

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. BENNET. I further ask that the bills be considered read a third time and passed and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, all en bloc.

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

#### REUBEN E. LAWSON FEDERAL BUILDING

The bill (S. 3412) to redesignate the Richard H. Poff Federal Building located at 210 Franklin Road Southwest in Roanoke, Virginia, as the "Reuben E. Lawson Federal Building", and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read a third time, and passed as follows:

S. 3412

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

##### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Reuben E. Lawson Federal Building Act of 2023".

##### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) Reuben E. Lawson dedicated his life and career to promoting the ideals of equality and inclusion as a lawyer for the Roanoke chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (commonly known as the "NAACP") who actively worked to end segregation in Southwest Virginia;

(2) arguing a number of significant cases in the Western District of Virginia, Reuben E. Lawson fought to ensure the enforcement of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), so that schools in the Roanoke region would be fully integrated; and

(3) Southwest Virginians are indebted to Reuben E. Lawson for his important work in ending segregation, and it is fitting that he be remembered in the current home of the sec in which he valiantly fought.

##### SEC. 3. REUBEN E. LAWSON FEDERAL BUILDING.

(a) REDESIGNATION.—The Richard H. Poff Federal Building located at 210 Franklin Road Southwest in Roanoke, Virginia, shall be known and designated as the "Reuben E. Lawson Federal Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Richard H. Poff Federal Building shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Reuben E. Lawson Federal Building".

#### IRENE M. KEELEY UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

The bill (S. 3570) to designate the United States courthouse located at 500 West Pike Street in Clarksburg, West Virginia, as the "Irene M. Keeley United States Courthouse", and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read a third time, and passed as follows:

S. 3570

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

##### SECTION 1. IRENE M. KEELEY UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The United States courthouse located at 500 West Pike Street in

Clarksburg, West Virginia, shall be known and designated as the "Irene M. Keeley United States Courthouse".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Irene M. Keeley United States Courthouse".

#### VIRGINIA SMITH FEDERAL BUILDING

The bill (S. 3577) to designate the Federal building located at 300 E. 3rd Street in North Platte, Nebraska, as the "Virginia Smith Federal Building", and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read a third time, and passed as follows:

S. 3577

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

##### SECTION 1. VIRGINIA SMITH FEDERAL BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Federal building located at 300 E. 3rd Street in North Platte, Nebraska, shall be known and designated as the "Virginia Smith Federal Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Federal building referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Virginia Smith Federal Building".

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 28; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and that morning business be closed; further, that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Sneed nomination; further, that the cloture motions filed during yesterday's session ripen at 11:30 a.m.; that at 2:15 p.m., if cloture has been invoked on the Sneed nomination, the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; and that if cloture is invoked on the Damian nomination, all time be considered expired at 5:30 p.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

##### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator SANDERS.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, for some reason that I do not fully understand, it always appears to me that the more important the issue, the less it gets discussed here in the Congress and in the media—more important, less discussion.

And today I want to say a few words about one of those issues, and that is the ongoing and unprecedented humanitarian disaster which is taking place in Gaza and which is getting worse every single day.

On October 7, as I think we all know, Hamas established and went forward with a brutal terrorist attack against Israel killing 1,200 innocent people and took 230 hostages, some 100 of them are still in captivity. And in my view as I said many times, Israel had a right to respond to that attack and go after Hamas.

But what Israel did not have the right to do and does not have the right to do is to go to war against the entire Palestinian people, which is exactly what has occurred.

When I talk about issues that we in Congress do not fully engage in, discuss, appreciate, what we are talking about is that in Gaza right now some 30,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 70,000 have been injured since that war began. This is a country, an area, of 2.2 million people. Two-thirds of those who have been killed or injured are women and children.

Unbelievably, and I think this is another point that is not discussed very often—1.7 million Palestinians, 80 percent of the population—80 percent of the population of Gaza has been driven from their homes. The men, women, and children have been driven from their homes with no safe place to go and no idea as to whether or not they will ever return to their communities.

Imagine that for a moment. Little kids 5 years old, 3 years old—they don't know what is going on. Bombs falling, pushed out of their homes, they don't know where they are going or whether, in fact, they will ever, ever return to their communities.

The bombing of Gaza—and again it must be talked about over and over again—is almost unprecedented in modern history. Seventy percent of the housing units in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. Let me repeat that. Seventy percent of the housing units in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. The civilian infrastructure of Gaza has been devastated. There is virtually no electricity. There are few supplies of clean water. There is not one functional hospital for 2.2 million residents of Gaza.

There is not enough food, not enough water, not enough fuel, and not enough medicine. And increasingly for the people of Gaza, there is no hope. This is the horrific reality. And I know here in

the Senate we deal with a lot of stuff, but this is the reality that cannot be ignored. It must be dealt with. The catastrophe unfolding in Gaza today, right now as we speak, is among the worst humanitarian disasters in modern history. And while this body was in recess—we had a 2-week break. While we were safely with our families, the urgency of this crisis only increased. We are truly approaching a point of no return.

For months, the United Nations and other aid organizations have warned that the constant bombing and the restrictions on humanitarian aid entering Gaza raised the risk of famine—of famine and disease.

Two months ago, the U.N. warned that the whole population of Gaza was hungry—people were going hungry—and that more than half a million people faced the most severe category of food insecurity. That is fancy terminology for talking about people in desperate need of food.

Now, today, the worst of those fears are becoming reality. Hundreds of thousands of children in Gaza, beautiful little kids, are starving to death. Last week, the World Food Programme reported that nutrition screenings found that one in six children under the age of 12 in northern Gaza are acutely malnourished and 3 percent are experiencing child “wasting,” a terrible, terrible term that talks about—that describes the destruction of human life for kids. These children will die without urgent treatment. In other words, if all of the aid in the world came in tomorrow, many hundreds of thousands of children in Gaza have been permanently damaged.

Malnutrition in children causes cognitive and emotional distress, physical distress. So let us contemplate that. Let us think about that for a moment. If nothing changes in the coming weeks, thousands of children in Gaza will begin to die of starvation and easily preventable diseases caused by the lack of food, medicine, and clean drinking water.

Was this a natural catastrophe? Was this a storm? Was this an earthquake? No. This is a manmade disaster. Already, some 90 percent of children under 5 in Gaza have one or more infectious diseases, according to the U.N., and 70 percent have had diarrhea in the past 2 weeks due to the lack of clean drinking water.

This is an urgent humanitarian crisis.

It cannot be ignored. It must be addressed. Without an immediate humanitarian cease-fire and an urgent—urgent—expansion of the relief efforts, even more people could end up dying from the lack of basic supplies than have been killed in the bombing. In other words, what we are looking at is thousands of people are dying, have died from the bombs, and now we are going to see more people die from starvation and diseases as a result of no clean water or sanitation.

Scientists at Johns Hopkins University recently modeled what could happen over the next 6 months if nothing changes and concluded that some 85,000 more people could die in Gaza over that period and more from disease.

We cannot let this disaster continue. Let us be clear—be clear why this is happening. It is happening because Israel is simply not letting in enough aid, not enough food, not enough water, not enough medical supplies, not enough fuel. It is not more complicated than that. This is a manmade crisis caused by Israel, and it can be changed tomorrow.

Israeli restrictions on aid entering Gaza mean that only a tiny fraction of the food, water, medicine, and fuel that is needed can get into Gaza. Even then, once aid gets in, Israeli bombing and military activities mean that very little of that aid can reach beyond the immediate area around the Rafah border crossing from Egypt. What that means is that some of the most desperate areas of Gaza, that in those areas virtually no aid can get through at all. So it is not only that aid is not getting in, what aid that is getting in is not going to those locations where it is needed the most.

Even more distressing, aid convoys have been turned back or fired upon even after previously clearing their route with the Israeli military. In other words, the aid people tell the Israeli military where they are going, and the result of that is they, in fact, get bombed.

Bottom line. Despite the urgency of this crisis and the growing starvation of the people of Gaza, humanitarian access has actually gotten worse—worse—in recent weeks. About 80 trucks per day have gotten into Gaza over the last 3 weeks, down by roughly 40 percent from earlier periods.

Before the war, before the homelessness, and before the starvation, some 500 trucks per day delivered basic necessities into Gaza. Almost all aid deliveries to northern Gaza have been suspended. The Israeli Government has rejected most requests for access to the north, and the situation has become too dangerous for aid to be safely delivered. The reason that aid delivery has become increasingly dangerous is that the Israeli military has shown little regard for the safety of humanitarian operations.

Quite the contrary. Earlier this month, the Israeli military fired on a U.N. food aid convoy even though it had previously cleared its route and timing with the Israelis.

And here is something that I hope every American hears—that, up until now, since this war began, 161 U.N. staff and at least 340 health workers have been killed in Israeli attacks since October 7. In other words, the people who are trying to help the desperate—the people who are trying to deliver aid, the people who are trying to provide healthcare—are being killed in large numbers.

The situation today is obviously desperate and getting more and more desperate; and as an indication of that desperation, humanitarian aid trucks that do get through to northern Gaza have been mobbed by starving people. That is the reality. When a truck manages to get through, aid is not distributed in an orderly way. Hungry people are mobbing the trucks to grab food to feed their kids. The U.N.'s leading expert on access to food, this week, said Israel is intentionally denying access to food. That is a war crime.

Unbelievably, in the midst of this humanitarian cataclysm, rather than work to improve coordination with the U.N. and get basic supplies to Palestinians in the war zone, there has been a concerted attack on UNRWA, the largest U.N. agency operating in Gaza and the backbone of the humanitarian aid operation. They are the ones who do the lion's share of the work in getting humanitarian aid to the civilian population. UNRWA runs schools, healthcare, water sanitation, and food assistance for Palestinians in Gaza as well as in the West Bank and the wider region. Israel has accused 12 UNRWA employees of taking part in the October 7 attack—12 employees. This is a serious allegation, and it is being investigated seriously, but you don't starve 2 million people because of the alleged actions of 12 UNRWA employees out of a total workforce of 30,000.

Despite UNRWA's indispensable role in addressing this unprecedented humanitarian disaster, Congress is now considering legislation—Senate-passed legislation—that would actually prohibit funding for this agency, which would only make a horrible situation even worse. Children are starving. People don't have water. People don't have medical supplies. The agency that historically has done the work of getting aid out to people is now being unfunded. The U.S. decision to pause its funding for UNRWA has left the agency at a breaking point. That decision must be reconsidered immediately.

That brings to us the United States' role in this crisis, because the point is: We are not just looking at some distant part of the world where terrible things are happening and we are just learning about it and we have nothing to do with it. It is quite the contrary. Simply, we are deeply complicit in the humanitarian disaster and the horror that is taking place in Gaza today. Most of the bombs and most of the military equipment that the Israeli Government is using in Gaza is provided by the United States and subsidized by American taxpayers. This is not just an Israeli war; this is an American war as well. We are providing the weapons for Netanyahu to wage this war.

I met earlier today with human rights experts from Amnesty International. Amnesty researchers have painstakingly documented the use of U.S. weapons in numerous Israeli strikes that break the international

laws of war. Most recently, Amnesty documented four unlawful strikes in Rafah in December-January that killed at least 95 civilians, including 42 children, and some of those attacks were done with U.S. weapons.

The U.S. has laws on the books intended to prevent these kinds of human rights violations that are being done with U.S.-provided weapons. The problem is that we have very rarely enforced them with any country, and we have never enforced them with Israel. For months, as I think all of us know, President Biden has been trying to get Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his extreme rightwing government to scale back the indiscriminate bombing. So far, Netanyahu has not changed his tactics. In fact, humanitarian access has actually deteriorated. The situation is getting worse. Netanyahu makes polite sounds when U.S. officials visit him in Israel, and then he proceeds to do exactly what he wants. And what he wants increasingly seems to be the wholesale destruction of Gaza.

The United States is now focused on negotiating a cease-fire agreement that would allow for massive humanitarian aid and the freeing of the remaining hostages. I desperately hope that this deal comes together. I trust that all of us want the killing to stop and the hostages to be freed. But, once again, despite what President Biden is fighting for, Netanyahu is resisting. It appears that he and his extreme rightwing government are trying to prolong this war to hold onto their power and to avoid accountability. President Biden has repeatedly said that the only viable path to lasting peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike is a two-state solution. I agree. But, of course, Netanyahu has made it very clear that he is completely opposed to that outcome, and he has been opposed to that outcome for his entire political career.

On issue after issue, Prime Minister Netanyahu is deeply opposed to the goals of the United States. We want civilian life protected; he doesn't seem to care. We want more aid getting into Gaza; he won't allow it. We want a two-state solution; he is vigorously opposed. Given all of that reality—given the fact that with every aspect of this crisis, Netanyahu disagrees with what the U.S. Government wants to see happen—it is beyond comprehension as to why the United States is preparing to send another \$10 billion in unrestricted military aid so that Netanyahu can continue the murderous campaign that we oppose.

Enough is enough. The United States cannot continue to be complicit in Netanyahu's war crimes. No more military aid for Israel. Whether Netanyahu likes it or not, the United States must continue working toward an urgent humanitarian cease-fire to allow for the release of the hostages and massive influx of humanitarian aid. We should join other countries all over the world to pass a cease-fire resolution at the

U.N. Security Council that includes the release of the hostages and full humanitarian access as previous drafts have done.

The United States should begin the process of recognizing the Palestinian State as a full U.N. member state. This is both a fact—Palestine is a nation recognized by 139 U.N. member states—and a moral imperative in the face of what amounts to illegal Israeli annexation.

President Biden should also make clear that he will not release any additional military funding for Israel without firm commitments that the cease-fire will be honored unless broken by Hamas and that full humanitarian access will be ensured; that funds for the Palestinian Authority will be released; and that illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories will cease.

None of this will be easy, but to my mind, it is absolutely morally unacceptable that the United States continue its complicity in the humanitarian disaster that is taking place in Gaza right now. The time is now to say no to the rightwing extremist government of Netanyahu—no more money for the Israeli military.

With that, I yield the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:26 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be major general

BRIG. GEN. PAUL R. PAST

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

##### To be major general

BRIG. GEN. ANNAMARIE K. ANTHONY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS FOR THE AIR FORCE AND THE SPACE FORCE AND APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE SO SERVING IN THAT POSITION UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 9039:

##### To be major general

BRIG. GEN. TRENT C. DAVIS

##### IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADES INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JOSEPH A. RICCIARDI

##### To be brigadier general

COL. LOUISA R. BARGERON  
COL. CHARLES R. BELL

##### IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) JEFFREY J. KILIAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) DION D. ENGLISH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 8089:

##### To be rear admiral

CAPT. LIA M. REYNOLDS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) SUSAN BRYERJOYNER  
REAR ADM. (LH) RALPH R. SMITH III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) ELIZABETH S. OKANO  
REAR ADM. (LH) KURT J. ROTHENHAUS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) MARK D. BEHNIG  
REAR ADM. (LH) THOMAS R. BUCHANAN  
REAR ADM. (LH) CHRISTOPHER J. CAVANAUGH  
REAR ADM. (LH) JENNIFER S. COUTURE  
REAR ADM. (LH) WILLIAM R. DALY  
REAR ADM. (LH) ERIK J. ESCHIG  
REAR ADM. (LH) RONALD A. FOY  
REAR ADM. (LH) PATRICK J. HANNIFIN  
REAR ADM. (LH) GREGORY C. HUFFMAN  
REAR ADM. (LH) KEVIN P. LENOX  
REAR ADM. (LH) OLIVER T. LEWIS  
REAR ADM. (LH) MARC J. MIGUEZ  
REAR ADM. (LH) BENJAMIN R. NICHOLSON  
REAR ADM. (LH) CARLOS A. SARDIELLO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) LUKE A. FROST

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) DENNIS E. COLLINS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) GREGORY K. EMERY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) BRADLEY D. DUNHAM  
REAR ADM. (LH) SCOTT W. RUSTON  
REAR ADM. (LH) DOUGLAS W. SASSE III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. TROY S. PUGH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. MICHAEL L. FREIDBERG  
CAPT. RYAN K. MAHELONA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. SHAWN G. DENIHAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. BENJAMIN E. BARAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. DAVID N. BARNES  
CAPT. REGINALD H. HENDRIX  
CAPT. MARCUS J. LOCKARD, JR.  
CAPT. JASON M. NAIDYHORSKI  
CAPT. KATIE F. SHELDON