

to provide up to 100,000 soldiers in the coming months, from North Korea to Russia, to fight in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Iran and its proxies have been attacking U.S. shipments in the Red Sea and have launched a terrorist attack against our greatest strategic ally in the Middle East, which is Israel. It is no secret—it is well-known—that China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are working in concert to undermine American interests and to threaten the stability of the global world order. So we should not add our name to the list by helping them with the gift of unrestrained, nontransparent American investment.

I would urge all of our colleagues to not let politics stand in the way of our national security. We cannot stand by and continue selling the communists in China the rope they will use to hang the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call vote.

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

#### RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, we are come to the end now of 2024, to the end of another legislative session—indeed, to the end of another Congress. And before this Congress congratulates itself on finishing its legislative work next week, I must come again here to this floor and remind my colleagues that hundreds of thousands of good Americans are still waiting for this Congress to act, waiting for justice to be done in their cases.

I am talking about the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have been poisoned by nuclear radiation by their own government. I am talking about the people of St. Louis, MO, an original uranium processing site dating back to the Manhattan Project 50, 60 years ago now.

The people of St. Louis did their duty proudly, patriotically; but the government didn't do right by them. What did the government do when the Manhattan Project was shut down? The government took that nuclear waste, that radioactive material, and dumped it into a public landfill. They allowed it to seep into our groundwater. They allowed it to be distributed across the region so that now, in the greater St. Louis area and the greater St. Charles area, thousands upon thousands of Missourians have been exposed to nuclear waste and radiation for decades.

And even as I stand here today, the radiation continues. The groundwater is still in doubt. Coldwater Creek is still contaminated. Just a few weeks ago, the Army Corps of Engineers discovered additional nuclear radioactive material under residents' homes in suburban St. Louis. Weldon Spring is still not fully remediated. And no one—I emphasize "no one"—in the State of

Missouri has received a dime in compensation from the Federal Government for the decades of radioactive exposure that this government forced upon them.

And the people of Missouri are not alone. The same story is repeated over and over in places like New Mexico and Arizona and in Idaho and in Colorado and in Wyoming and Montana—and I could go on—hundreds of thousands of Americans, exposed through no fault of their own, many of them veterans, I might add, many of them miners who went to work in uranium mines to provide the critical material that allowed us to support our nuclear program, that allowed us to win both the Second World War and the Cold War.

And what has the U.S. Government done for these good Americans—veterans, laymen, one and all? What has the government done for them? Nothing. It has exposed them to nuclear radiation and done nothing.

That is why this body finally acted this year, passing with a huge bipartisan majority legislation that would finally compensate and honor those Americans who served their country, who gave their health and in many cases, yes, gave their lives for this country's national security as part of our nuclear program.

Mr. President, while this body has acted, the House has not. And here we are now, at the end of this calendar year, at the end of this legislative session; and because the House has waited and because the House has stalled and because the House has failed to act, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Program has now fully expired—fully expired—so that no American, no veteran, no one across the country who has been exposed by the government to this radioactive waste—not a single person has been compensated for the cancers that they have contracted, compensated for the loved ones whom they have lost to radioactive-related diseases—nobody. It is completely dark. No one is getting anything.

And now we are told, Mr. President, that at this eleventh hour, after this body has passed legislation, not once but twice, to fairly compensate these good Americans, after this body has acted to ensure that these good Americans get the justice that they deserve, now, at this eleventh hour, after the House has allowed the program to expire, we are told that now House leadership is considering a backroom deal, a backroom deal to be shoved into an end-of-the-year package next week that would select just a few counties in one State, the State of Utah—just a few counties to compensate and exclude everybody else. I cannot emphasize to the Presiding Officer enough what an offense this would be.

For months now, victims have met with House leadership and negotiated with them a path forward. I have negotiated with House leadership. Many here have engaged in this effort to find a way to get the House to act and com-

pensate these good Americans who have been poisoned. And now, at this last minute, for House leadership to be preparing, as reports indicate they are, to shove down the throats of these victims across the country a backroom deal that excludes almost all of them—almost all of them—is not only unacceptable, but it is absolutely offensive. It is unjust. It is wrong.

President Reagan used to say that sometimes there really are simple answers, just not easy ones. Let's be direct about this. What House leadership is considering here, there is a simple way to describe it: It is wrong. It is just flat out wrong. There is no more nuance needed than that.

And who will suffer if House leadership puts up a backroom deal, rigged for only a few insiders, excluding most of the country? Who will suffer? I will tell you who will suffer. It will be people like the young children of Jana Elementary in my home State of Missouri, an elementary school that had to close over a year ago because of continuing radioactive contamination right there in the St. Louis area. This elementary school is right near the creek that is still contaminated. The entire school had to shut down. Who knows how many children had been exposed, by the way, before that happened. The entire school closed. It is still closed. It will remain closed, and every child will remain uncompensated and exposed until the House chooses to act.

Think about Leslie Begay, a member of the Navajo Nation. No one contributed more to the defense of this country than the proud members of the Navajo Nation. In the Second World War, in the Cold War, and still today, their rates of volunteer service for our military are higher than any other community in the entire country. And nobody suffered more from the fallout of the nuclear program than the Navajo Nation, including Leslie, who has had a double lung transplant.

If the House fails to act, if the House forces a backroom deal through this body, Leslie and thousands of others like him will be uncompensated, will be unhonored, will be unrecognized. It is wrong, Mr. President.

Consider Claire, a young girl from Missouri, diagnosed with a radiation-related illness when she was born, going through chemotherapy when she was just a child, age 2.

Consider Bernice Gutierrez, from the great State of New Mexico. Every member of Bernice's family for three generations now has had cancer and multiple radiation-related illnesses because they were downwind of the original Oppenheimer tests that carried that radioactive nuclear cloud over so much of our country.

Consider Zach Visintine from the State of Missouri: born with cancer, died at the age of 2. He never had a chance. Why? Well, because his mother grew up along Coldwater Creek in the St. Louis region of Missouri that is still, to this day, contaminated.

None of these people—none of them—have been helped by their government with the expenses, with the losses, with the pain that the government forced on them—not a one of them.

Mr. President, it is time to act, and I want to be crystal clear about this. If the House persists, if House leadership persists and attempts to force into a CR package a partial, backroom, special-interest deal that excludes these good people, I will object; and if they come to this body asking for a time agreement at the end of the session to pass that package, I will object.

I want to be clear about this. There is no way forward for a partial, backroom deal—no way. I will stand in the way, on behalf of every one of these Americans, as long as it takes, until justice is done. This is the time. This body has acted, and I call on the House to act. What we should do instead of their backroom deal is pass what this body has already passed: generous compensation—fair, just compensation, with a spending limit, that will fairly honor, recognize, and help these good Americans who deserve it. This isn't a handout; this is justice. This is recognition of what these good Americans have done and what they have suffered.

You know, we are near upon Christmas now, and it is sort of old-fashioned, but it used to be around Christmastime sometimes we would talk about the Christmas feeling or the Christian feeling. Well, I would just observe this: What does that Christian feeling consist of if not, in the words of Micah, "doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God"? This is a chance, I might just say, to do just that: to do justice, to show kindness, to fulfill our duty to our fellow Americans.

The Scripture admonishes us to be not just hearers but doers as well. As this year comes to a close, let's be doers of justice. Let's be demonstrators of kindness. Let's do what is right by our fellow Americans. Let's honor our countrymen for what they have done. Let's right this wrong finally, this 50-year wrong. Let's right it. Let's end the year and end the Congress with this historic righting of a wrong, and then we can say to our constituents and to our fellow Americans "Merry Christmas." Then we can say we have truly done our jobs here.

Until that time, Mr. President, I will be here, I will be standing, and I will be advocating on their behalf.

I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Keli Marie Neary, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

#### NOMINATION OF KELI M. NEARY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Keli Marie Neary to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. She is an accomplished litigator who has devoted her entire legal career to public service in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

After receiving her undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and her law degree from Widener University Commonwealth Law School, Ms. Neary clerked on the 41st Judicial District of Pennsylvania for Perry and Juniata Counties.

Following her clerkship, Ms. Neary served as an assistant counsel in the Governor's Office of General Counsel, assigned to the Pennsylvania State Police's Office of Chief Counsel. She specialized in enforcement of the Gaming Act, personnel litigation, contract interpretation, and firearms-related due process hearings.

Since 2012, Ms. Neary has worked at the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General (OAG), currently serving as the executive deputy attorney general for the civil law division. At the OAG, she represents and defends a broad array of different government agencies, officials, and employees in matters before State and Federal courts and defends constitutional challenges to Pennsylvania statutes and regulations.

Over the course of her career, Ms. Neary has tried 13 cases to verdict. She has also participated in the briefing of hundreds of trial and appellate matters in State and Federal courts and argued numerous motions and injunctions.

Ms. Neary has the strong support of her home State Senators, Mr. CASEY and Mr. FETTERMAN. In addition, she was unanimously rated "qualified" by the American Bar Association.

I urge my colleagues to support Ms. Neary's nomination.

#### VOTE ON NEARY NOMINATION

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

Mr. CRAPO. 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 Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 318 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Baldwin	Cardin	Durbin
Bennet	Carper	Fetterman
Blumenthal	Casey	Gillibrand
Booker	Coons	Hassan
Brown	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Cantwell	Duckworth	Hickenlooper

Hirono	Ossoff	Stabenow
Kaine	Padilla	Tester
Kelly	Peters	Van Hollen
Kim	Reed	Warner
King	Rosen	Warnock
Klobuchar	Sanders	Warren
Lujan	Schatz	Welch
Manchin	Schiff	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schumer	Wyden
Murphy	Shaheen	
Murray	Smith	

NAYS—48

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

NOT VOTING—3

Markey	Sinema	Vance
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). 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 Senator from Minnesota.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, at 3:45 p.m. today, I ask the Chair to execute the order of November 20 with respect to the Dixon nomination.

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

#### RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:42 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

#### FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to say good-bye, as difficult as this may be.

Marylanders have trusted me to represent them for 20 years in the Maryland General Assembly, 8 years as speaker of the house, 20 years in the House of Representatives, and 18 years in the U.S. Senate, including now chairing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Let me start by thanking Marylanders for giving me your trust to represent you in this august body. You have supported me in 18 elections. The Hebrew letter for 18 is chai, which also means life—58 years of my life.

My grandparents came to this country over 100 years ago to escape the pogroms of Europe, and they settled in