

[Rollcall Vote No. 32 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Bennet	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Blumenthal	Hawley	Romney
Booker	Heinrich	Rosen
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Braun	Hirono	Rubio
Britt	Hoeven	Sanders
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Budd	Johnson	Schmitt
Butler	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Carper	Klobuchar	Sinema
Casey	Lankford	Smith
Cassidy	Lee	Sullivan
Collins	Lujan	Tester
Coons	Lummis	Thune
Cornyn	Manchin	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Markley	Tuberville
Cotton	Marshall	Van Hollen
Cramer	McConnell	Vance
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Cruz	Merkley	Warnock
Daines	Moran	Warren
Duckworth	Mullin	Welch
Durbin	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murphy	Wicker
Fetterman	Murray	Wyden
Fischer	Ossoff	Young
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Graham	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Barrasso Peters Stabenow

CHANGE OF VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, on vote No. 32, I voted no, but my intention was to vote yes, actually. I would like to ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to change my vote, since it will not affect the outcome.

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

(The foregoing tally has been changed to reflect the above order.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). On this vote, the yeas are 97, the nays are 0.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph Albert Laroski, Jr., of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from Maryland.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to express my deep appreciation and gratitude for human rights defenders. They are the core of free, democratic societies. They risk their lives and freedom to hold governments and the private sector accountable. They advocate for human rights and political freedom. They protect our environment and fight corruption.

Despite very real threats to their lives and safety, they have achieved incredible victories. Because of their tireless efforts, from Colombia to Mexico, nations across Latin America expanded reproductive rights; Argentina

passed a law to prevent gender-based violence online and hold perpetrators accountable; the EU reached an agreement to require companies to address the human rights and environmental harms of their operations; and Malaysia and Ghana took steps to abolish the death penalty. We celebrate these victories.

But I also must underline a deep sense of urgency today. Attacks against human rights defenders are on the rise across the globe. Hundreds are killed each year, and thousands more are attacked, threatened, or imprisoned; the Russian investigative journalist who was brutally attacked for exposing human rights abuses in the Northern Caucasus; the Guatemalan judge forced into exile after holding human rights abusers accountable for their actions during the brutal civil war; the taxi driver and human rights defender in Turkmenistan serving a 22-year sentence in a penal colony for documenting the torture of ethnic minorities; the 28-year-old human rights defender in Sudan who was killed, along with his parents and his four brothers; or one of the hundreds of human rights defenders killed by armed groups vying for control of Colombia's drug trafficking routes.

Not only are attacks growing in scale, today's oppressors use sophisticated surveillance technology to target their enemies, even those living in exile.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders has said:

Governments claim that all this repression is about national security. In reality it is about power and money. They want to maintain power so they control information.

As a result, those who stand for freedom and justice often face death threats, harassment, arbitrary detention, and torture.

Women human rights defenders and those working on environmental protection, climate change, LBGTQI+ community issues, and indigenous rights face especially high levels of violence.

I am pleased that the Biden administration has made protecting human rights defenders a priority for American foreign policy. Human rights defenders are heroes in the fight for democracy and freedom, and the United States must stand in solidarity with them.

But we all need to do more. That is why I introduced the Human Rights Defenders Protection Act. This bill enhances our government's ability to prevent and respond to attacks on human rights defenders. It requires the administration to come up with a whole-of-government global strategy for human rights defenders. It creates a new, limited visa category for at-risk human rights defenders. It elevates the State Department's human rights officers in countries facing democracy and human rights crises. It trains Foreign Service officers on the protection of human

rights defenders. It expands fellowships to allow human rights defenders to conduct research, outreach, and exchanges in the United States.

My grandparents came to America in 1902 from Lithuania, where there were pogroms against Jews across Russia and Eastern Europe. The defense of human rights has always been profoundly important to me and my family.

For many decades in my life, the Soviet Union was one of the greatest threats to human rights on Earth, and it seemed indestructible. But I remember standing with my wife at the Berlin Wall in 1987—a symbol of totalitarianism suffering. My wife and I hammered at the concrete that was covered in graffiti, showing a crossed-out hammer and sickle. Chipping away at the Berlin Wall was a reminder of the good we can achieve if only we have faith.

So to everyone who cares about justice, to everyone who fights for freedom, to everyone who defends human rights against all odds, don't give up. Let us continue to advocate for those human rights defenders behind bars. Let us champion their efforts across the globe. Let us have faith that we can overcome oppression and violence and assassinations. Let us keep hope alive that we can build a world that is safe and peaceful and prosperous.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation I filed.

NOMINATION OF LISA W. WANG

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Lisa Wang to the U.S. Court of International Trade.

Ms. Wang attended Cornell University and the Georgetown University Law Center before entering private practice in Washington, DC, as an international trade associate. Ms. Wang then spent 3 years serving in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing as a senior import administration officer before joining the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative as assistant general counsel. She went on to serve as a senior attorney in the Commerce Department's Office of the Chief Counsel for Trade Enforcement and Compliance before completing another stint in private practice.

In 2021, President Biden nominated Ms. Wang to serve as an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Enforcement and Compliance, and she was confirmed in the Senate by voice vote. At the Department of Commerce, she has led the Federal Government's efforts to maintain a level playing field for American workers and consumers by holding our partners accountable to their trade agreements.

Ms. Wang was unanimously rated "well qualified" by the American Bar Association. Her deep knowledge of international trade law and commitment to fairness make her an excellent addition to the Court of International Trade. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for her confirmation.

Mr. CARDIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote for 1:45 p.m. begin immediately.

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

VOTE ON WANG NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Wang nomination?

Mr. CARDIN. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 33 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—42

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

NOT VOTING—5

Barrasso	Marshall	Stabenow
Cruz	Peters	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk about something every American wants from their public officials: transparency and accountability.

Unfortunately, after repeated attempts, Congress has not received that transparency or accountability from

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, and it is feeding the perception of corruption. For the past 6 months, the Senate Finance Committee has been trying to get straight answers from the Justice and his wealthy friends about the growing list of handouts they have lavished on the Justice.

Most recently, we sought to figure out whether Justice Thomas secretly had over \$250,000 in debt written off—simply wiped away—by a wealthy benefactor. If so, as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I am working to learn whether he paid the taxes he was supposed to—taxes that any American is legally required to pay.

The Justice has refused to respond. Justice Thomas acts as if the freebies and the special favors Americans are reading about—the flights on private jets, comped; trips on luxury yachts; megawealthy individuals paying for school tuitions; quarter-million-dollar debts wiped away—is totally normal stuff.

The reality is, it is not. It isn't normal for anyone, and when the person receiving all of these extravagant handouts is one of the nine most powerful jurists in the country, with unchecked power to rewrite laws from the bench, it looks worse.

With respect to this disappearing debt, here is what we know. In 1999, one of Justice Thomas's friends loaned him \$267,230 to buy a luxury RV. That is some kind of friend.

Justice Thomas wants to believe the story is simple, like the couple hundred bucks you would loan somebody to get their car fixed in an emergency. This is the story that the Justice has, in effect, apparently subscribed to obscures the truth.

The simple fact here is that loans have to be repaid, and it sure looks like this one was not. According to the terms of the loan agreement—which, by the way, was written down on Supreme Court stationary from the chamber of Clarence Thomas—Thomas's friend supplied the money to buy Thomas the luxury RV. In return, the Justice was supposed to pay 7.5 percent interest for 5 years. Then the loan would come due, and then Justice Thomas would be responsible for having to repay the full principal. But from what I have seen, the payment never happened.

Through my investigation, I have uncovered that Justice Thomas only paid interest on the transaction. When the deadline hit after 5 years, his friend extended the maturity date on the loan for another decade. But just 4 years later, Thomas' friend simply decided to stop collecting payments from the Justice, even though the Justice still owed him more than \$¼ million.

Justice Thomas's friend wrote a note telling him that the interest he paid was good enough and that he wouldn't accept further payments. That means that the debt—likely the entire \$260,000 in principal—was considered forgiven. Again, that is quite a friend.

So the documents we have seen indicate Justice Thomas received a \$267,000 loan to buy a luxury RV and never repaid most—and, likely, not even a dollar—of the money that his friend originally loaned him. This has legal consequences.

The Tax Code makes clear that in instances where a debt is canceled, forgiven, or discharged for less than the amount owed, the borrower must report the amount canceled or forgiven as income for tax purposes. Furthermore, the forgiven debt is income that Justice Thomas is required by law to report on his financial disclosure report.

But Justice Thomas never reported the \$¼ million in forgiven debt on his financial disclosure report in 2008, the year his debt was forgiven. He won't give the Finance Committee a direct answer on whether he reported it on his taxes, raising serious legal questions.

After I publicly revealed these findings, Justice Thomas, through his lawyer, said the documents that I reviewed were untrue. The Justice said:

The loan was never forgiven. Any suggestion to the contrary is false.

And—

The terms of the agreement were satisfied in full.

This contradicts the documents I reviewed. So, along with Senator WHITEHOUSE, our colleague from Rhode Island, we wrote to Justice Thomas's lawyer and gave him a chance to prove his claim. Personally, I believe that a sitting Supreme Court Justice would jump at the opportunity to correct the record and prove that he repaid his debt and did not cheat on taxes. I wish I could report to the American people that was the case and that this whole mess was just a misunderstanding. But that did not happen.

Justice Thomas did not give us any documentation about his so-called loan. Senator WHITEHOUSE and I gave him a month to respond and received nothing—no loan agreement, no payment schedule, no evidence of principal payments, and no explanation for why he and his lawyer said the documents and information I uncovered were untrue. If what Justice Thomas and his lawyer are saying about the loan is accurate, the question is, What is behind all the stonewalling?

Does the Justice believe he shouldn't ever have to answer the questions about all these major windfalls and luxury travel, not even to prove that everything was on the level? Justice Thomas and his lawyers could put this whole affair to rest by providing copies of checks repaying the \$¼ million loan.

My personal guess is they can't because those payments never happened.

If a wealthy friend forgave a \$¼ million loan to Justice Thomas, the law requires that he declare it.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, it is essential that Justice Thomas list that income on his taxes. He is also required to disclose the money on his financial disclosure report. Based on what we have seen, it

seems like he did neither. Our laws, including our tax laws, have to apply to everyone. The law applies to everyone, especially one of the nine most powerful jurists in America. Congress must ensure that they do.

It is time for Justice Thomas to respond with the facts about this \$¼ million loan and any similar money and gifts he has received as a Supreme Court Justice.

Now, Madam President, I am going to yield to my colleague on the Finance Committee. He is also the chairman of the Budget Committee and chairman of the important Judiciary Subcommittee on Federal Courts, our colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, let me start by thanking our Finance Committee chairman, Chairman WYDEN, for his strong leadership. Chairman WYDEN was able to secure the cooperation of the wealthy donor who gave Justice Thomas the \$¼ million-plus RV loan. The chairman doggedly followed the facts to get the truth for the American people, which takes guts, particularly when you consider the many special interests rooting for this investigation to go away.

And while I am thanking the chairman, let me also thank Chairman DURBIN for his persistent and dogged pursuit of the truth through the Judiciary Committee. Both the Judiciary and Finance Committees are working to get to the bottom of this.

Keep in mind, in all the ethics mess engulfing Justice Thomas, that for every ethics issue, there is also likely a tax issue; perhaps, two sides of the same coin. If a Justice isn't reporting income on his legally required financial disclosure, there is a good chance that something is amiss with his tax reporting as well.

When a Justice receives something of value from a benefactor, the presumption is that it needs to be disclosed under the ethics law either as income or as a gift. Generally speaking, if it is income, the Justice must also report it as income for income tax purposes; and if it is a gift, the donor needs to report it for gift tax purposes—which is why when you are looking at possible ethics violations in situations like this, it is important to know if that income showed up on the tax side or if that gift report showed up on the tax side. That is why Chairman WYDEN's leadership here is so essential.

If this went unreported, that could be a tax law violation. Again, if it is a gift, the Justice needs to disclose it under the ethics law unless it falls under a narrow definition for "personal hospitality"—spending Christmas with your in-laws, for instance, or going on a trip with your college roommates. So either way, the tax question becomes for donors, for gifts, did the benefactor or did the donor report it for gift tax purposes? So you have the income tax reporting issue, the gift tax reporting

issue. And then you have a third issue, which is that these tax filings can also test the veracity of what Justices claim.

Justices Thomas and Alito claim they didn't have to report free jet and yacht travel gifted by billionaires because those gifts, they claimed, were personal hospitality. There were no college roommates or in-laws involved. It is a heck of a stretch to call this personal hospitality. But one of the ways you could test whether it is personal hospitality would be by looking at how the donor of the hospitality treated it on their taxes. It would be a pretty good tell that all that hospitality those Justices received was not so personal if the yacht and jet travel gifted to Justices Thomas and Alito was written off by these billionaires as a tax expense—as a business expense. So there is a lot to be learned from tax filing.

Two other reminders as we go through this. One, it is a crime. It is a crime under 18 U.S. Code section 1001 to file a false sworn statement with the Federal Government. Both judicial disclosures and tax filings are filed under oath.

No. 2, the law requires the Judicial Conference, if there is any question about whether an improper judicial disclosure filing might have been willful, to refer the question of willfulness to the Attorney General for investigation. It is not under the law of the Judicial Conference's job to decide the question of willfulness; it is only to decide if there is a question of willfulness and then refer that to the Attorney General for investigation.

So this can get serious fast, which brings us to Justice Thomas and his RV. When it comes to ethics requirements, there is no question about what the law required here. If part of Justice Thomas's debt was forgiven, he had to report it. The state of the facts based on the documents the Finance Committee has obtained and reviewed is that Justice Thomas never paid back a dollar of principal on \$¼ million loan and that the donor long ago stopped collecting even interest on that loan.

So let's take a look at the law. Justice Thomas likely didn't have to report the loan itself. Justices don't need to report loans secured by a personal vehicle as long as the value of the loan isn't worth more than the vehicle itself.

If Justice Thomas put up the RV as collateral for his loan and didn't obtain more money than the RV was worth, there was no need for him to disclose the loan. But all that changes if any part of the loan was forgiven later on. As the chairman has said, when you collect not \$1 of principal and stop collecting interest, that sure looks like forgiveness of a loan. And a loan you don't pay back is a form of income.

The law requires officials to disclose any income they receive outside of their government salaries, which makes sense if you are trying to expose or prevent corruption. Under the law, if

you receive more than \$200 of income from any one person in a year, you have to disclose that.

Here are the regulations on financial disclosure. These are regs adopted pursuant to law, and they say that income "includes but is not limited to" income from "discharge of indebtedness." And down here, it further says that you must report "discharge of indebtedness."

And if you go to the Tax Code—specifically 26 U.S. Code, section 21, which defines income for tax purposes, subsection 11(a) describes that "income from discharge of indebtedness counts as income." Income from discharge of indebtedness—it is the identical language in the Tax Code and in the judicial reporting regulations.

So a loan whose principal is not repaid is reportable income both under judicial ethics law and under tax law. And the law is crystal clear on this point.

Even Justices are told what the law is on this point. So if you go to the "Filing Instructions for Judicial Officers"—this is what the judge gets that tells them how to comply with their filing requirements regarding these disclosures. Here is what it tells them:

Income . . . The disclosure of the gross amount and the type of income—dividends, rent, interest, or income from discharge of indebtedness—is required.

Disclosure of income from discharge of indebtedness is required.

There is nothing very subtle or complicated about that. It couldn't be more straightforward.

If Justice Thomas failed to report a loan that was no longer being collected with a big balance still due and hence was, as a practical matter, forgiven, he likely violated these requirements.

If he failed to file his taxes accordingly, he also likely violated our tax laws. Either of these—either the tax filing or the filing under the judicial disclosure rules—could amount to a false statement under the Criminal Code.

In the first instance, as to the judicial disclosure filings, the law requires the Judicial Conference to determine if there is reason to believe that Justice Thomas's violation may have been willful, in which case it has a legal obligation to report him to the Attorney General for further investigation to settle the question of willfulness.

I have asked the Judicial Conference to consider exactly these facts, and I hope they will do so. It looks like they are. As they do so, here are some things they should consider:

First, this is not Justice Thomas's first brush with this law. A previous episode of yacht and jet travel gifts to him from Harlan Crow actually went to the Judicial Conference for investigation years ago.

In my subcommittee on the Judiciary Committee, we held a hearing about this with a judge who served on the Judicial Conference at the time and could relate to us what transpired

back then with the Crow to Thomas yacht and jet travel undisclosed gifts.

That episode I would describe as a decent burial, but it is not clear now that, with Thomas back as a repeat offender with the same types of gifts from the same billionaire, that he will get the same courtesies from his fellow judges as he did in episode one of Crow to Thomas yacht and jet travel gifts. Indeed, the latest report from the Judicial Conference—they put out two reports a year. This is their report of proceedings for this past fall; i.e., this is their most recent report of proceedings, dated September 12 of last year. It has this rather Delphic sentence in it:

The Committee was also updated on the status of the ongoing review of public written allegations of errors or omissions in a filer's financial disclosure reports that were referred to it since the Conference's last session.

I don't know of any other judge or Justice who has received public written allegations of errors or omissions in that filer's financial disclosure reports other than Justice Thomas. So although there is no name mentioned here, it looks very much like the Thomas investigation is alive and well in the Judicial Conference. If they should determine that there is a question of willfulness in his failure to file, particularly to the extent that it may involve similar failures in tax filings, it is their legal obligation to present that question to the Attorney General. So it appears that the matter remains under active review, and I would conclude by saying that this is to be continued.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, conversations are ongoing. Some issues still need resolution, but we are getting very close on the national security supplemental.

The national security supplemental is so important to enabling us to address multiple crises around the globe. Vladimir Putin has waged war against Ukraine and against Western democracy for nearly 2 years, and America must step up. Israel suffered its bloodiest day last fall at the hands of the terror group Hamas, and millions of innocent Gaza civilians are in need of aid. The Chinese Communist Party threatens to increase tensions in the Indo-Pacific. Our southern border is in urgent need—in urgent need—of fixing.

Addressing these challenges is not easy, but we cannot simply shirk from our responsibilities just because a task is difficult.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

So, for the information of Senators, the Senate will be in session and will hold a vote on Monday, February 5. There is no longer a no-vote day. While we are respectful of Members' schedules and try to limit inconveniences, these challenges at the border, in

Ukraine, and in the Middle East are just too great, and we will need to be here working.

Next, as I said, discussions are going well, so I want Members to be aware that we plan to post the full text of the national security supplemental as early as tomorrow, no later than Sunday. That will give Members plenty of time to read the bill before voting on it.

As for the timing of the vote, I plan to file cloture on the motion to proceed to the vehicle on Monday, leading to the first vote on the national security supplemental no later than Wednesday.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 486.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kurt Campbell, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 486, Kurt Campbell, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

Charles E. Schumer, Benjamin L. Cardin, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Jeff Merkley, Mazie Hirono, Tim Kaine, Richard Blumenthal, Tina Smith, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jack Reed, Margaret Wood Hassan, Richard J. Durbin, Chris Van Hollen, Christopher A. Coons, Jeanne Shaheen, Christopher Murphy.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 473.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Amy M. Baggio, of Oregon, to be United States District Judge for the District of Oregon.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 473, Amy M. Baggio, of Oregon, to be United States District Judge for the District of Oregon.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie K. 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.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, February 1, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

IRAN

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, tensions in the Middle East have escalated dramatically since Hamas, an Iranian-backed terrorist organization, launched its war on Israel on October 7 of last year, killing innocent men, women, and children and taking and still holding up to 132 hostages.

Over the last few months, another Iranian proxy—Iran-backed militias—intensified their attacks throughout the region.

There are Houthis in Yemen, there is Hezbollah in Lebanon, and, of course, as I mentioned, there are the attacks against Americans and American interests by Iranian proxies in Iraq and Syria. These conflicts are playing out thousands of miles away from here, but we are not just a distant and disinterested spectator. Thousands of American troops are stationed in the region—not engaged in combat operations but in carrying out a range of security and intelligence missions and helping the residents and citizens of those nations defend themselves and