

strongly supported by both of her home State Senators and the Pennsylvania legal community. Her litigation background and her courtroom experience as both an advocate and as a magistrate judge ensure that she will be an asset to the district court.

I am proud to support her nomination, and I ask my colleagues to join me in my support.

VOTE ON MEHALCHICK NOMINATION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Mehalchick nomination?

Mr. CARDIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 28 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—49

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

NOT VOTING—1

Barrasso

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). 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.

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. 142, Joseph Goffman, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Charles E. Schumer, Thomas R. Carper, Alex Padilla, Gary C. Peters, Jack Reed, Tina Smith, Sheldon Whitehouse, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard J. Durbin, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Peter Welch, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher Murphy, Richard Blumenthal, John W. Hickenlooper.

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 Joseph Goffman, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 29 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—49

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

NOT VOTING—1

Barrasso

(Ms. BALDWIN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 49.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph Goffman, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

IRAN

Mr. RICKETTS. Madam President, I rise here today in support of our closest and longest standing ally in the Middle East, Israel, and also to prevent American taxpayer dollars from supporting terrorism.

On October 7, Hamas broke the cease-fire with a horrific and barbaric attack on Israel. Hamas terrorists crossed the border. They killed unarmed citizens, raped and mutilated women, burned children, beheaded soldiers, and kidnapped innocent civilians as well. That horrific attack demonstrates the barbarity of this terrorist organization.

For those who call on a cease-fire for Israel to somehow sponsor this, I call on you to call on Hamas to surrender. Hamas must surrender. Israel cannot tolerate an organization on its border that is dedicated to destruction of its state. Hamas has said time and time again they will continue to attack Israel in this barbaric way. Hamas must be destroyed and the United States must support Israel. Israel will be doing the world a favor when Hamas is destroyed.

On that day, 1,200 Israelis were killed. It included 33 Americans. Hundreds of people were kidnapped, many of whom have not been returned. I have been posting about the hostages since this terrible event has happened. These folks are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, children. These folks are real people, and they must be returned. That is why it is so important that Hamas surrender, return the hostages, and the State of Israel must continue to defend itself until that happens.

Now, we ought not support terrorism, especially not a brutal terroristic organization by the name of Hamas. We shouldn't undermine our foreign policy to support the State of Israel. And yet that is exactly what we are doing at this moment.

There is an organization called the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the Near East, also called UNRWA. Last Friday, there was a report that a dozen UNRWA employees participated in the October 7 attack, six directly in the attack killing Israelis. A couple were responsible for logistics, procuring weapons. More were involved in kidnappings. Still more were traced to the sites where Israelis had been killed.

The Wall Street Journal reports that perhaps 10 percent of UNRWA employees, some 1,200 people, may have links to Hamas or even the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which considers Hamas too moderate. Think of how crazy that is.

UNRWA has been described as, essentially, a branch of Hamas. But, by the way, this is not a news flash that this

happened. The UN has said they are going to launch an investigation into this. But guess what. We know through previous investigations that this was the pattern of UNRWA.

The Trump administration knew this, and so they cut off funding for UNRWA. They knew that UNRWA previously had been supporting Hamas, had its employees also be agents of Hamas, that its textbooks glorified martyrdom, terrorism, and preached anti-Semitism. Its teachers talked about killing Jews. Its schools had stored weapons for Hamas.

UNRWA sites and facilities have been used to launch attacks on Israel. This was not new news. And yet, inexplicably, the Biden administration, as soon as they came into office, resumed our funding, our taxpayer dollars to UNRWA. Madam President, 730 million U.S. taxpayer dollars given to UNRWA.

And we have since found out now that one of the UNRWA teachers, an Arabic language teacher, was a Hamas commander who participated on an attack on a kibbutz that killed 97 people and in which 26 people were kidnapped.

We should not fund Hamas, and we should not fund Hamas through UNRWA. We need to cut off the funds to UNRWA. The Trump administration saw it. And the State Department saying they are going to temporarily pause their funding to UNRWA is simply not good enough.

The junior Senator from South Carolina and me have proposed the Stop Support For Hamas. This would end U.S. taxpayer funding to UNRWA and stop their support of Hamas.

This bill must pass, or we have other ways to do it. We can put it into any supplemental that we pass that is going to provide aid to Gaza. We are currently considering such a bill right now.

Before we provide another taxpayer dollar, we must pass this legislation so that UNRWA cannot continue to support terrorists like Hamas. We must stand with our ally Israel. They not only have the right to defend themselves, but it will be important for world peace to see Hamas destroyed.

Hamas is a brutal terroristic organization. It has no place in the world. We need to provide Israel the tools they need to be able to defend themselves and destroy this terrorist organization. And we should not act counter to that by providing UNRWA money.

We must permanently ban our funding to UNRWA so that our taxpayer dollars are not supporting the terrorist organization Hamas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

IRAN

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, this weekend, three brave Americans gave their lives in service to our country. My heart goes out to the families of SGT William Jerome Rivers, SPC Kennedy Sanders, and SPC Breonna

Moffett, who were serving in the Army Reserves 718th Engineer Company—the same company I served in nearly 30 years ago as a platoon leader. I know the bravery of men and women who put themselves in harm's way, and my prayers are with their colleagues who are suffering from their injuries.

Our servicemembers continue to be on the frontlines of Iran-backed attacks. Earlier this month, two Navy SEALs went missing in action while interdicting lethal aid that Iran was resupplying to the Houthis. Navy Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Christopher Chambers and Navy Special Warfare Operator 2nd Class Nathan Ingram made the ultimate sacrifice working to prevent more Iranian-backed terror.

Iran's proxies who continue to attack our troops must know how seriously the United States takes American lives. Every American life is precious. Our adversaries need to understand that a single American loss is one too many and that they will pay dearly for spilling the blood of those who wear the uniform.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: American weakness on the world stage emboldens our adversaries and puts U.S. citizens at risk.

Right now, today, six Americans continue to be held hostage by Iran-backed Hamas. This terrorist organization thinks it can barter with American lives. Instead of fearing us, they seek to manipulate us. Instead of hiding in the shadows, they hold press conferences and entertain foreign officials openly in Doha.

For over 100 days, Hamas has held six of our citizens and has not paid a price. Instead, the opposite has occurred. What is President Biden doing to bring them home? Doubling down on the appeasement strategy.

By refusing to enforce existing sanctions on Iran's illicit oil sales, President Biden has fueled and funded Tehran's terrorist proxies and green-lit terrorism. For years, President Biden lined the coffers of the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism through his appeasement strategy, culminating in the October 7 assault on Israel.

Every day since these Iranian-backed attacks on Israel, we have seen the world erupt into chaos, and American lives have been in constant danger. Still, the Biden administration fears escalation more than anything else. What is the result? They are letting Tehran's terrorists off the hook for their illicit actions and attacks on American lives.

October 7 was not only a physical attack on Israel but also one of the largest losses of American lives from terrorism since 9/11. There were 32 unforgettable deaths.

Make no mistake, this chaos is exactly what Iran wants. It pays for it, and it plans for it.

When I was in the region during the attacks, many leaders shared their concerns with me that Iran would cap-

italize on the chaos by using proxies to escalate the conflict. I knew that it was essential to stand with Israel not only to protect our partnership with our greatest ally in the region but also to protect American lives.

Unfortunately, we are seeing those fears come to fruition. Since October 7, Iran-backed proxies have ramped up their aggression, with over 160 attacks on our servicemembers. The Houthis are unleashing drone attacks on our troops in the Red Sea, disrupting commerce, and wreaking havoc on innocent civilians.

We struggle to defend our ships from incoming rockets and drones and hesitate to find, fix, and finish the very source of these attacks. We know it is Iranian proxies. Folks, we know that. There is no doubt about it. We know they are trained by the IRGC. It is time to strike the source of the problem. Why? Because American lives continue to be on the line every single day. Self-defense is not escalation; it is the most basic and moral action we can take as a nation. We owe it to our troops. We owe it to our citizens.

For nearly 4 months—4 months, folks—Hamas has held U.S. citizens hostage as political prisoners. Our fellow Americans are being used as human shields, without consistent access to food, to water, to medical treatment, or to sleep. Right now, American hostage families live in agony, uncertain if their loved ones are alive or dead. No parent should ever have to endure this, and terrorists should not be able to hold this power over Americans. We must do everything in our power to stop Hamas from torturing our families.

To end Hamas's reign of terror, we must cut off their IRGC funding. These terrorist groups have one thing in common: As long as they are sponsored by Tehran, they are committed to chaos in the world, and they pose a threat to Americans at home and abroad.

Now is the time for strong U.S. leadership. I have been calling for President Biden to hit Iran where it hurts—the pocketbooks funneling illicit oil funds to its terrorist proxies.

The choice, folks, is clear: To stand with Israel, we must target Iran's terrorist arm and end its ability to target Americans so we can bring American hostages home safely and quickly. Folks, every second counts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I want to talk today about deterrence and escalation.

In 1988, the American frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts struck an Iranian mine in international waters. Thankfully, no Americans were killed. But, wisely, President Reagan didn't wait for tragedy to occur before acting. Just 4 days later, the United States destroyed two Iranian oil platforms, three warships, two fighter jets, and multiple other vessels.