

Now Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS have brought us to possibly World War III. It is the weakest administration in the history of the United States of America.

We have become a complete joke in the eyes of the world, which is why I rise today to call on Senator SCHUMER to immediately bring the NDAA to the floor for a vote. Senator SCHUMER has refused to act on this legislation since it passed out of committee on June 13 with bipartisan support. After the events last night, it is imperative now more than ever that we move this bill.

Senator SCHUMER, let's be serious here, if you really care about our military, you will bring the NDAA up for a vote immediately. Stop wasting our time on messaging bills that are a ploy to bail out vulnerable Democratic colleagues in an election. We need a military that is 100 percent focused on protecting our country and enhancing our national security, not implementing the Biden-Harris woke agenda, which is why I have taken steps to return our military to greatness in this year's NDAA.

Among these victories, I count my amendments which will help refocus the Pentagon on its stated mission to deter war and ensure our Nation's security. One of these amendments includes eliminating all funding for the woke diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at the DOD.

Another amendment prohibits the use of taxpayer dollars from being spent on transgender surgeries or any other costs associated with these services.

I appreciate my colleagues on the committee supporting these commonsense amendments that were included in this year's Senate NDAA. I, along with millions of Americans, am scratching my head as to why the DOD has implemented these policies to begin with.

Sadly, no institutions, not even our great military, are safe from infiltration by the Biden-Harris regime's radical woke policies. Immediately after taking the White House, Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS weaponized the DOD, using it as yet another tool in their arsenal to further their progressive agenda. One of the Biden-Harris administration's first moves was mandating diversity, equity, and inclusion training in all the DOD. On day one, the Biden-Harris administration announced the military would be conducting training to "have knowledge of systemic and institutional racism and bias against underserved communities."

This hateful ideology has no place in the United States, let alone our military. The military is not a social experiment. It should be a lethal fighting force feared by our enemies and comprised of our best and brightest. The military should be built on merit, not diversity.

It is dangerous and insulting to waste our troops' valuable time on political indoctrination such as this.

And that is not all. In 2021, the Biden administration announced it would begin directing taxpayer dollars to pay for hormone therapy and transgender surgeries for servicemembers who want to transition to a different gender. It is not the job of the taxpayers to pay for someone to get a controversial elective procedure. American taxpayers' resources should ensure troops who are injured or sick get quality healthcare, timely, as they need it. And taxpayers should not be forced to bankroll these dangerous experimental procedures that often backfire.

Of course, the Biden-Harris administration would rather spend valuable taxpayer dollars on programs that affirm its progressive world view. The DEI and transgender surgery policies at the DOD are just two examples of the woke policies being implemented. We can't forget that the Biden-Harris DOD illegally mandated taxpayer dollars to fund elective abortions in the military. I have spent the better part of 2 years fighting the Biden-Harris administration on this front.

And we cannot forget the Biden-Harris DOD fired more than 8,000 able-bodied troops for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

None of these policies should be DOD priorities. It is a distraction from keeping America safe and secure and the consequences are dangerous.

For decades, support for the U.S. military was one of the few topics that brought Republicans and Democrats together. In the past year, the U.S. House and Senate Armed Services Committee would draft the NDAA, which authorized funding for the military and establish policy priorities for the DOD. These bills were largely bipartisan and not usually controversial. Both parties were united in the belief that the U.S. military should be the most lethal fighting force in the world. There were some policy differences here and there, and there should be. But both parties largely left politics out of the military; that is, until the Biden-Harris administration came to town. It is disappointing we reached a point where we need to legislatively intervene to refocus the Pentagon on its mission to protect and defend our great country, but here we are.

Predictably, the Biden-Harris regime injecting politics in our military has come at a price. The departure from bipartisan, commonsense policies at the DOD has resulted in detrimental impacts to military readiness and lethality.

Take recruitment, for example. In 2023, the Pentagon announced that it fell way short of recruitment goals in what it referred to as "the toughest recruitment year for the military services since the inception of the all-volunteer [Army]."

I would ask: Why would young men and women volunteer to serve in a country and in our military if it has become a place of the far-left indoctrination? Why would they do that?

Why would young men and women join a military that teaches them to hate our country? Why would any patriotic citizen join an organization that is more committed to social justice than defeating our enemies?

I must say, I share their concerns. The military, under today's regime, is not the same military that my dad served in over 60 years ago. It is the sad truth. The recruiting failure has resulted in a national security emergency. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have asked our top military leaders about the decision to focus on woke policies instead of addressing the recruiting crisis. Unsurprisingly, they didn't have an answer for me.

The impact of implementing those leftwing social priorities extends far beyond the recruiting problems here at home.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. These dangerous policies at the DOD have consequences for our military readiness and the world stage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

TRIBUTE TO LAVERNE ALLEN

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I will be brief. Back in the early eighties, disco was popular. I was young, and LaVerne Allen was just coming into the Senate, first as an intern and now as what everybody refers to as the "enforcer" on the floor.

I had to come over here. I am even doing this on a bipartisan basis. I came to the Democratic side of the aisle to trace LaVerne down to force her to get into the picture, probably the first time in her career.

But ladies and gentlemen, a lot of times we take for granted what happens in this Chamber. We don't think about all the hard work the staff does. They get here before us, they leave after us. We don't think about how difficult it is to come to a U.S. Senator and tell them to be quiet. I will tell you, she trains her proteges well because she just had SHERROD BROWN be asked to be quiet by an intern over there, somebody who just started. I saw it happen. LaVerne was about to, but you trained somebody to take your place really well.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have to recognize this place only runs because we have a strong Sergeant at Arms staff and great staff in both cloakrooms and up on the dais.

I did not want this week to pass, when LaVerne is about to take retirement and hopefully spend a little time with her beloved son Marcus, who is in the Navy stationed in Japan right now. I feel like, if it weren't against the rules and it wouldn't make the Parliamentarian mad for me to ask unanimous consent to take a selfie on the floor—I am not going to do that, but I am going to thank LaVerne for 43 years of service to this great institution.

I know we are not supposed to applaud, but I will anyway.

Thank you, Madam President.
(Applause.)

NOMINATION OF MEREDITH A. VACCA

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Meredith Vacca to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York.

Judge Vacca earned her B.A. from Colgate University and her J.D. from the University at Buffalo School of Law. After completing law school, she began her legal career in private practice as an associate attorney at Hamberger & Weiss LLP, where she focused primarily on workers' compensation insurance defense cases. In 2007, Judge Vacca joined the Monroe County District Attorney's Office as an assistant district attorney, where she tried approximately 60 cases to verdict in her 13-year tenure. Since 2021, Judge Vacca has served as a judge on the Monroe County Court, where she has presided over 21 felony trials that have gone to verdict.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Vacca "qualified" to serve on the district court, and she has the strong support of Senators SCHUMER and GILLIBRAND.

Judge Vacca's deep ties to the Rochester, NY, legal community, combined with her courtroom experience both on and off the bench, will ensure that she is ready to meet the demands of the Western District of New York from day one.

I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

VOTE ON THE VACCA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Vacca nomination?

Mr. RISCH. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay."

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 225 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—9

Fetterman	Lee	Scott (SC)
Hoeven	Menendez	Vance
Kelly	Romney	Warner

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.

The senior Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute on the next nomination.

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

NOMINATION OF JOSEPH FRANCIS SAPORITO, JR.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise just for 1 minute to talk about Judge Saporito.

Joe Saporito is someone I have known for decades. He is someone who serves currently and has for the last 9 years as a magistrate judge in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

Prior to his service as a Federal magistrate judge, he served as an assistant public defender over the course of several decades, at the same time doing private practice. So he has broad experience as a magistrate judge, as someone who has been in the courtroom, providing a defense for people, and also serving in private practice.

I have great confidence and I think everyone who has dealt with him has confidence in his integrity, in his judicial temperament, and in his ability to serve with distinction in the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

I would urge a "yes" vote on the cloture vote as well as on his nomination vote.

I yield the floor.

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 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. 709, Joseph Francis Saporito, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Peter Welch, John W. Hickenlooper, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Laphonza R. Butler, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tammy Baldwin, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Brian Schatz, Sheldon Whitehouse.

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 Francis Saporito, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay".

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 226 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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