

world will be of very limited help if we don't have the personnel necessary to deploy these resources. So expanding and improving our recruitment efforts has to be a priority.

We also have to continue to work to improve the quality of life of our military members and their families, which is why I am pleased to report that this year's bill includes a 5.2-percent pay increase for our troops, as well as measures to improve barracks quality and expand access to mental health care, among other things.

I am also pleased that this year's NDAA takes measures to keep our military's focus warfighting and not the dissemination of woke ideologies by Pentagon bureaucrats.

Above all, I am proud to report that this year's bill authorizes full funding for the next steps of the B-21 mission, the Air Force's new, long-range, strategic bomber, which will revolutionize our long-range strike capabilities and be hosted at South Dakota's own Ellsworth Air Force Base. The Air Force calls the B-21 Raider the future backbone of its bomber force.

One of my top priorities here in Congress over the past several years has been ensuring that the Air Force—and Ellsworth in particular—has everything it needs for this critical advancement in our Nation's readiness. This year's NDAA will once again fund not only the B-21 bomber, which we excitedly saw take flight 1 month ago, but the support facilities at Ellsworth that will be needed to maintain this aircraft once it enters service.

While, as I said, we are passing this bill a little late, I am pleased that we are finally passing it and in what I expect will be a strongly bipartisan fashion.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, now we should turn to addressing another important aspect of our national security in a bipartisan fashion, and that is securing our border. The kind of unchecked illegal immigration we are currently experiencing at our southern border represents a serious national security threat—one that so far Democrats are refusing to meaningfully address. I hope that their position will shift in the coming days and that we will be able to work together to pass a supplemental bill which not only provides support for our allies but which also contains real measures to secure our border. The NDAA should not be the only national security legislation that we pass this December.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DASH ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I got back late last night from Oregon—another round of community meetings. You can't do your job well sitting behind your desk back here; you have to get out into the community. I have had more than 1,000—really more than 1,060—open-to-all townhalls, in every corner of Oregon, and I am going to talk for a few minutes about the issue I hear about constantly, and that is the shortage of affordable housing for working families.

I am going to talk about what it means for my constituents, but I will tell you, I hear about it all across the country and from Senators on both sides of the aisle. I have just introduced legislation with the distinguished Senator from Alaska, Senator SULLIVAN, about housing that is affordable for working families. Ask the New Hampshire Senators about employers and workers facing housing challenges there. Ask those from Kansas what is going on in Kansas City, where they can't house teachers. Oregonians from Brookings to Baker City are facing rising rents and housing costs and are making tough financial choices. They ought to have enough money because they are working hard to pay for affordable shelter.

Here is a statistic that will give you a sense of what the challenge is all about. In my State, 26 school districts have been forced to buy, rent, or build housing for their teachers. So get this, Mr. President—and we are westerners, and we understand this. We know we have a lot of challenges competing in tough markets. We have a leg up geographically with Asia, for example, on the west coast, but we are losing it if we don't have affordable housing for working families, for firefighters and teachers.

Folks, the minority community has said: We are trying to start small businesses on a credit card, and we can't afford shelter.

In Oregon, these school districts—more than 20 of them—are now basically in the housing business. How in the world—I see my friend from Alaska is here. We have been talking about these issues. It is wonderful to work with him on it. How in the world did our schools suddenly get in the housing business? I guess in some places they are going to in effect rent houses they bought to teachers, and the teachers will practically be back, I say to my friend from Alaska, in their college days. They will be waiting to use the washing machine in line with other teachers.

So I just don't think it is right that all our school districts have to get into the housing business—by the way, there was a front-page story in the Wall Street Journal here not long ago about the same sort of thing in Kansas City.

I have introduced comprehensive legislation as chairman of the Finance Committee to tackle this issue. It is

called the DASH Act—the Decent, Affordable, Safe Housing for All Act. Today, we are just going to focus on one piece, which is affordable housing for working families.

Senator SULLIVAN and I have teamed up here in the Senate. I am very pleased that our bill is bipartisan and bicameral.

I am very pleased that our bill is bipartisan and bicameral. Representatives JIMMY PANETTA and MIKE CAREY are offering the same kind of tax credit that Senator SULLIVAN and I are offering for working families, and our proposal is built on the proven and successful—what is called LIHTC—low-income housing tax credit.

My view is that the combination of LIHTC, plus the help that Senator SULLIVAN and I and our counterparts in the House want to advance—those two efforts—could spur a juggernaut of new and desperately needed housing construction. Our bill could be a big shot in the arm to the countless middle-income Americans hoping to get their shot at the American dream of owning a home.

I want, as we get into this issue of working families, to make sure that everybody understands that we are also recommitting our support to the existing programs that help the homeless and help folks of modest incomes, like LIHTC. These are people who, every week, walk an economic tightrope. They are balancing the food bill against the fuel bill and the fuel bill against housing costs. We desperately need more LIHTC funding, and as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I am going to continue to push that.

But I don't think the two needs here for working families and low-income folks are mutually exclusive. We can do both. We ought to do both. Our country is not at its best when we pit working families against people of modest means. We ought to be extending opportunity for all Americans.

I will just say—and I am going to yield to my friend from Alaska—that small businesses across my State—and I heard it yesterday again at our business summit in Portland—can't grow because employees can't afford housing. Even when they have good-paying jobs, families are forced to search for months for reasonably priced properties, only to be up against several other families in similar circumstances and contending for the same property.

So we are going to continue to try to build on the progress of LIHTC. My hope is—and I had a good talk just this morning with the chairman in the other body, Chairman JASON SMITH of the Ways and Means Committee, my counterpart. We had a good conversation about the effort to get help for kids with what is called the child tax credit, and an equal amount of help for the research and development tax issue for innovation so we can outcompete China. We made good progress just in the last week, Chairman SMITH and I,

in looking at the numbers and the various ways in which we can ensure that an equal amount of assistance—an equal amount of assistance—goes for the child tax credit and the research and development tax credit.

One of the reasons I was so pleased to be able to come to the floor this morning and talk with my colleague from Alaska is I think we also ought to be talking about, on top of—and I use those words—an agreement that is proportional in assistance for the child tax credit and for the research and development tax credit. I think, on top of that, we ought to give a boost to housing, particularly the low-income housing tax credit, which has gotten significant support from my colleague from Washington, Senator CANTWELL, and a number of Republicans as well, and we should include such a housing effort—on top of a child tax credit and a research and development-innovation package, help on housing—and make them all bipartisan.

I see my friend from Alaska here. I thank him for his cooperation.

I will just say, in closing, no community is immune from the skyrocketing cost of housing. Democrats aren't usually supposed to use this word, but I will tell you I am a supply-sider on housing. We need to increase supply, and on that, Senator SULLIVAN and I are working together.

I yield the floor to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to begin by offering my sincere thanks to the chairman of the Finance Committee, my friend Senator WYDEN of Oregon. I am honored to be on the floor with him today to talk about these housing issues and this really important bill, the Workforce Housing Tax Credit Act, which, as he already mentioned, is bipartisan and bicameral.

As Senator WYDEN already mentioned, our country is facing a lot of challenges right now: inflation, fentanyl coming through our borders, national security threats all over the place overseas. But it is very obvious, and anyone reading the paper knows, that we are also experiencing in rural and urban America a severe housing crisis. Everywhere I travel in the great State of Alaska, I hear from Alaskans reeling from the scarcity of housing, and it is everywhere—Anchorage, Fairbanks, Sitka, Ketchikan, Kodiak—every single small rural village in my State. It is everywhere.

I know it is a big challenge in Oregon, but it is a big challenge all over the country, and it is a challenge that impacts low- and middle-income families. It stands as a stark obstacle to getting and keeping jobs, to having a family, to building communities. This is really foundational stuff in terms of what matters in communities—housing.

So solving this challenge has been one of my top priorities, and I really

want to thank Senator WYDEN and his team for being so patient in working with us—a really good partner here. This is going to take all kinds of solutions. There is no silver bullet here. It is going to take everybody pulling on the same oar—the Feds, State, private sector, Tribes, nonprofits—but this is an important start.

I actually hosted the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Marcia Fudge, in Alaska this past August. We held a roundtable and some meetings on urban housing issues and on rural housing issues. It was very well attended. I want to thank all of the Alaskans who took part. They weren't shy with Secretary Fudge—she got an earful—and there is a whole host of things we are going to follow up on with her: challenges dealing with overregulation from HUD, homelessness definitions, housing formulas for cities. But it was progress our getting her up to Alaska.

So this is progress. This is progress. What Senator WYDEN and I have introduced is an exciting and creative bill that will broaden a tried-and-true Federal tax incentive program—the low-income housing tax credit.

This all started during the 1980s, during the Reagan administration. It is market-based. It is private sector-focused. It is a proven, successful formula that will help catalyze the private sector to build more housing in urban and rural areas for working families. That is why we actually named it the Workforce Housing Tax Credit Act. Teachers, law enforcement, first responders, nurses, healthcare officials, electricians—the backbone of so many communities—are, right now, priced out of the market to buy a home. Expanding the low-income housing credit will help address the core issues of not just homelessness and overcrowding in many places in Alaska, particularly in rural Alaska, but it will empower hard-working Alaskans to stay in our communities and build a more robust workforce.

Now, sometimes, when you bring legislation down on the Senate floor, you are not sure who is going to support it. Well, I am very proud to say that, back home in Alaska, this bill has enormous support—liberals; conservatives; mayors; our Governor; the mayor of Anchorage, our biggest city; the chair of the Anchorage Assembly. I know these guys really well. They don't really get along on much, but they support this bill. We have Tribal groups. We have private sector groups. We have home builder groups. It is a super big list.

I think that is the signal for Senator WYDEN and me that we are on to something here. We are on to something here. If there aren't homes in communities for hard-working families, then entire communities are shut off for growth. Housing is a catalyst for community and economic development and good jobs and pride in where you live.

This bill offers one solution that will actually lead to the construction of

these kinds of housing developments. How do I know that? How can I say that? Because, as the chairman of the Finance Committee already said, we know this works. The low-income tax credit already works. We know that, and we are building on that program in the best way to ensure that the private sector will actually use this program to break open other bottlenecks for economic development.

Importantly, this bill provides flexibilities to States and developers to decide what is best for their communities. It is not a one-size-fits-all Washington mandate. We don't like those in Alaska. As I mentioned, it has broad support—bipartisan, bicameral.

Once again, to my friend from Oregon, I really want to thank Senator WYDEN. He was very patient with me and my team as we had a number of edits. We were trying to make sure that this would work for America and Alaska. Sometimes, my State has some really unique challenges, and he accommodated so much and was very patient with us. You can tell, again, from the reaction of this broad-based group of stakeholders back home in my State, that this has a lot of support.

So I thank Senator WYDEN again. I look forward to working with him and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in getting this over the goal line and addressing one of the big challenges in America that, I think, impacts every State in the country. This is one of the many tools we will use to try to address it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. I will yield very quickly to Senator PETERS after I wrap this up.

Mr. President, first, I want to thank Senator SULLIVAN again for giving us a chance to bring housing, in a bipartisan way, to the Senate floor and just to tell colleagues there is an opportunity to do something really big here in the U.S. Senate.

I just got off the phone again with the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee in the other body, my counterpart. We are making good progress in the effort to make sure that there is a child tax credit and a significant boost to research and innovation in this country. They have to be proportional. We have made that clear. That is the essence of a good and fair agreement.

Now, Senator SULLIVAN and I and our colleagues who are advocating for LIHTC are getting an opportunity to also discuss building upon that and taking some steps to ensure that there is housing for working families and for low-income folks.

I thank my colleague from Michigan for the chance to close this discussion up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 4 minutes prior to the vote.

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

NOMINATION OF HARRY COKER, JR.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise in support of Harry Coker's nomination to be the National Cyber Director. The National Cyber Director is responsible for driving cyber security policy and strategy all across the Federal Government.

The Office of the National Cyber Director was established by Congress in 2021 to foster a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to cyber security. Harry Coker is an accomplished leader and a dedicated public servant who is well qualified to lead this important office.

Mr. Coker has over four decades of national security and cyber security experience. He served as a naval officer and in senior leadership roles at the National Security Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency, where he worked to combat cyber and national security threats. His nomination received bipartisan support from the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and he has been endorsed by a wide range of bipartisan cyber and national security experts.

During the 2 years since the Office of the National Cyber Director was created, the office has done impressive work, including developing an ambitious national cyber security strategy and national cyber workforce and education strategy. The Office of the National Cyber Director has been without a confirmed leader for almost 10 months. A dedicated, Senate-confirmed leader is critical to building upon these efforts and continuing to grow and mature the Office of the National Cyber Director.

I urge my colleagues to join me in confirming Mr. Coker to this very important role.

I yield the floor.

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 bill 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. 410, Harry Coker, Jr., of Kansas, to be National Cyber Director.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Ben Ray Lujan, Tammy Duckworth, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Angus S. King, Jr., Michael F. Bennet, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen, Mazie Hirono, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark Kelly.

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 Harry Coker, Jr., of Kansas, to be

National Cyber Director, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: The Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 59, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 337 Ex.]

YEAS—59

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

NAYS—40

Barrasso	Graham	Ricketts
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Britt	Hoeven	Schmitt
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Tuberville
Cruz	Lummis	Vance
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Young

(Mr. HICKENLOOPER assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJAN). On this vote, the yeas are 59, the nays are 40.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, this is supposed to be the greatest deliberative body on earth. This body is supposed to be a body that works for the American people and exemplifies what the greatest Nation in the world should exemplify and lead in that vein.

I rise today to highlight that we are not living up to expectations. I want to highlight the very real consequences of this body's failure to deliver a Defense appropriations bill that would provide urgently needed resources to our men and women in uniform and keep this country safe.

As most folks know, I am a farmer. We are getting winter underway, and I

am planning for what I am going to plant next spring in the fields. I will tell you that when spring planting time comes, I will have to do that job. And I will work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to get that job done. Because if I don't, I lose the farm—literally. If I don't tend to business, I go broke.

I want you to take a look at this body. We should have had a Defense bill, Defense appropriations bill, done the end of September, 3 months ago. And instead, we did a continuing resolution, then we did another continuing resolution, then we did another continuing resolution—keep kicking the can down the road. And the result of that is uncertainty, and the result of uncertainty is putting this country at risk.

By the way, what I do on the farm is what people do every day in their businesses. And folks who go to work, they don't throw in the towel at any moment in time because they can't. They have to stick around. They have to get the job done. We need to follow our constituents' lead.

I serve as chairman of the Senate committee that works on that military appropriations. I have been working with Republicans and Democrats for months to make sure that we have an appropriations bill that invests in the United States of America; that makes sure we stay ahead of our pacing threat, China; that we defend our country from foreign adversaries; and we take care of our servicemembers and their families.

That Defense Appropriations Committee came together, and we produced a strong, bipartisan appropriations bill in the Senate that meets the needs of our military. That bill passed through committee months ago. In fact, it passed back in July by a vote of 27 to 1. Of course, it was a bipartisan vote.

What that bill did was it included a 5.2-percent pay raise for our troops; it significantly ramped up production of made-in-America defense systems; it modernized our nuclear weapons programs; it accelerated investments in modernization to make sure that we, the United States of America, stays ahead of the countries that want to harm us and threaten our way of life.

Let me be frank. This bill should have been passed by the House and the Senate back in September. If that had been done, we would not be talking here in the middle of December about taking up a bill in February to keep this country safe.

Instead, we lurch from one potential shutdown to another potential shutdown.

Right now, the military is running under last year's budget, a continuing resolution that expires on February 2. Now I am hearing a number of folks talking about the fact that we do not need an appropriations bill for this year; that we will just run off the old bill. Quite frankly, it is stupid, and it is dangerous. Let me give you the consequences of continued inaction because they are serious.