Ossoff	Vance
Hyde-Smith	Paul	Warner
Johnson	Peters	Warnock
Kaine	Reed	Warren
Kelly	Ricketts	Welch
Kennedy	Risch	Whitehouse
King	Rosen	Wicker
Klobuchar	Rounds	Wyden
Lankford	Rubio	Young
Lee	Sanders	
Lujan	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—6

Crapo	Padilla	Scott (FL)
Hoeven	Romney	Scott (SC)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). On this vote, the yeas are 94, the nays are 0.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time be considered expired at 5 p.m. today.

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

Mr. DURBIN. For information of the Senate, Members should expect two rollcall votes starting at 5 p.m.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, much has been said and written about the horrific Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on October 7. The wanton slaughter of more than a thousand Israelis and an estimated 200 hostages still being held is hard to fathom. One fact tells the grim story. More Jews died on this day than any time since the Holocaust. It was not just another bad day in the Middle East. It was a premeditated slaughter of historic proportion.

The crisis that has followed has touched many in my home State of Illinois who have family in Israel. On Friday, I was relieved to learn of the release of Natalie and Judith Raanan from Evanston who were being held as hostages by Hamas in Gaza. Another two women, thankfully, were released yesterday. Now the Hamas terrorists must release the remaining hostages captured on October 7. I pray every moment for their safe return.

Throughout my career in Congress, I have supported U.S. assistance to help Israel defend itself from those bent on its destruction. I am not naive. I know the creation of the nation of Israel was controversial in its time. It still is to many today. Yet it struck me that the people of that region deserve an opportunity to live in peace, to find one refuge in the world they can count on. And I have always supported Israel because of that.

I will strongly support the President's proposed supplemental request to help Israel, Ukraine, and other urgent humanitarian needs.

The Hamas attack, which had nothing to do with solving the problems between the Jewish people and the Palestinians, was really not advancing a two-state solution or even seeking long-term peace. It was a reminder that there are still those in the region who refuse to accept Israel's right to exist—literally, their right to exist—and will take any actions to destroy it.

But in acknowledging Israel's understandable rage and pain, I believe President Biden gave wise counsel to learn from America's mistakes made after the similarly traumatic attacks on 9/11. I remember that day. I was in this building, just outside the Chamber, 9/11/2001. I couldn't imagine what had happened to our Nation as we were evacuating the Capitol to stand out on the lawn and pray another airplane was not directed toward the Capitol or the White House.

It changed America in some ways for the better. We were united. We were determined. We were really in focus with one another to try to make this a safe country for our kids and grandkids. And it divided us as well. We made some decisions which were thoughtful, wise, and stood the test of history and some that did not.

Hamas, just like al-Qaida in those days, must be destroyed. But Israel should be wary of the kind of overreach we found after 9/11. You do not want an ill-thought occupation of Gaza to become your Fallujah. You do not want to dehumanize the innocents on the periphery who are not your enemy and will have to be your neighbors in the future.

Hamas is a terrorist organization that has a long and cynical history of hiding its military essence among and around innocent civilians. They dare their enemies to attack, only to realize the collateral damage is going to be devastating. It makes any effort to root them out and rescue hostages extraordinarily difficult.

Let us be clear, the Palestinian people are not Hamas. As a democracy, Israel must follow the rules of war and not target civilians or conduct disproportionate or indiscriminate attacks. We are already seeing a distressing humanitarian crisis building in Gaza, which has the potential to become worse.

As such, I joined several Senate colleagues in calling for the U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, a move President Biden made last week. The suffering of the Palestinians cannot be ignored. Tom Freidman said it even better last week when he said:

Hamas has not only taken [Israel] hostage; it has taken [Gaza civilians] hostage as well.

The passions and pain from these events are not limited to the Middle East. They are manifesting in all of our Nation, even in my State of Illinois. Ten days ago, a 6-year-old Palestinian-American, Wadea Al-Fayoume, was murdered in a suburb of Chicago in a mindless, heartbreaking act. Almost