

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 478, Ramona Villagomez Manglona, of the Northern Mariana Islands, to be Judge for the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands for a term of ten years. (Reappointment)

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.

CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF RYAN CORBETT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 638 submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 638) calling for the immediate release of Ryan Corbett, a United States citizen who was wrongfully detained by the Taliban on August 10, 2022, and condemning the wrongful detention of Americans by the Taliban.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 638), was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD (Legislative Day of April 10, 2024) under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, I am very proud that the Senate just passed Leader McCONNELL's and my resolution calling for Ryan Corbett's immediate and unconditional release.

By passing this resolution today, the Senate sends a resounding message that it is time to bring Ryan home. This weekend is Ryan's birthday. We are all thinking about him because it has now been 609 days since Ryan, a New York native, was unjustly detained by the Taliban in Afghanistan during a routine business trip.

I met with Ryan's beautiful family this week, and I told them the Senate is standing with them and has their back. I promised them that as long as Ryan is held by the Taliban, I will never stop fighting to bring him back home and unite him with Anna, his children, and his family as quickly as possible.

Again, I thank Leader McCONNELL for joining me in this legislation.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on a few other matters. This morning Prime Minister Kishida Fumio became only the second Japanese Prime Minister to ever formally address a joint meeting of the Congress.

The best way the House can heed Prime Minister Kishida's words is to pass the national security supplemental as soon as possible, to approve defense funding, not just for Ukraine, but also for the Indo-Pacific.

If we want to protect against the Chinese Communist Party endangering Taiwan, the House should quit stalling and pass the supplemental. If we want to prevent handing Putin a victory in Europe, the House should do the right thing for democracy and pass the Senate's aid package now.

GUN SAFETY

Mr. President, on another matter, today is a big day for America for commonsense gun safety reform.

This morning, the Biden administration announced a rule expanding background checks and closing loopholes for online sales at gun shows, a direct result of the bipartisan gun safety law passed 2 years ago.

This gun safety announcement has been decades in coming. It is the first significant expansion of background checks since I led passage of the Brady Bill way back in 1993. Today's announcement expanding background checks shows change is possible when both sides work together, even if progress is hard and halting. After all, a few years ago, this announcement would have been unimaginable.

Because Democrats and Republicans both, together, cast aside the influence of groups like the NRA and worked together, today's announcement has been made possible. The expansion of background checks will save lives. It will be easier to prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands. It will show parents, kids, and teachers, and Americans everywhere impacted by gun violence that Congress is listening.

We have a lot of work to do. But today is a clear step in the right direction.

As all through the Brady law, today's announcement on background checks is a proud moment and a galvanizing one. We should build on these historic bills passed in 2022 and cure our Nation of the disease of gun violence.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Mr. President, finally, just a note. Yesterday, I led a group of 40 Senators introducing a bill that would curtail judge shopping and restore fairness to the judicial system. I will work with my colleagues to enact this important legislation.

We here in Congress have a duty to hold the Federal judiciary accountable. And when the Federal judiciary is being exploited by dangerous practices like judge shopping, it is both proper and appropriate for Congress to exercise oversight authority.

Some of my Republican colleagues have suggested it is unconstitutional for Congress to oversee its judicial branch. That is ridiculous and avoids a plain reading of the Constitution. Even the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court—hardly a liberal—agrees that judge shopping is a problem and ought to be addressed.

Congress has clear authority under the Constitution to exercise oversight of the courts. We will continue weighing legislative options to ensure the Federal judiciary is committed to equal justice under the law.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion filed today ripen at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 15.

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

MOTION TO RECESS

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to recess until 3 p.m. on Monday, April 15, and 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 124 Ex.]

YEAS—48

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

NAYS—40

Barrasso	Cotton	Hoeben
Blackburn	Crapo	Hyde-Smith
Boozman	Cruz	Johnson
Braun	Daines	Kennedy
Britt	Ernst	Lankford
Budd	Fischer	Lee
Capito	Grassley	Lummis
Cassidy	Hagerty	Marshall

McConnell	Rubio	Tillis
Moran	Schmitt	Vance
Mullin	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Ricketts	Scott (SC)	Young
Risch	Sullivan	
Rounds	Thune	

NOT VOTING—12

Cornyn	Hawley	Sanders
Cramer	Menendez	Sinema
Durbin	Murkowski	Stabenow
Graham	Romney	Tuberville

The motion was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

NATIONAL SECURITY, ENERGY, AND SHOP ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today, a joint session of Congress welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Kishida to the Capitol.

The importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance is front-and-center at a critical moment. As I said earlier this week, Japan is an essential partner in the security of the Indo-Pacific.

But its leaders also understand the global nature of the threats facing sovereign states, free societies, and free markets today. As the Prime Minister's office put it ahead of this week's visit, today's security environment is, "as severe and complex as it has ever been" and that "from the Japanese viewpoint, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not a faraway European question."

In other words, Japan understands that the challenges we face can't be dealt with one at a time. Last year, Japan approved the largest ever budget for its own self-defense forces. And it is in the process of acquiring nearly 150 fifth-generation F-35 fighters and investing in long-range counterstrike capabilities to enhance deterrence.

Meanwhile, Japan also provides significant economic assistance to countries across Asia who may otherwise be vulnerable to the PRC's coercion or aggression.

And at the same time, Japan was the third largest financial contributor to Ukraine last year.

Our ally is facing linked threats simultaneously. But Japan is not an anomaly. Across the region, America's closest regional allies like Australia and South Korea understand the PRC poses the greatest long-term strategic threat to a free and open Indo-Pacific. But they also understand that what happens in Europe or the Middle East in the near-term matters an awful lot to Asia.

To meet these growing security challenges, our Indo-Pacific allies are making substantial commitments to grow their defense budgets.

Similarly, as our European allies grow increasingly concerned about the PRC, their combined spending rose by 9.5 percent.

This is encouraging progress. But our allies still look to America to lead. And our own defense spending is not keeping pace.

Four times, President Biden has submitted defense budget requests that

would have amounted to net cuts after inflation. And even if Congress prevails in passing an emergency national security supplemental, a 1 percent growth cap on next year's spending will still constrain our ability to meet growing threats.

We have to be honest about the urgent requirements of replenishing stockpiles, expanding defense industrial capacity, and modernizing our forces.

Deterring linked threats isn't a task America has to face alone. But as we encourage our allies to continue their own modernization efforts, we have to lead.

That means deepening technology cooperation and trade with our most advanced allies—similar to what we have promised to do with AUKUS, an agreement that we must implement with urgency and sincerity.

It also means reforming our sluggish, bureaucratic foreign military sales process to help more allies upgrade their capabilities by buying modern American equipment.

But most of all, maintaining our influence and advancing our global interests means taking our own national defense responsibilities seriously.

Our fundamental constitutional obligation is to provide for the common defense. And it will fall to Congress in the months ahead—as we consider the NDAA and FY25 defense appropriations—to make the investments that sustained American leadership requires.

Now, on another matter, yesterday's inflation report did little to help working Americans make sense of Bidenomics. The 3.5 percent year-on-year jump recorded last month puts cumulative inflation since President Biden took office at 19.4 percent. Grocery prices are up 21.2 percent, gasoline prices are up 47.8 percent, and rent prices are up 20.4 percent.

And it is getting particularly difficult to keep the lights on. The latest 5 percent jump in electricity prices is just the latest bad news for ratepayers facing overall energy inflation of 38.8 percent since January 2021. And it is no wonder why: Working families aren't just up against Democrats' reckless inflationary spending. They are also facing the effects of the mountain of devastating regulations rolled out under President Biden's activist climate agenda.

He has ticked his way down a green activist wishlist from canceling job-creating pipeline infrastructure to freezing LNG export permits to micro-managing home appliances to imposing debilitating emissions standards on automakers and effectively requiring that two of every three vehicles manufactured for America in 2032 be electric.

Honestly, it feels like the Biden administration itself cares less about a grand green future than about making the entire country follow the consumption habits of deep-blue California. And that is particularly bad news.

As the administration races to conjure up a market for expensive electric vehicles, growing evidence suggests that its grand plans to leave the most affordable and reliable forms of American energy behind are pushing electric grids to a breaking point. And grid security experts are warning that "overly rigid" environmental policies are creating significant blackout risks across the country.

Whether you call it Bidenomics or the Green New Deal, Washington Democrats are presenting working Americans with some tough choices. Here's how one California retiree described it: "Food has been a worry, but now electricity is the worry. Unless you want to go to candles and firewood, we have no other choice but to bite the bullet and pay."

Fortunately, the Senate will soon have another opportunity to pull an emergency brake on the administration's runaway regulations: legislation from Senator CRAPO to overturn the President's disastrous de facto EV mandate.

The tailpipe emissions rule would effectively force American auto dealers to sell two EVs for every gas-powered vehicle, even at the inevitable expense of further reliance on Chinese supply chains. And with electric vehicles already piling up at dealer lots across the country due to low demand, it would force American consumers to buy vehicles they don't want.

What utter madness. I am grateful to the senior Senator for Idaho for bringing this legislation to the floor. And I will encourage our colleagues to join me in supporting this step to rein in some of this administration's worst ideas.

Now, on one final matter, yesterday, with my colleagues the junior Senator for Arkansas and the senior Senator for North Carolina, I was proud to introduce the SHOP Act, a comprehensive, nonpartisan solution to venue shopping in Federal courts.

As I have said before, the problem with venue shopping is not a judge in north Texas. It is a national problem driven by the ability of single judges everywhere to grant injunctions that are national in scope.

The SHOP Act would stop that, restricting the relief that judges in Texas and in California can provide to the parties in front of them or the geographic reach of their jurisdictions.

It also addresses the problem of venue selling in bankruptcy and patent cases. Venue abuse in those specialized areas of law comes less from litigants seeking advantage than from judges creating artificially attractive venues in order to enrich their friends in the local bar. The SHOP Act would impose uniform standards for where bankruptcy and patent cases should be heard to solve this problem.

Lastly, the SHOP Act addresses the practice of actual illicit judge shopping. Recently, the Southern Poverty Law Center and Lambda Legal engaged