

NOMINATION OF JULIE SIMONE SNEED

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Julie Sneed to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Born in Fort Lauderdale, FL, Judge Sneed received her B.S. from the University of Florida and her J.D. from Florida State University. After completing law school, Judge Sneed clerked for Judge Chris W. Altenbernd of the Second District Court of Appeal of Florida before beginning her legal career as a litigation associate at Trenam, Kemker, Scharf, Barkin, Frye, O'Neill & Mullis, P.A. After clerking for Judge James D. Whittemore on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, she continued her litigation career at Fowler White Boggs Banker, P.A. and Akerman LLP, where she represented large corporations in civil business and commercial litigation in State and Federal courts. In 2015, Judge Sneed was appointed to serve as a U.S. magistrate judge for the same district to which she is nominated, where she has since issued more than 1,000 orders and opinions.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Sneed "well qualified" to serve on the district court, and she has the strong support of Senators Rubio and Scott.

Judge Sneed's deep ties to the Florida legal community, combined with her courtroom experience on and off the bench, will make her ready to serve the Middle District of Florida with distinction.

I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

Mr. MURPHY. I yield the floor.

VOTE ON SNEED NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sneed nomination?

Mr. DAINES. 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 Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 56 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Collins	Hickenlooper
Bennet	Coons	Hirono
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Kaine
Booker	Duckworth	Kelly
Brown	Durbin	King
Butler	Fetterman	Lujan
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Manchin
Cardin	Graham	Markey
Carper	Hassan	Menendez
Casey	Heinrich	Merkley

Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen

Rubio
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Scott (FL)
Shaheen
Sinema
Stabenow

Tester
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—44

Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Braun
Britt
Budd
Capito
Cassidy
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst

Fischer
Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Mullin

Paul
Ricketts
Risch
Romney
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (SC)
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Vance
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—2

Klobuchar

Smith

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 469, Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.

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 Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 77, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Baldwin	Boozman	Cantwell
Barrasso	Brown	Capito
Bennet	Budd	Cardin
Blumenthal	Butler	Carper

Casey
Cassidy
Collins
Coons
Cornyn
Cortez Masto
Cotton
Cramer
Cruz
Duckworth
Durbin
Ernst
Fetterman
Gillibrand
Graham
Grassley
Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Hyde-Smith
Kaine

Kelly
Kennedy
King
Lee
Lujan
Lummis
Manchin
Markey
McConnell
Menendez
Merkley
Moran
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Ricketts
Romney
Rosen

Rounds
Rubio
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Scott (FL)
Shaheen
Sinema
Stabenow
Tester
Tillis
Van Hollen
Vance
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden
Young

NAYS—20

Blackburn
Braun
Britt
Crapo
Daines
Fischer
Hagerty

Hawley
Hoeven
Johnson
Lankford
Marshall
Mullin
Paul

Risch
Schmitt
Scott (SC)
Sullivan
Thune
Tuberville

NOT VOTING—3

Booker

Klobuchar

Smith

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). On this vote, the yeas are 77, the nays are 20.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CRUZ. On Saturday, March 2, the great State of Texas will celebrate 188 years since we declared our independence from Mexico and fought for liberty. In the fight for our independence, many brave Texans laid down their lives at the Alamo, including William Barret Travis, James Bowie, and Davy Crockett. They risked everything to make liberty a reality for generations of Texans to come.

It is a tradition on Texas Independence Day to read the words of Colonel Travis, leader of the besieged forces at the Alamo. His call for reinforcements resounded across Texas, across America, and across the world, and it reminds us of the bravery of those who fought there and died for liberty.

I have had the blessing to read this letter aloud many, many times, and every time, it stirs the spirit and speaks to the heart.

COMMANDANCY OF THE ALAMO,

Bejar, Feby 24th, 1836.

TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS & ALL AMERICANS IN THE WORLD—

Fellow Citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, &

our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

[SIGNED] WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS.

[Lieutenant colonel commandant].

P.S. The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

TRAVIS.

At the battle of Santa Jacinto on April 21, 1836, the Texans finally secured a decisive victory. We won our independence and formed the Republic of Texas, a new nation. Texas was an independent nation for 9 years before we officially became part of the United States of America in February of 1846.

Sam Houston, the founding father, the George Washington of the Lone Star State, was also born 231 years ago on March 2, on Texas Independence Day. Sam Houston was an extraordinary American. He was born in Virginia. He spent many years in Tennessee, where he served in the U.S. House of Representatives and then became Governor of Tennessee. In Texas, he led the Texans to victory in the Battle of San Jacinto.

When Texas became an independent nation, Sam Houston served as President twice before Texas finally became part of the United States. Later, he served in the U.S. Senate and finally as Governor of Texas. He is the only man in American history to serve as Governor of two separate States.

Sam Houston was a tireless, talented leader and a great statesman who believed in liberty. His words, “Govern wisely and as little as possible,” still ring true today, and the Lone Star State still follows that adage.

To every Texan, I wish you a gloriously happy Texas Independence Day.

May God continue to bless the great State of Texas and the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

ACCESS TO FAMILY BUILDING ACT

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I have been called a lot of names in my life: “Tammy,” “Lieutenant Colonel,” “Senator,” and a couple others I shouldn’t mention in polite company.

“Mommy,” though, is, without a doubt, my favorite name. It is the one my 5-year-old uses when she runs into the house after dance class and pulls on my sleeve, eager to show me what she learned during her lesson.

It is the one my 9-year-old says when she announces her latest life plan. When she was little, she wanted to grow up to be a garbage collector; now, she is leaning towards being an Army cyber warrior.

My girls are my everything. But they, likely, would have never been born if I hadn’t had access to the basic reproductive rights that Americans—up until recently—had been depending on for nearly a half century, because after a decade struggling with infertility after my service in Iraq, I was only able to get pregnant through the miracle of IVF.

IVF is the reason I get to experience the chaos and the beauty, the stress and the joy that is motherhood. IVF is the reason that my husband and I aren’t just Tammy and Bryan but we are “Mom” and “Dad.” IVF made our family. It made my heart whole. It made my life full.

But for countless women in Alabama, that desperately sought-after dream of becoming a mom just became so much harder. Last week, that State’s supreme court ruled that frozen embryos created through IVF should be considered children under State law—a ruling that paints women like me and our doctors as criminals and one that throws IVF access into chaos as countless women and doctors try to figure out whether they might be criminalized for simply trying to create a family.

If you are thinking that this makes no sense, you are right. You are not misunderstanding anything; you are not missing something. It is the nightmarish blend of hypocrisy and misogyny that you think it is.

The very people who claim to be defending family values are the ones trying to enact dystopian policies that would prevent Americans from starting their own families.

This is no longer a hypothetical worst-case scenario. IVF providers around the State have already paused treatments out of fear that their doctors and patients could be punished.

Organizations that transport embryos to and from medical facilities in Alabama have already announced that they will stop doing so, meaning that would-be parents there won’t even be able to start their families in any other States either.

And now that the first domino has fallen, it seems like it could only be a matter of time before more hospitals and more organizations make the same call, before more State courts issue similar rulings, before more extremist politicians succeed in enacting even more draconian laws nationwide.

Think about that. Think about what is at stake if State courts simply can strip away access to IVF. Think about how many would-be moms might never be able to hear their child’s first little gurgle of a laugh. Think about how many hopeful dads might never be able to play tooth fairy when his would-be daughter loses her first tooth.

You know, I lived in Alabama for a bit when I was in the Army, stationed at what is now called Fort Novosel. And I didn’t know it at the time, but infertility would become one of the most heartbreaking struggles of my

life, my miscarriage more painful than any wound I ever earned on the battlefield.

I also almost lost the opportunity to even try IVF because a doctor in a well-known Catholic hospital that my VA hospital referred me to told me I was simply too old for treatment; that at 42, I should just “go home and enjoy my husband,” instead, and if it was meant to be, I would get pregnant.

It was pure luck that I found out that that doctor was lying to me, that she wasn’t basing her advice on medical science but rather on her personal religious beliefs, nearly costing me my chance to have my two little girls.

So it is a little personal when a majority male State supreme court suggests that people like me who became parents with the help of modern medicine should be in jail cells and not nurseries. And I know I am not the only one who struggles to understand how elected representatives who back these kinds of policies can call themselves members of the so-called “party of life.”

No, rulings like this one and the bills with the same intent that are being pushed forward in State legislatures around the country are not about being pro-life. They are about catering to an extremist base by exerting even more control over women’s bodies, inserting politicians into some of the most intimate, personal decisions anyone could ever make.

Look, back when I was going through IVF, three of my five fertilized eggs were deemed nonviable. If a version of this ruling had been in place then, I might have been forced to implant each of those three nonviable embryos. I might have been forced to suffer through three more miscarriages or else risk me or my doctor being convicted of manslaughter for discarding nonviable fertilized eggs.

That is the kind of extremism that we are talking about here. That is the level of cruelty that we are facing. That is the kind of future we are fighting to prevent, where frozen embryos have more rights than the women who would carry them.

Let’s be clear about what led to this moment, the overturning of Roe is what made last week’s ruling even possible, as it stripped women of a constitutional right, transferring the power to decide whether or when to start families from us to politicians in State houses across the country.

Donald Trump is the one who brags about taking down Roe v. Wade. Donald Trump is the one who acts as if that is something to be proud of. So while it may now be convenient for him to claim that he had nothing to do with what happened in Alabama, we know the truth. IVF is at risk because of him. He is to blame. Him and every other GOP official who shamelessly kisses his ring, proving with every word they say that they care more about protecting his poll numbers than protecting Americans’ freedoms.