

vetting was complete and until this body, which is a safeguard for our national security, had all the information that it needed. It doesn't.

Despite the poor due diligence on this nominee, there is still time for the Senate to do the right thing. I know it won't. I know this is essentially going to be a party-line vote. The Democrats want this person; they are going to get him.

If we truly care about advancing American and U.S. leadership in the Arctic and tackling the threats posed by our adversaries, we must do better—a lot better—than deliberately putting personnel in place that can pose a risk to national security. This appointment is such an appointment. This is not some political person going into a place where they can't do any harm. This is a person who is going to be at the crossroads of national security, dealing with people from China, for instance, every one of whom is an agent of the Chinese Communist Party, because every Chinese national is an agent of the Communist Party, and they have no ability to conduct themselves freely.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on the nomination of Michael Sfraga for Ambassador at Large for Arctic Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Colorado.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1555

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion with respect to the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 457, H.R. 1555, ripen at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, no later than Thursday, September 26, 2024.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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. 550, Michael Sfraga, of Alaska, to be Ambassador at Large for Arctic Affairs.

Charles E. Schumer, Benjamin L. Cardin, Raphael G. Warnock, Ben Ray Lujan, Patty Murray, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Tammy Baldwin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Angus S. King, Jr., Michael F. Bennet, Mark Kelly, Jeanne Shaheen, Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen, Debbie Stabenow, Brian Schatz.

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 Michael Sfraga, of Alaska, to be Am-

bassador at Large for Arctic Affairs, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 250 Ex.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—36

Barrasso	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Johnson	Rounds
Britt	Kennedy	Rubio
Budd	Lankford	Schmitt
Crapo	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Daines	Marshall	Thune
Ernst	McConnell	Tuberville
Fischer	Moran	Wicker
Grassley	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—8

Butler	Cotton	Tillis
Cardin	Hyde-Smith	Vance
Coons	Sullivan	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The yeas are 56, the nays are 36.

The motion is agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:19 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON SFRAGA NOMINATION

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

Mr. PADILLA. 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 California (Ms. BUTLER), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 251 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Helmy	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Booker	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kelly	Sinema
Capito	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Lujan	Tester
Cassidy	Manchin	Tillis
Collins	Markey	Van Hollen
Cornyn	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Mullin	Warnock
Cramer	Murkowski	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Welch
Fetterman	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—36

Barrasso	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Johnson	Rounds
Britt	Kennedy	Rubio
Budd	Lankford	Schmitt
Crapo	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Daines	Marshall	Thune
Ernst	McConnell	Tuberville
Fischer	Moran	Wicker
Grassley	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—9

Butler	Cotton	Sanders
Cardin	Durbin	Sullivan
Coons	Hyde-Smith	Vance

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I am rising right now to speak about the urgency to quickly confirm two bipartisan members to the U.S. Sentencing Commission. Time is really of the essence as the term of two voting members, Judge Claria Horn Boom and Judge John Gleeson, will expire this Congress.

For decades, the Senate has come together and confirmed all Commissioners to the Sentencing Commission by a voice vote and, on one occasion, two members by unanimous consent after they had been considered by the Judiciary Committee. This used to be just something easily done. There is no reason to depart from this incredible bipartisan precedent. We must confirm these two nominees today.

Just as a reminder, Congress created the Sentencing Commission in 1984 as an independent Agency, housed in the judicial branch, to reduce sentencing disparities and to promote transparency and proportionality in sentencing. By statute, the Commission must have bipartisan representation amongst its members. It calls for our coming together. This mandate reflects the consensus-driven, evidence-based approach Congress has envisioned in making Federal criminal sentencing fairer and more balanced for the United States of America.

The Sentencing Commission plays a critical role in our Federal legal system. It establishes sentencing policies and practices for Federal courts, and it promulgates and amends the sentencing guidelines, which serve as the cornerstone for every Federal judge when deciding a criminal sentence. It is deeply imperative that the Commission maintain a full slate of voting members to continue this profound work.

Recent history has shown us what happens when the Commission is deprived of its full membership. From 2019 to 2022, the Commission lacked a voting quorum and could not update the sentencing guidelines in response to new Federal criminal statutes, including the big bipartisan work we did to get the First Step Act passed and signed by Donald Trump. Without direction on how to implement the new provisions and criminal penalties, circuit courts split over the proper interpretation of the guidelines, resulting in disparate sentences for people who are dependent solely on which circuit court they were tried in. In other words, there was no equal justice under the law. There wasn't fairness or proportionality.

So, consistent with this Commission's mandate, these nominees have to and will need to continue to function in our bipartisan way—the vision. It is up to us to work in this bipartisan way. Therefore, I ask now to confirm two bipartisan members of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, Judge Claria Horn Boom and Judge Gleeson.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 602 and 603; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. That word is difficult to say, but it seems like that happened quicker than even my saying that word. With something so important as this, I was hoping for more of an understanding of why this is being blocked.

Again, perhaps one of the greatest marks of this institution, in my 10 years of experience, has been the times we have come together—multiple times—to make our justice system more just.

This seems, to me, to be obstructionist to the hopes that we can be a nation that ends this partisanship, that ends this unnecessary partisanship—excuse me—and that ends the sort of tribalism that is making this institution less operative.

We all come here from various parts of our great Nation to get things done, and there seems to be this pattern in the United States of America of our finding less comity, less togetherness.

I love what Martin Luther King said; that we are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied with a garment of destiny, in that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

When it comes to the exercise of justice in our country, it is clear, by not having a bipartisan majority sitting on this body, that we create injustice, which, ultimately, hurts our democracy and our highest ideals.

We started this day by pledging allegiance to that flag, where we said with “liberty and justice for all.” It pains me today, with the stopping of this unanimous consent, that we are not fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of that pledge.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### 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. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 789.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of April M. Perry, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

#### 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 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. 789, April M. Perry, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Ben Ray Lujan, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeanne Shaheen, Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Richard Blumenthal, Tammy Duckworth, Tammy Baldwin, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, September 24, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I come to the floor today, Mr. President, to support the nomination of David Kostelancik to be U.S. Ambassador to Albania.

For over 35 years, Mr. Kostelancik has served as a career member of the Foreign Service and a qualified and exemplary candidate to represent the United States in an allied capital. He also served in Congress as the senior State Department adviser to the Helsinki Commission.

Like so many of our career Foreign Service officers, Mr. Kostelancik has dedicated his career to serving the United States at home and abroad. He served in Albania before, as well as overseas assignments in Türkiye, Russia, and Hungary, where he led our Embassy as Charge d'Affaires for nearly 2 years. Most recently, he served as Foreign Policy Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

It is clear that we have a highly qualified candidate to serve as Ambassador to Albania. But I also want to talk about why it is so critical that we confirm an ambassador to Albania and that we do it without delay.

Albania is a real success story for American foreign policy. Just 30 years ago, Albania was waking up from more than four decades of communist rule.