

million Americans who are currently in Israel. We need Jack Lew's expertise to help us get the hostages back safely on the ground in Israel.

I want to thank Secretary Lew for being willing at this time, at this critical moment, to serve his country in this critically important position, and I would hope my colleagues would vote for his confirmation, recognizing that we could not have a more qualified individual to represent America as our Ambassador to Israel.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON LEW NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lew nomination?

Mr. CARDIN. 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "nay" and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 276 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Butler	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Lujan	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Paul	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—43

Barrasso	Ernst	Ricketts
Blackburn	Fischer	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Romney
Braun	Hagerty	Rounds
Britt	Hawley	Rubio
Budd	Hoeben	Schmitt
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Sullivan
Collins	Kennedy	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tuberville
Cotton	Lummis	Vance
Cramer	McConnell	Wicker
Crapo	Moran	Young
Cruz	Mullin	
Daines	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—4

Lee	Scott (SC)
Marshall	Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered

made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Senate, I am proud to say, has now taken an extremely important step in our support of Israel. We have approved, with bipartisan support, Jack Lew to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Israel. With Israel defending itself against Hamas, this ambassadorship is as important and timely as any nomination that the Senate has confirmed in a long time.

Mr. Lew is the right man for the job of Ambassador to Israel. He is a capable public servant, a fierce ally of Israel's, and commands a broad base of trust and respect, and he is a decent and humane man.

When my colleagues and I met with the Israeli Government, we promised to send them an ambassador as soon as possible. Today, the Senate has kept that promise. Having an ambassador in Israel means stronger diplomatic ties between the United States and Israel at a time when these bonds matter most. It means Israel's messages will be conveyed appropriately to our government, but it also means our government's messages will be sent appropriately to the Israeli Government. So it helps the two-way street of communication—so important right now. Having an ambassador ensures America can work with Israel and communicate with Israel in both directions at the highest level as the fight against Hamas continues.

I thank my colleagues for confirming Mr. Lew on a bipartisan basis. Thank you to Chairman CARDIN and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which championed Mr. Lew's nomination.

Finally, I want to applaud the remarkable team at the U.S. Embassy in Israel, all of whom have done exceptional work under the most difficult circumstances.

When I went to Israel with my Senate colleagues, I got to see the Embassy's incredible work up close, especially the outstanding Chargé d'Affaires, but we also saw the need, the vacancy, the hole that was there during a time of crisis when we didn't have an ambassador, and we saw how much we needed one. We are easing the short-staffed Embassy's burden by sending a fully appointed ambassador so they can continue carrying out their mission with excellence during this pivotal moment.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and the con-

sideration of H.R. 4366, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4366) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Murray/Collins) amendment No. 1092, in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

AMENDMENT NO. 1200 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1200, and I ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. HAWLEY] proposes an amendment numbered 1200 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds for providing grants, funding, or any financial benefit to Chinese entities)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR PROVIDING GRANTS, FUNDING, OR ANY FINANCIAL BENEFIT TO CHINESE ENTITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to provide grants, funding, or any financial benefit to any entity, including any corporation, that—

(1) is organized under the laws of, is headquartered in, or has its principal place of business in the People's Republic of China, including any Special Administrative Region; or

(2) is subject to the control (as defined in section 800.208 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act)) of an entity described in paragraph (1).

(b) DEFINITION OF CORPORATION.—In this section, the term "corporation"—

(1) means an entity with the business structure of a corporation, a company, a limited liability company, a limited partnership, a business trust, a business association, or another similar entity; and

(2) includes any subsidiary or branch of an entity described in paragraph (1).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes for debate, equally divided.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, the appropriations bills that we are now considering appropriate a total of \$280 billion—\$280 billion—in taxpayer money—money that will be used by Agencies ranging from the Department of Veterans Affairs to Transportation and Agriculture.

This amendment does something very simple. Whatever other disagreements we may have about the spending in these bills, surely we can agree that this money ought to go to Americans and American companies and our allies. So all this amendment does is it

says that none of the money we are appropriating can go to China. It can't go to Chinese companies or companies that are owned and controlled by China. That is it. It is simple: no American taxpayer dollars to the People's Republic of China.

This should be an easy vote. I urge a "yes" vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to make clear that I also worry about the influence of Chinese entities, but this amendment is not the answer. This amendment could have far-reaching, unintended consequences that would affect our Agencies' ability to fulfill their missions and serve people.

If this amendment passed, the VA could face challenges in obtaining products for essential mission needs, like pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and IT.

This amendment could negatively impact the procurement of meat for the school meals programs. For example, Smithfield is owned by a Chinese company. This amendment would actually prohibit the USDA from purchasing hogs from any U.S.-based farmers owned by Smithfield. Is that what we want?

It could also prevent Americans from understanding the security challenges related to Chinese-made drones because this amendment would mean the FAA would no longer be able to purchase drones made by Chinese entities to conduct critical counter-UAS research, testing analysis, or training.

We should have more time to carefully consider the impact of this amendment and the serious, unintended consequences it could have before adding it to this legislation.

I urge a "no" vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fifteen seconds.

Mr. HAWLEY. I would just say, Mr. President, do we want to be buying school lunches from China? Do we want to be buying pharmaceuticals from China and be dependent on them? I think not. Let's bring these resources to the United States of America. Let's fund Americans and American companies.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1200

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: The Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea." The result was announced—yeas 61, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 277 Leg.]

YEAS—61

Baldwin	Fetterman	Mullin
Barrasso	Fischer	Murkowski
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hassan	Romney
Britt	Hawley	Rosen
Brown	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Budd	Hoeven	Rubio
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Casey	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sinema
Collins	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Tester
Cortez Masto	Luján	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tuberville
Cramer	Manchin	Vance
Crapo	Marshall	Wicker
Cruz	McConnell	Young
Daines	Menendez	
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—36

Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Booker	Kelly	Schumer
Butler	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Markey	Smith
Cardin	Merkley	Stabenow
Carper	Murphy	Van Hollen
Coons	Murray	Warner
Duckworth	Ossoff	Warnock
Durbin	Padilla	Warren
Gillibrand	Paul	Welch
Heinrich	Reed	Whitehouse
Hirono	Sanders	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Lee	Scott (SC)	Tillis
-----	------------	--------

The amendment (No. 1200) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

AMENDMENT NO. 1296 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1296 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Texas [Mr. CRUZ], for himself and Ms. LUMMIS, proposes an amendment numbered 1296 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit using funds to pay the salary of an individual who was nominated to the position of Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and whose nomination was subsequently withdrawn)

In the matter under the heading "OPERATIONS AND RESEARCH" under the heading "NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION" in title I of division C, strike the period at the end and insert the following: "Provided, That none of the funds made available under this Act may be used to pay the salary of an individual carrying out the responsibilities of the position of Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in an acting or temporary capacity who was nominated to that position and whose nomination was subsequently withdrawn."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be now 10 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the need to protect the Senate's constitutional authority to

advise and consent on Presidential nominations.

With his appointment of multiple acting officials to perform senior roles that would, otherwise, require confirmation by this body, President Biden is deliberately circumventing the Senate and the nomination process. In some instances, these are vacancies of President Biden's own making. He has routinely nominated individuals with no relevant experience to key safety positions. When threatened with the rejection of these unqualified nominees, President Biden simply withdraws their names from consideration and, instead, installs them in Senate-confirmed positions in an acting capacity. Julie Su's tenure as the head of the Department of Labor is a notable example. The recently reported elevation of Laura Daniel-Davis to Acting Deputy Secretary at the Department of the Interior is another.

But I speak today about yet another case of this gamesmanship at a key safety Agency where a rejected nominee has been given the reins—the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or NHTSA. Earlier this year, President Biden nominated Ann Carlson to be the administrator of NHTSA. She is an environmental law professor who has written for decades about how unelected bureaucrats should make major changes to American society in the name of combating global warming. But NHTSA is a safety Agency whose mission it is to make American roads safer. It is not the EPA, and Ms. Carlson has zero road-safety experience.

It was immediately obvious to many, including myself, that she was not qualified for this position. And in the face of opposition from every Republican on the Commerce Committee and dozens of stakeholders because of her lack of experience, the President withdrew Ms. Carlson's nomination just 2 months after he submitted it.

President Biden could have followed his withdrawal of Ms. Carlson's nomination with the appointment of a qualified individual to lead NHTSA. He did just that with the FAA only last month, and that nominee was confirmed. But, instead, President Biden turned around and appointed Ms. Carlson to the same position in an acting capacity in July.

Promptly thereafter, she led the charge to effectively mandate expensive electric vehicles by proposing standards that stretched the Agency's authority far beyond what the law allows. And, as my committee has uncovered, Ms. Carlson has been involved in helping a for-profit law firm file dozens of nuisance suits across the country to try to bankrupt American energy companies. Then, when it was pointed out how she used her position and law students to help, she tried to cover it up.

The stakes here are significant. Big government mandates for EVs threaten to make our Nation less secure, as we rely on supplies controlled by China;

less productive, as autoworkers fear for their jobs; less competitive, as automakers seek to stay afloat after unprofitable investments—Ford is losing a whopping \$36,000 on every single EV sold—and less prosperous, as families pay more for cars they don't actually want or, even worse, see their tax dollars spent on yet more bailouts.

Congress must have a role in these kinds of far-reaching policies and the officials who implement them. The appointments clause of the Constitution is a critical check on Executive power. The Senate must protect its prerogative to review the President's nominees to powerful, unelected positions in the Federal Government.

Some important protections already exist in law. The "Vacancies Act" sets rules for how a President may temporarily fill posts with acting officials. One of the restrictions it imposes is that a person may not serve as an acting official once the President submits his or her nomination to the Senate for the same position. This rule protects the Senate's constitutional role. It applies to Ms. Carlson's withdrawn nomination, and the limited exceptions to the rule do not allow her to serve as the acting head of NHTSA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. CRUZ. This bill would enforce our advice-and-consent authority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, this is a personal attack on a public servant, and it should be rejected.

To be clear, Ann Carlson is legally authorized to serve as the Acting Administrator of NHTSA under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act. But what this amendment would do is set an alarming precedent in the Senate that, if you have a political or policy disagreement with a particular administration policy, you can take the public servant who is in charge of implementing it and take their salary hostage.

And if the issue is that she hasn't been confirmed by the Senate, let's remember that in the last administration we had two different Acting Administrators working for months without being Senate confirmed, and it is no surprise that the ranking member of the Commerce Committee didn't object to them because he agreed with their policy.

It is fine for you to disagree with fuel efficiency incentives. It is fine for you to never want to move on from the internal combustion engine and to oppose the electric vehicle revolution. That is fine. What is not OK is the U.S. Senate coming in and defunding a position of an Administrator with whom you disagree.

And I want you all to think about this, Republicans. I want you all to think about this, Democrats. There will be times, as Claire McCaskill used to say, that "the door swings both ways in Washington." So let's think

very carefully about whether we want to set a precedent where the U.S. Senate defunds public servants with whom we disagree.

This amendment should be rejected.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1296

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question now occurs on agreeing to amendment No. 1296.

Mr. CRUZ. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "aye."

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 278 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Barrasso	Fischer	Murkowski
Blackburn	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Braun	Hagerty	Risch
Britt	Hawley	Romney
Budd	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Cramer	Manchin	Tuberville
Crapo	Marshall	Vance
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Mullin	

NAYS—49

Baldwin	Heinrich	Sanders
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schumer
Booker	Kaine	Shaheen
Brown	Kelly	Sinema
Butler	King	Smith
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cardin	Lujan	Tester
Carper	Markey	Van Hollen
Casey	Menendez	Warner
Cooms	Merkley	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Welch
Durbin	Padilla	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	
Hassan	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—4

Lee	Scott (SC)
Ossoff	Tillis

The amendment (No. 1296) was rejected.

(Mr. LUJÁN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Maine.

AMENDMENT NO. 1349 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I call up Senator BLACKBURN's amendment No. 1349, and I ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS], for Mrs. BLACKBURN, proposes an amendment numbered 1349 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To withhold Federal funding from the Department of Transportation for awarding any Federal assistance to entities from certain foreign countries for projects related to unmanned aircraft systems, and for other purposes)

At the appropriate place in division C, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act for the Federal Aviation Administration related to unmanned aircraft systems may be used to make awards to any entity that, after the date of enactment of this Act, intends to use such funds to partner with or otherwise transact business related to unmanned aircraft systems with the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, or the Republic of Cuba. No such entity may receive awards for any project related to unmanned aircraft systems if the entity is:

(1) included on the Consolidated Screening List maintained by the Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade;

(2) domiciled in the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, or the Republic of Cuba;

(3) subject to influence or control by the government of the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, or the Republic of Cuba; or

(4) owned by the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, or the Republic of Cuba.

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. None of the funds made available by the Act for the Federal Aviation Administration related to unmanned aircraft systems may be used by the Secretary of Transportation to operate an unmanned aircraft system or to enter into, extend, or renew a contract for the procurement of an unmanned aircraft system or a contract with an entity that operates an unmanned aircraft system in the performance of any Department of Transportation contract if the unmanned aircraft system is manufactured by an entity that is included on the Consolidated Screening List maintained by the Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, domiciled in the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, or the Republic of Cuba, subject to influence or control by the government of any such country, or owned by any such country unless—

(1) the operation, procurement, or contracting action is for the purpose of—

(A) detection or counter-UAS system surrogate testing and training (including at Federal Aviation Administration-approved testing sites);

(B) intelligence, electronic warfare, cybersecurity, and information warfare operations, testing (including at Federal Aviation Administration-approved testing sites), analysis, and training; or

(C) research to inform unmanned aircraft system data-driven policy decisions, safety assessments, procedures, rulemaking, and

standards to safely integrate emerging entrants into the national airspace system (including at Federal Aviation Administration-approved testing sites); and

(2) the Secretary of Transportation, on a case-by-case basis, certifies in writing to the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives that such operation, procurement, or contracting action is required in the public interest.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1349

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1349) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

AMENDMENT NO. 1243 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1243, and I ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Carolina [Mr. BUDD] proposes an amendment numbered 1243 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to implement or enforce Executive Order 14019)

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT EXECUTIVE ORDER 14019.**

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this division may be used to implement or enforce Executive Order 14019 (86 Fed. Reg. 13623; relating to promoting access to voting).

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT EXECUTIVE ORDER 14019.**

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this division may be used to implement or enforce Executive Order 14019 (86 Fed. Reg. 13623; relating to promoting access to voting).

At the appropriate place in division C, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT EXECUTIVE ORDER 14019.**

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this division may be used to implement or enforce Executive Order 14019 (86 Fed. Reg. 13623; relating to promoting access to voting).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for up to 3 minutes of debate equally divided prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, on his 47th day as President, Joe Biden signed an Executive order directing the head of every Federal Agency to submit a plan for their Agency to promote voter registration and voter participation.

The problem is that the order also mandates that all Federal Agencies partner with approved third-party or-

ganizations to provide these services on Federal Agency property across the Nation. Determining which third-party organizations will be approved, by whom, and based on what criteria is missing from the order.

In spite of congressional oversight attempts and Freedom of Information Act lawsuits, the Biden administration has refused to release copies of these Agency plans. The prospect of the Biden administration writing their own rules and using taxpayer money to partner with liberal "get out the vote" organizations is wildly inappropriate.

As a matter of principle, I don't believe that the Federal Government should be using official taxpayer resources to advance partisan politics. Further, mandating that every Federal Agency engage in election engineering on the taxpayers' dime raises serious ethical and legal concerns. Simply put, this Executive order is further weaponization of the Federal Government's power to boost one side of the aisle over the another.

My amendment would defund this ethically and legally dubious scheme and restore faith in our elections.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, interesting in our democracy: two different political parties and two different attitudes toward registration and voting.

Many of us on this side of the aisle believe that expanding the number of voters makes the democracy stronger. So does President Biden. His Executive order was a message to the Agencies: Help where you can to help with voter registration and to make sure that voting is accessible to Americans across the board.

Example: They decided that VA health facilities would be registration sites for disabled veterans. Does that sound like some radical idea? It sounds to me like common sense.

That is the kind of thing we should support, and I urge my colleagues to vote against this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1243

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. BUDD. 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 Virginia (Mr. WARNER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr.

TILLIS) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 279 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Barraso	Ernst	Mullin
Blackburn	Fischer	Murkowski
Boozman	Graham	Paul
Braun	Grassley	Ricketts
Britt	Hagerty	Risch
Budd	Hawley	Romney
Capito	Hoeben	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young

NAYS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Butler	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Lujan	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Welch
Fetterman	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	

NOT VOTING—5

Lee	Tillis	Warner
Scott (SC)	Vance	

The amendment (No. 1243) was rejected.

(Mr. MARKEY assumed the Chair.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 6 minutes on my amendment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1177 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1092

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I call up my amendment, No. 1177, and ask that it be reported by number.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Iowa [Ms. ERNST] proposes an amendment numbered 1177 to amendment No. 1092.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require reporting regarding telework by employees of agencies funded under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. 4. REPORTING REGARDING TELEWORK.**

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms "employee", "locality pay area", "locality rate", and "official worksite" have the meanings given those terms in section 531.602 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

(b) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary for each agency funded under division A, division B, or division C of this Act shall submit to Congress a report containing—

(1) the number of employees of the agency or department who, based upon information technology login information, office swipe-ins, and other measurable and observable factors, perform the majority of their working hours in a locality pay area with a lower locality rate than the locality rate for the locality pay area in which the official worksite of the employee is located, but continue to receive the higher locality rate associated with the official worksite of the employee;

(2) the cost savings that would be achieved by adjusting the locality rate for employees described in paragraph (1) to be the locality rate for the locality pay area in which the employees perform the majority of their working hours;

(3) the actions the agency or department has taken to audit and adjust the locality rates for employees with a telework agreement to account for the location from which the employees perform the majority of their working hours;

(4) as of the date of enactment of this Act, the actions the agency or department has taken to ensure oversight and quality control of remote work;

(5) any additional steps the agency or department is considering taking to improve oversight and quality control of remote work;

(6) the typical daily onsite attendance in the office buildings of the agency or department, as a proportion of the total workforce of the agency or department;

(7) any guidance, initiatives, or other incentives in effect to entice the employees of the agency or department to return to working from the office buildings of the agency or department;

(8) a description of the instances in which the agency or department has exercised the authority under paragraph (2) of section 531.605(d) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations to waive the twice-in-a-pay-period standard under paragraph (1) of such section;

(9) the number of exceptions to the exercises of authority described in paragraph (8) that have been revoked during each month beginning on or after July 1, 2021;

(10) as of the date of enactment of this Act, the number of employees for whom an exception described in paragraph (8) remains in effect;

(11) a discussion of the monetary and environmental cost of maintaining underutilized space for the agency or department, in terms of energy use and carbon emissions;

(12) any steps the agency or department is taking or planning to take on or before the date that is 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act to reduce underutilization of building and office space; and

(13) the impacts of telework on the delivery of services and response times, including any increase or decrease in backlogs relative to the backlog as of March 1, 2020.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, thousands of calls to the VA from veterans seeking mental health care went unanswered over the past year, and that was just at the Atlanta VA.

One veteran in the midst of a mental health crisis called 10 times over a 3-month period and could not get the care she needed, much less anyone to answer her calls, so she ended up in an emergency room. Other veterans who made VA appointments say their therapists didn't even show up.

Meanwhile, a manager at the Atlanta VA responsible for overseeing the scheduling of veterans' appointments actually called in to a meeting from a bubble bath and posted this selfie on social media with the caption:

My office for the next hour.

Another VA staffer lamented:

It's almost as if this employee is making a mockery of all the veterans. I can sit here in my tub and relax, and you just have to wait.

And that is exactly what is happening.

While this bill provides nearly \$320 billion for the VA, what good is it to give the Agency all of this money if the VA isn't even answering the phone or showing up for appointments with our veterans?

This isn't just a problem at the VA either. Desperate travelers are waiting hours on the phone or in line, hoping to speak with someone at the State Department about passport delays that are causing vacation cancellations, and seniors calling the Social Security Administration are increasingly having their calls go unanswered altogether as the Agency shifts toward remote work.

Frustrated Americans are sick and tired of being put on hold while many Federal employees are phoning it in, "working" from home.

In his 2022 State of the Union Address, President Biden pledged that "the vast majority of Federal workers will once again work in person." A year and a half later, government employee unions are still fighting off efforts to bring their bureaucrats back.

Only one out of every three bureaucrats is fully back in the office, according to a recent Office of Personnel Management survey. Some said they never report to a physical office.

Seventy-five percent or more of the office space at the headquarters of most Federal Agencies is not even being used. Taxpayers are picking up the cost of maintaining these mostly empty buildings.

If Federal employees can't be found at their desks, exactly where are they? The work locations of over 281,000 employees were redacted by the Biden administration to a Freedom of Information request filed by the nonprofit group Open The Books.

Well, folks, time is up for Biden's game of bureaucrat hide-and-seek. I am offering an amendment making the Biden administration account for the location of every bureaucrat who works for the VA and every other Department funded by this bill. My amendment also requires taxpayers to be told the financial and environmental costs of maintaining empty offices and the impact remote work is having on veterans' care and the response times of other government services.

To all of my Senate colleagues, don't claim that you are taking care of veterans just because there is a spending increase for the VA in this bill. We need to work together to ensure that the VA is actually showing up and caring for our veterans.

My amendment will provide some much needed accountability to monitor if that is happening. Our veterans answered the call of duty. Now it is time for Federal employees to do the same.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I oppose the Ernst telework amendment because, in general, it imposes an overly burdensome reporting requirement for Agencies—without providing additional resources—both because of the very short time allotted—30 days—and the vague language used to outline the reporting requirements. The amendment includes multiple, undefined terms, some of which do not appear in title 5—for example, "majority of work hours". Further, there are no parameters outlining the period of time that should be represented in the data being reported. As such, Agencies would have significant challenges defining and providing what data is actually being sought.

This reporting requirement also does not take into consideration the state of the workforce as some Agencies have a substantial number of staff that do not report to a "building" on a routine basis because of the nature of their mission, such as some law enforcement officers and those who work in disaster relief. Again, per the above comment, many employees legitimately reporting to and performing routine work will not be captured, skewing data, and generating lower counts. Additionally, there are more technical challenges with the amendment language. For example, subsection (b)(8) does not describe an Agency's authority in 5 CFR 531.605(d)(2) correctly.

To summarize, the vague nature of this language and the lack of context and consideration for the varying nature of positions across the workforce would result in reports that do not accurately convey the nature of telework and remote work across the Federal Government.

I received comments from three of the largest Federal employee unions opposing the Ernst amendment. Here is what I heard from the International Federal of Professional and Technical Engineers, IFPTE:

This amendment seems duplicative in some parts and counter to what is required by the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010. It asks agencies to consider and report actions that, if taken, would require agencies to violate current legal standards and regulations. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 also requires agencies to design telework programs that "do not diminish employee performance or agency operations." By definition, agencies (and unions, when bargained) must create programs that work for employees and agencies. Not working on-site does not mean not working.

(b)(1) is highly burdensome for agencies—For employees with management-approved telework agreements, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines the official worksite/official duty station (ODS) as the regular work location to which they are assigned as long as the employee is reporting "on a regular and recurring basis" to that worksite. Regular and recurring is defined as at least twice/pay period. So (b)(1) is highly burdensome for agencies and asks agencies to guess and estimate whether legal teleworking ("majority of their working hours") in the amendment is greater than two days per pay period).

Agencies are not legally able to carry out the cost savings in (b)(2) and nothing is

going to be achieved by the audit in (b)(3). For example, if an agency took action to change the ODS for an employee who teleworks six days per pay period, they would violate OPM regulations. If the agency reduced an employee's salary based on this, the agency would be liable for back pay and attorney's fees for each employee who reported at least twice per pay period per OPM regulations but had their ODS changed. Also, emergency conditions provide exceptions to all of this (the agency head can take any actions necessary for emergencies) so it is not relevant to look at periods under the COVID-19 health and national emergencies.

The premise of (b)(7) also doesn't make much sense. Employees are not in charge; management is, so employees do not need to be "enticed" to the office, they are directed to do so in concert with existing policies.

Reporting in (b)(7)–(10) may have a chilling effect on telework for employees with disabilities. Many federal employees with disabilities are legally entitled to telework as a reasonable accommodation. In many agencies, federal employees who have maximum telework have difficult personal situations and disabilities and it is often the only way they can remain in federal service.

Evaluation of environmental concerns related to underutilized space in (b)(11) needs to be balanced. Any evaluation of telework and space utilization needs to consider the increased environmental burden that commuting causes, especially in vehicles with a single occupant. Further, many federal office spaces and worksites have better space utilization due to telework. For example, IFPTE members working for Navy shipyards have more productive office workstations when on-site and when working from home, whereas prior to the current telework levels, these employees were in uncomfortably tight cubicles and constrained office spaces.

Here is what I heard from the National Treasury Employees Union, NTEU:

The Ernst amendment seeks to obstruct well developed federal telework programs by using a self-crafted standard contrary to law to determine an employee's post of duty. Telework and remote work initiatives have saved millions in taxpayer dollars and improved productivity in part by better recruitment and retention. Some employees now work remotely full time following a management determination that the nature of the work allows for this. These employees receive locality pay based on the location of their home office. As federal offices tend to be in high-cost central urban centers, these moves generally result in a savings to agencies.

Teleworking employees are different than remote workers and must, by law, report to their office at least two days per pay period. Travel to and from the office is considered the employee's normal commute with no travel expense obligations by the agency since their official post of duty is their office, not their home, and they do in fact report to that office. Even if they do live outside of the locality pay area it is not fraud, it is just a long commute. The reporting in the amendment also fails to contemplate that many employees work away from the office because of work-related travel that is required by their job (e.g., bank examiners, food and drug inspectors, fraud monitors, etc.).

And finally, this is what I heard from the American Federation of Government Employees, AFGE:

Please oppose the amendment offered by Sen. Joni Ernst. This amendment would require extensive new reporting from federal

agencies, on an unrealistic 30-day timetable, concerning the telework and remote work activities of hundreds of thousands of federal employees. As the nation's largest employer, the federal government is a vast and complex enterprise with millions of employees performing work at offices, remote work sites, telework centers, and in some cases from their homes. Their pay (including locality pay) is governed by longstanding rules promulgated by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Senator ERNST has publicly and without evidence accused federal agencies and employees of "fraud" in how locality pay is provided for teleworking employees.

AFGE supports telework and remote work programs where appropriate, though the majority of our members—who include healthcare workers, law enforcement officers, border patrol agents, and transportation security officers—never teleworked even during the height of the pandemic. We support programs to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of telework and remote work arrangements, and we believe such efforts will show that these workplace flexibilities are critical for maintaining a high-performing federal workforce that can compete with the private sector for the best talent.

The Ernst amendment duplicates almost verbatim a series of recent requests from Senator ERNST to dozens of agency inspectors general (OIG) to report on the same questions. These OIG requests were made less than three weeks ago. Moreover, the requests were premised in part on a single report of an alleged poor performer at the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office that occurred in 2014, nearly a decade ago. Furthermore, the amendment conflates and confuses remote work, where an employee is assigned full-time to a remote duty station that may be far from agency offices, with telework, where under existing OPM rules employees must report to an office twice per pay period. In either case, existing rules govern locality pay and there is no evidence of widespread misapplication of these rules.

It is for all of these reasons that I oppose the Ernst amendment.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on my amendment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there further debate?

If not, the question occurs on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1177) was agreed to.

I yield floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my chief of staff, Jon Donenberg, be allowed to join me on the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO JON DONENBERG

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary public servant who is leaving my office for a new role.

Jon Donenberg has been one of my most trusted senior advisers since 2011, when I first ran for the U.S. Senate. After his stint advising me on policy during the 2012 campaign, I asked Jon to serve as my first legislative director in my Senate office. Jon was my LD for 6 years, then senior adviser and policy director for Warren for President, and,

for the last 4 years, he has served as my chief of staff.

After nearly a dozen years of working together, I have come to know Jon pretty well. So I can say with some authority that he is one of the best policy nerds and sharpest minds on economic policy in the business.

When I arrived in the Senate, I knew more than pretty much anybody else in the world about a very specific slice of commercial law. I also spent a lot of time thinking about how middle-class families were getting crushed by an economy that didn't work for them and thinking through how to fix it. And this was a good a start. But being a Senator means doing work on a much, much broader range of issues.

Jon was the person I turned to for counsel as I developed that broader agenda, drawing on his deep expertise with policy, his facility for digging into data, and his formidable technical training. Also, importantly, Jon has good values—the longstanding belief that government is here to serve not the richest and most powerful, not those who can hire armies of lobbyists and lawyers, but here to serve the people who are trying to build a future for themselves and their families.

Jon and I were a good match, and, when I say that, I am not saying that we always saw our next moves the same way. But he has a lightning-quick mind, a staggering command of both domestic and foreign policy topics, and instincts honed by years of working in Congress, and those qualities allowed him to see around corners I didn't even know existed. He is good with numbers, and he has never been afraid to change his mind based on what the data has shown him.

Our relationship has always been energetic. Jon hasn't been afraid to tangle with me when he thought I was getting something wrong. He would tell me I was making a mistake, and I would tell him he didn't know what he was talking about. We would size each other up, and I would start lobbing fastballs at him, just like I was back in the classroom, trying to figure out if a student had done reading and was on solid ground in their arguments.

Jon, of course, has always, always done the reading. He would grab those fastballs out of the air and zing them back at me with a spin, often highlighting an aspect to the issue I had failed to consider.

Sometimes, I would try a new angle and play the devil's advocate to see if he could defend his position, back and forth, until I had—often in the space of 10 or 15 minutes—pressure-tested an argument more thoroughly than seemed possible. Now, I am not saying Jon won all of those arguments, but I would give him a 50–50 lifetime record, which is pretty respectable in my book. And I would also say this: 100 percent of the time, my thinking about an issue got deeper and sharper as a result of running my views through the gauntlet of Jon's scrutiny.

Given all of these attributes, it should come as no surprise that Jon had a very specialized skill that is rarely employed among adults outside elected office: Jon was a wiz at debate prep. He has worked with me and several other Senators during our races, helping candidates prepare for preelection debates. He put all of us through our paces, forcing us to confront the frustration—and the opportunities—of butting heads with our opponents, and doing it in 1-minute chunks. For all of us who managed to survive those debates far better than we expected, we owe Jon our thanks.

When he came to work for me, Jon brought with him years of experience in Congress. Before joining my office, Jon served as chief counsel to Senator RICHARD BLUMENTHAL. Before then, he served as a health law advisor to Representative Henry Waxman on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

I asked Henry Waxman for a few words about Jon, and he had this to say:

Jon started his congressional career as a precocious young staffer in my office working on the Affordable Care Act. He's leaving Senator WARREN's staff as a veteran chief of staff with many distinguished legislative accomplishments. What's been constant is the gratitude and respect he has earned from everyone who has been lucky enough to work with him along the way.

Jon's first experience working in Congress has a special resonance for me: Jon was a legal fellow for Senator Ted Kennedy, the senior Senator from Massachusetts who served for 47 years in the seat I now hold. I think Senator Kennedy would be pleased to know that the young man he first brought in for work in the Federal legislature ended up contributing so much to this work.

There is one more aspect of Jon's leadership that I want to make sure to highlight. He is a dedicated mentor who has trained scores of policy staffers in how to make this country work better for families who don't always have someone in government looking out for them. Year after year, I have observed as Jon invests in the staff on my team and throughout government—supporting them, teaching them, and challenging them, and always, always, always making them better at what they do.

Congress is a hard place to work in, in a lot of ways. Jon often tells me that trying to make change by working in the Senate can feel a lot like running face-first into a brick wall, over and over and over again. You have to keep standing up and sprinting back at the wall because, even though history suggests you are going to smack right into it, just like last time, the only way you will ever smash through the bricks is by taking one more run at it.

Jon is the kind of colleague who makes you want to take one more run at knocking down the wall that has never been knocked down before—the one who will help you dust yourself off and then sprint along beside him.

I have watched as these staffers who Jon has trained have transformed from eager, gifted beginners into seasoned strategists. Jon and I have stood proudly, side by side, as we have seen them leave our office and take their talents to go make change somewhere else. Jon's commitment to mentorship means that today we have more dedicated public servants doing topnotch work all around the country and doing it better because of their time learning from him.

Now Jon is the one who is taking his talents to another public service post. He is headed to the White House to serve as Deputy Director of the National Economic Council. I know Jon will bring with him to this position an abiding commitment to helping working families, as well as one of the best policy brains in the business.

One last note: Jon is a good man. He is honest. He is principled. He is generous. He is funny. He cares about people. He loves his family deeply, and he is always there for his friends. He tries to live his life every day according to deeply held moral values. I admire him.

So, Jon, I am grateful down to my toes for the years that we have worked together. I will miss having you by my side, but I know that the President, the Nation, and the world will be better off because of the challenges you will help tackle in this new role. Thank you for your work, both past and present and future. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, first, I would like to ask unanimous consent that my senior colleague and I from Maine may engage in a colloquy.

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

#### MAINE SHOOTING

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I have often asked, particularly around here, why Maine is so special, why I am so passionate about it, why Maine people are always so connected to our State, no matter where they may roam. And I always have the same answer: that Maine is a big small town, with very long streets. We know each other. We care about each other.

There is a fabric of our community that is a beloved community, and we go through storms, and we go through all of the vicissitudes of life together, supporting one another and caring about one another.

A week ago, there was a tear in the fabric of our community. A lone gunman visited two places, a bowling alley and a bar and grill, and killed 18 people—18 innocent, beautiful people—and injured another 13.

We are going to have a lot of time around here to talk about policy and what to do about this problem and what our policies can and should be. But, tonight, my colleague and I simply want to remember the people who lost their lives last Wednesday night in Lewiston, ME.

Lewiston is a microcosm of that Maine community. It is a community where people are close, where they know one another, where they grew up together. It is a diverse community. It was largely formed over 100 years ago by immigrants coming to this country by Canada. It is one of the most vital and vibrant communities in our State.

I now want to ask my colleague for her thoughts. And she and I are going to remember those that we lost.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, let me first thank Senator KING for inviting me to join him in this colloquy this evening. Tonight, we honor and remember our fellow Mainers who lost their lives in a senseless tragedy, a senseless act of violence, as well as those who were wounded in this heinous attack. We also remember the family members and the loved ones who grieve for them.

We want to recognize the people of this proud community of Lewiston who have rallied together to support each other during these dark and difficult days: first responders; law enforcement; healthcare providers, especially at Central Maine Medical Center; businesses and community members who provided food for law enforcement; State and local officials; Federal agents. So many people deserve our thanks.

Those efforts and more will be acknowledged by the city of Lewiston tomorrow as it hosts an Act of Kindness and Gratitude Day. The city intends for this to be an annual occasion for the community to come together and celebrate the spirit of kindness and unity which characterizes our wonderful State.

As the phrase "Lewiston strong" echoes across our State and our country, the grit, resolve, and compassion of the people of Lewiston have rallied and inspired the Nation.

No words can diminish the pain, shock, and understandable anger felt by the families who lost loved ones. Nevertheless, it is my hope that they will find solace and strength in knowing that they are in the hearts of so many. As my colleague from Maine has just said, Maine, in many ways, is a small town, a place of caring communities where people know their neighbors.

One of my staffers in my Lewiston office knew 9 of the 18 people who lost their lives that horrible day.

Members of the close-knit deaf community had gathered at a local restaurant to play cornhole that night. Four members of that community lost their lives in the attack. One of the family members taught me the American sign language symbol for "I love you." It reminds me of this proverb:

Death leaves a heartache no one can heal; love leaves a memory that no one can steal.

In their memory, let us support one another through this difficult grieving period and hope for brighter days.

Senator KING and I will now read the names of those who lost their lives: Tricia Asselin. Tricia, age 53, was a part-time employee at Just-In-Time Recreation and was fatally shot while calling 9-1-1. She was a mother who worked three jobs, an accomplished athlete, and a terrific volunteer.

Peyton Brewer-Ross. Peyton, 40, was a new father and a pipefitter at Bath Iron Works. He enjoyed playing cornhole and often brought beanbags to family gatherings, according to his brother. He was described as the life of the party.

William Frank Brackett. William was 48. He was part of the gathering of deaf people who were playing cornhole. He was known for his ability to help place those who were deaf in the workplace. He had just celebrated his third wedding anniversary with his wife in August and leaves behind a 2½-year-old daughter.

Thomas Ryan Conrad. Thomas, 34, was manager of Just-In-Time Recreation and was an Army veteran who served tours in Iraq. He had just returned to the State of Maine to be closer to his daughter. And he was one of the brave individuals who attempted to stop the shooter.

Michael Deslauriers. Michael was fatally shot while trying to rush the gunman at Just-In-Time Recreation. His close friend Jason Walker was also killed in the bowling alley. The two men made sure that their wives and children were under cover before charging at the killer.

Maxx Hathaway. Maxx was 35 and a stay-at-home father. He and his wife were expecting their third child in a little more than a month. He was described as a "goofy, down to earth person" who always had an "uplifting attitude no matter what was going on." He was working on completing his degree in business administration at the University of Southern Maine.

Bryan MacFarlane. Bryan, 41, had recently moved back to Maine to be closer to his mother. He was playing in the cornhole tournament for the deaf community at the restaurant and bar. He loved the outdoors and was one of the first deaf people in Vermont to earn his commercial driver's license. He was often accompanied on the road by his beloved dog, M&M.

Keith Macneir. Keith Macneir was 64 and lived in Florida. He was visiting Maine to celebrate his 64th birthday with his son. He most recently worked as chief of maintenance at the Virgin Islands National Park.

Ronald Morin. Ronald, 55, was a dedicated husband and father, too, and was described by his family and friends as having an "infectious personality." He was a sales merchandiser for Coca-Cola and was an avid cornhole player.

Now Senator KING will resume the reading of the rest of those who lost their lives.

Mr. KING. Senator COLLINS mentioned that one of the most poignant parts of this tragedy was there were

four members of the Maine deaf community who happened to be at this restaurant playing cornhole—recreation, having fun.

One of them was Joshua Seal. He was 36 years old, a member of the deaf community who regularly went to the bar and grill to play cornhole. During the pandemic, this gentleman served as the American Sign Language interpreter for the head of our CDC who had press conferences practically every day. He became one of the best-known people in Maine. He was a director of interpreting services. He coordinated summer camps for the deaf and hard of hearing, and he was the father to four children.

Arthur Strout, 42, was playing pool—imagine, playing pool at a bar and grill with his father. The father, blessedly, left before the shooting occurred. Arthur was the husband and father of five children, described as a "Christmas person" who started decorating for Christmas around Halloween.

Steve Vozzella, 45, was a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service and also an active member of the deaf community—a letter carrier, mailman. He was playing in the cornhole tournament for the deaf at the restaurant when the shooting happened. He was the father of two and was preparing to celebrate his 1-year anniversary with his wife next month.

Lucille Violette, 73, was a valued member of the business office at the Lewiston public schools. She was well-known in the community. She worked in the community for over 52 years. She was fatally shot alongside of her husband, Bob Violette, at the bowling alley.

Bob Violette was 76. He was a dedicated volunteer coach in a youth bowling league. He was shot and died along with his wife while out for a night of bowling.

Joseph Lawrence Walker, 57, was the manager of the bar and grill. His father is a city counselor in Auburn. He recounted that his son's final moments were spent trying to save lives during the shooting.

Jason Adam Walker. Jason Walker, 51, was a father and husband who was shot at the bowling alley. His close friend Michael Deslauriers was also killed when the two of them charged the gunman to try to make others safe. As my colleague mentioned, he made sure their wives and children were safe before they took their last risk.

William Young—Bill Young—44. Auto mechanic, father to a 14-year-old son. He was described as the rock of the family. And perhaps most poignantly, that 14-year-old son, Aaron, was also killed. He was a high school honor student, proud of his grades, avid bowler. And he lost his life that night in this tragedy.

Senator COLLINS and I, on Sunday night, were at a vigil at the magnificent Catholic basilica in Lewiston. There were well over a thousand people in that church. When we went outside

afterwards, there were well over a thousand on a cold night in Maine, watching and listening to the service.

One of the most poignant moments in the service for me was when a member of the deaf community gave his address in sign language, and it was the reverse of what we usually see where a person is speaking and there is an interpreter. In this case, the person was giving the signs, and the interpreter was giving us the words that we could hear. One of the signs was this. It means love. There is another sign in American Sign Language for love. It is this.

This community will never recover from this tragedy, but it will heal. But it will only heal as long as we remember and understand that this was a tragedy. And we have to resolve ourselves to move forward to find a way to prevent tragedies like this and to always remember those people that gave their lives on a night of fun, on a night of recreation, on a night when there was no expectation of such an event occurring. We just have to remember all of these wonderful people, these beloved people that we lost that night.

We love Lewiston. We love the State of Maine. And we will always remember, not only the events of that night, but these beloved people of Maine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The majority leader.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 334.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of the following named officer for appointment as Chief of Naval Operations and appointment to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 8033: to be Admiral, Lisa M. Franchetti.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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 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. 334, Adm. Lisa M. Franchetti for appointment as Chief of Naval Operations and appointment to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title