

where she was working with that organization that provided lifesaving training to healthcare professionals in Los Angeles.

Judge Court then pursued her legal education at Loyola Law School, where she further demonstrated her commitment to public service. As a student, she worked the National Health Law Program, researching healthcare services provided to incarcerated women.

Following law school, Judge Court began her legal career gaining experience in public interest law, including first as a fellow at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Court served in various positions as the deputy director of litigation and then director of litigation and, finally, as vice president and general counsel at Bet Tzedek Legal Services. Bet Tzedek, which translates literally into the “house of justice” in Hebrew, is one of the premier legal services organizations in the United States that focuses on poverty law.

For 10 years, Judge Court provided critical legal services to low-income, elderly, and disabled clients and worked in collaboration with the California Legislature on codifying related policy efforts.

In 2012, Judge Court was sworn in as a judge on the civil division of the Superior Court of Los Angeles. During her time on the court, she presided over approximately 200 civil trials and ruled on 12,000 motions and requests.

In 2023, she received a well-deserved promotion to supervising judge, where she was responsible for overseeing approximately 150 judges in 35 court-houses throughout Los Angeles County.

Judge Court’s robust career has left an impression both on her colleagues and on her community. Since her nomination, she has received letters of support from people and organizations representing a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, including the National Association of Consumer Advocates, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and the Association of African American California Judicial Officers, Inc.

And several in California’s legal community have come forward voicing their strong support for Judge Court. California Women Judges said:

Her calm demeanor, thorough preparation, and deep knowledge of whatever the subject is will serve her well in addressing any audience, answering questions, and keeping the discussions focused.

Five current supervising L.A. County Superior Court judges say:

She is currently serving as the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division of the largest unified trial court in the Nation. Judge Court was selected for this position, in part, due to her administrative skills, technical knowledge, and being a subject matter expert in civil law procedure. Her strong management skills are illustrated by her innovative approaches to lessening the civil case backlog during the pandemic.

In addition to the important professional experience that Judge Court

brings to the Central District, she also brings a unique lived experience. If confirmed to this position, she would be only the third Black woman actively serving as an article III judge in this court and only the fifth in the court’s history.

Her nomination is an important step towards building trust in our legal system by ensuring that our Federal courts reflect and represent the diversity of the people it serves.

Judge Court’s dozen years of experience in the superior court, including as supervising judge, demonstrate her ability to smoothly transition to the district court.

Given her remarkable track record serving Californians from all walks of life, I have the utmost certainty in Judge Court’s readiness for this role. She is prepared and has demonstrated. So I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting her nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Missouri.

ENSURING NATIONWIDE ACCESS TO A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE ACT

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a very, very important piece of bipartisan legislation that, frankly, is personal to me. It is something that I believe is not only necessary but is common sense, and it is something that all of us can get behind and support wholeheartedly, and that is my bipartisan Ensuring Nationwide Access to a Better Life Experience Act, otherwise known as the ENABLE Act.

As I noted before, this fight is personal for me. In my maiden speech nearly a year ago, I detailed that my call to enter public service was primarily because of my son Stephen. My wife Jaime and I noticed a birthmark on Stephen’s leg when he was just a few months old, and I joke about how we thought so little of this initially that my wife trusted me to take Stephen to the doctor. We took him there, and it was discovered that he had more of these and that he had something called tuberous sclerosis, which is a rare genetic condition where tumors form on various organs, including his brain. So Stephen has been affected by that pretty severely. He is nonverbal. He is on the autism spectrum and has epilepsy.

So we have had this journey with our son Stephen, including a 4-hour seizure, and through that process and that journey with my son, went through what I have referred to as a discernment process where—trying to decide what I wanted to do. I knew there was something more that I wanted to do,

and for me, that calling was public service, so I decided to run for office.

That is nearly 20 years ago now, but that journey that began with Stephen 20 years ago certainly affects how I view the world and the things that I passionately get behind, and this happens to be one of those.

So here we are. That focus has led to legislation—not just my time in Missouri but now here in the Senate—and to be a voice, to be a voice for individuals with disabilities.

ABLE accounts were created by Congress and signed by the President nearly 10 years ago. So one of the focuses that I have is to give those with disabilities a voice and achieving a better life experience with those accounts. These accounts were created in 2014 to allow individuals with disabilities and their families to save and invest for their future through tax-free savings accounts without losing any eligibility for Federal programs like Medicaid and supplemental security.

This has long been a priority since I entered the political arena. While serving in the Missouri State Senate, I helped lead a successful effort to authorize Missouri’s ABLE account program. During my time as State treasurer, before I was attorney general, I was proud to launch and champion the MO ABLE Program, helping Missourians with disabilities save and invest for their future. I know firsthand how beneficial these programs have been, considering my son Stephen was account No. 1 in the Missouri ABLE Program.

There are over 162,000 of these ABLE accounts nationwide since the program’s inception back in 2014. Thanks to these life-changing accounts, people with disabilities are empowered to secure employment and actively participate in society, to be their own person. These accounts empower individuals with disabilities.

Unfortunately, there are three ABLE provisions that are set to expire in 2025. The sunset of these important provisions would create unnecessary barriers for individuals with disabilities to save for their future needs while also likely ensuring further utilization of Federal safety net programs. Sunsetting these programs would keep individuals with disabilities out of the workforce unnecessarily.

Recently, I introduced the ENABLE Act, which would permanently enshrine these provisions into law, providing certainty to those individuals and their families. These provisions are not only nonpartisan, but they have also played an outsized role in the lives of those this program serves.

Again, this simply allows individuals with disabilities to save the money they earn at their jobs. All people deserve access to save and to be financially secure, and this legislation would protect this access for the future.

This bill is exactly why I entered public office in the first place—to fight

for those who needed a voice. It is a commonsense, bipartisan solution that provides an easy fix for those who depend on ABLE accounts.

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 bill 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. 706, Michelle Williams Court, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Laphonza R. Butler, Peter Welch, Gary C. Peters, Chris Van Hollen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tina Smith, Jack Reed, Christopher Murphy, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Tim Kaine, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, 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 Michelle Williams Court, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent; the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 244 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—44

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

McConnell	Risch	Sullivan
Moran	Romney	Thune
Mullin	Rubio	Tuberville
Murkowski	Schmitt	Wicker
Paul	Scott (FL)	Young
Ricketts	Scott (SC)	

NOT VOTING—5

Graham	Tillis	Wyden
Rounds	Vance	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

FARM BILL

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I come from a State not exactly like yours, but we share the fact that we provide the energy, the fiber, and the food for this country and much of the world.

There is a crisis that is with us, and that crisis is growing, and the consequences are dire.

I was in my State of Kansas, as many of my colleagues were at home during the month of August. I traveled the State from corner to corner, putting 5,600 miles on my truck. I talked to lots of people, and I listened to even more.

In addition to those conversations, last week, farm groups, commodity groups, and farm organizations made a call on Washington, DC, to highlight what I am highlighting today. Included in those visits were those who sell farm equipment in Kansas and across the country.

Yesterday morning, before coming to Washington, DC, I spoke to an agricultural outlook conference in Kansas City. Today, I just walked across the street from visiting with bankers from the Kansas Bankers Association who are in the Nation's Capital as well today.

The message I bring to my colleagues is that agriculture is in serious condition. Input costs have risen dramatically. The things that farmers buy in order to put a crop in the ground and to harvest that crop have escalated amazingly in a way that is so damaging, while the price they receive for what they grow has diminished. So the cost of seed, fertilizer, diesel fuel, natural gas, interest costs—all of which are significant components of the farmers in Kansas and the country—they are at a point in which there is no profitability in most circumstances for agriculture today.

I would add that my couple of visits in Kansas with farm equipment manufacturers—we manufacture lots of farm equipment—and in places like Salina and Abilene, the circumstances of those businesses are in dire shape because farmers no longer can afford to buy the equipment they manufacture.

The issue here is the farm bill. We neared expiration of the 2018 farm bill. It was clear we needed to write a new farm bill and get it completed. It hasn't happened. It is past due. That is not unusual, but in this circumstance this year, it is significant.

Decisions not to get a farm bill done have come home to roost, and the fami-

lies of farmers and those farmers and ranchers and the communities in which they live, work, and provide the economic viability of the community and at the same time produce the food, fuel, and fiber that America and the world need—those days of the capability of doing that are waning because of input costs, and you add to that the drought that has been suffered by many parts of my State. Farm income has declined 43 percent over the past 5 years, and net farm income is expected to be 27 percent lower this year than it was in 2022.

Our agricultural trade deficit—something we always were proud about, as we exported more than we imported in agriculture—is a \$42.5 billion deficit. We import more than we export. It puts our farmers even more at risk, and it threatens the stability and security of our national economy.

So my plea to my colleagues is this: There aren't many weeks left between now and when Congress recesses for the month of October. We return in November and December, and we ought to use this opportunity to pass at least an extension of the current farm bill and at the same time, make certain that assistance is provided to the farmers to get them through the circumstance they are in. By the time we get a farm bill passed and by the time we get that assistance—that safety net that comes in title I of the farm bill—actually to farmers, it will be too late to address the challenges Kansas and American farmers face today.

The goal in my remarks today is to bring the awareness of this issue to my colleagues and indicate that the direction we need to go is two-prong: pass an extension of the farm bill, which provides certainty and the ability for lenders and borrowers, bankers and farmers to come together and make long-term decisions. It is time for farmers to renew their credit line, and without the passage or extension of the current farm bill, the ability for a banker to make that decision to benefit the farmer begins to disappear.

So we need a farm bill in place even if it is the current one, but the current one is insufficient to meet the needs of the disaster that is occurring in the incomes of farmers across the country.

Last week—I think it was Thursday afternoon—Senator STABENOW and I visited here on the Senate floor—I point in that direction over there—and we had a conversation. Senator STABENOW indicated that she recognizes the challenge that farmers—the dire circumstances they are in today.

Subsequent to that, I have met with and had conversations with Senator BOOZMAN from Arkansas, my colleague who is the ranking Republican on the Agriculture Committee, and with JOHN HOEVEN, the ranking member of our Ag Appropriations Subcommittee. I want all of us to work together to accomplish what I just described: long-term extension and a shorter term disaster assistance plan. Those conversations have begun, and I