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No. 33

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, February 21, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, send Your peace into our hearts. Hasten the day when nations will live in friendship, united by their allegiance to You. May the Members of this body seek to build with You a world without dividing walls and partisan strife. Keep our lawmakers faithful in their efforts to unite our Nation and world.

Lord, strengthen them to work together for the common good as You place Your peace that passes all understanding in their hearts. Help them to set country above party and place Your will above all else.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2034

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 7, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 7), setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF KELLY LOEFFLER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senate will soon confirm Kelly Loeffler. She will then be the next Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

As a former colleague in the Senate representing Georgia, I know she understands the needs of small business in both rural and urban areas. I am very sympathetic to the needs of small businesses. These small businesses have experienced disruptions from the

pandemic, labor shortages, inflation, and supply chain issues. I meet with many small business owners as I travel throughout Iowa, and I hear about the policy issues that are important to them.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. During the past 20 years, small businesses have created 75 percent of the new private nonfarm jobs in the United States. We always hear about excessive taxes and regulations affecting small businesses standing in the way of small businesses making the investments that would drive even more job growth. I have consistently supported legislation and policies to keep small businesses robust and prosperous.

I look forward to working with Senator Loeffler to advance Iowa's small business priorities and improve the policies of the Small Business Administration.

I recently met with her in my office, and one of the items that I stressed was the importance of responding to congressional letters and queries. I didn't do that just because the Small Business nominee was before me. I do this with all the nominees that come to my office because we have this constitutional responsibility of checks and balances, doing proper oversight of the laws and money that we appropriate being handled by the executive branch of government because we all know Congress not only passes laws and appropriates money, but we have to make sure that the President faithfully executes those laws and spends the money appropriately.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Oversight then allows us to hold bureaucrats accountable to the rule of law and, most importantly, keep faith with the taxpayers because if we have transparency in government, we have greater accountability. The public's business must be public.

I fully expect the new Administrator to respond to all congressional inquiries in a timely and responsive manner. I look forward, then, to working soon with Administrator Loeffler to support policies to keep our small businesses strong and to keep them productive.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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 (Mr. MULLIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, every single Senate Republican signed their name onto Donald Trump's plan to cut taxes for their billionaire buddies. Republicans and pundits all seem to be focused on this dispute between one bill or two bills. Donald Trump keeps changing his mind. One day, he says two bills is OK, and then just this morning he wants one bill.

Trump and Republicans have been all over the lot, and this morning the confusion continues. But frankly, this is all a sideshow. Republicans could do 2 bills, 10 bills, 50 bills, 100 bills. It doesn't make a difference because Donald Trump and House and Senate Republicans are united where it matters most: They want to give their billionaire buddies a tax break and have the American people pay the cost, no matter how many bills.

This is going to be a long, drawn-out fight. The debate we begin this week will spill into next week and the week after and go on possibly further. We will have late nights here on the floor, exposing the Republicans' hypocrisy on healthcare, on national security, on job creation, on inflation, and most of all on where their main focus is, their North Star: tax breaks for their billionaire buddies.

Democrats are glad to have this debate with the Republicans. We are glad to expose the truth here on the Senate floor. No matter how Republicans spin it, their No. 1 goal is tax cuts for their billionaire buddies. They are laying the groundwork to defund Medicaid and raise healthcare costs for tens of millions of working families all so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Republicans are preparing to cut nutrition programs that feed hungry kids so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break. Repub-

licans are making it harder for Americans to own a home so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Republicans are preparing to slash NIH funding and reduce the chances that we get cures for so many illnesses that affect tens of millions. They are slashing NIH funding even as a measles outbreak is breaking out in Texas. All—all—so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Republicans are getting ready to kill thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of clean jobs in order to put more money in the pocket of Big Oil executives all so they can give their billionaire buddies another tax break.

Of course, Republicans know how unpopular these tax cuts are. I don't hear them getting on the floor and saying we need to cut the taxes on the richest people in America. Oh, no. They will keep trying to divert and change the subject, just like when Donald Trump tries to change the subject by talking about the Gulf of Mexico; we are annexing Canada; we are building hotels in Gaza.

These are all distractions—distractions—to hide Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the Republicans' real goal: Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Republicans are trying to give their billionaire buddies a tax break and have you—you—pay the cost.

Republicans can do it in one bill. They can do it in two bills. They can do it in a whole bunch of bills. It doesn't matter. The endgame is the same: tax breaks paid for on the backs of working and middle-class families.

We will not relent. We are going to continue to expose Republicans for what they are doing in giving tax breaks for billionaires. We are going to do it in reconciliation, in the budget, and throughout the months and years ahead because the American people don't want it.

The Republicans are trying to hide it. We won't let them hide it. It is going to be front and center as we go through these debates.

UKRAINE

Mr. President. In a FOX News interview released last night, President Trump spoke about the war in Ukraine, and some of his comments sounded straight from a Russian propaganda playbook. Rather than speak the truth, rather than acknowledge Vladimir Putin's role in starting this war, President Trump amazingly blamed Ukraine for Putin's invasion.

To quote the President: "You should never have started it," he said. He was saying that to President Zelenskyy. This is disgusting—disgusting—after how this man has fought so hard and so valiantly, and it deliberately distorts the truth.

It is just awful to see an American President—it is disgusting to see an American President turn against one of our friends and openly side with a thug like Vladimir Putin. It is shameful to hear the President repeat Putin's prop-

aganda while laying the groundwork for negotiations that favor Russia at Ukraine's expense. The people of Ukraine did not start this war. Vladimir Putin did.

Ukrainians have fought and died on the battlefield to defend their home. The suffering and destruction of the Ukrainian country and the Ukrainian people that they have endured is staggering all because of Vladimir Putin.

Let's not forget, America—maybe there are some who say enough already—if we give in to Putin now, America will inevitably pay the price later. That is what history has shown. When you give in to thugs, when you give in to dictators, you pay the price. Hasn't Donald Trump and his allies learned the lessons of history?

This is not just about the security of another nation. This struggle is, in every way, about the ultimate security of the American people. Make no mistake, right now the Kremlin is overjoyed by what Donald Trump is saying and what he is doing. Every single Republican must be put on record for President Trump's dangerous and false statements about the war in Ukraine.

We have an obligation in the Senate to take a stand for the truth and take a stand against autocrats, and we will do it shortly. The American people deserve to know, Will Republicans take a stand for democracy and freedom around the world or will they cater to Putin and Russia like Trump is doing with ultimately bad consequences for all of us?

FAA

Mr. President, the more Donald Trump and DOGE indiscriminately hack away at public Agencies, the greater harm to Americans' well-being and even their safety. The FAA is a good example.

Just weeks after the deadliest plane crash in a long time and just as we see more incidents around the country, President Trump has fired hundreds of FAA workers, including air safety personnel. Firing people whose very job it is to keep air travel safe is nothing short of reckless.

Now, the White House accused us of linking the crash of the Minneapolis flight directly with FAA cuts and staffing. Nothing could be further from the truth. I simply said that when there are fewer FAA personnel, the skies are less safe.

Does Donald Trump deny that there are fewer FAA staffers? Does Donald Trump deny that when he fires FAA workers, including workers who focus on safety, it makes travel less safe? Of course, Donald Trump is obfuscating once again. He doesn't want the truth to come out, but he should correct course immediately and halt these firings because the safety of the skies is at risk.

Now, of course, we know that President Trump ignores the truth, but we need to speak the truth when people's safety is at stake. Here are the facts: Something went terribly wrong on the

flight that took off from Minneapolis. That is clear. An investigation is underway, and as I said yesterday, I await their results.

Similarly, something went terribly wrong a few weeks ago on the flight from Kansas to Washington, DC, that claimed 67 people's lives. Here are more facts: Donald Trump and Elon Musk have fired hundreds of FAA staffers, including safety specialists—the very people who keep our skies safe—all so Republicans can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Why—why—at a time when incidents in the air and on the runways and in our airports seem to be increasing, why would we cut the very people meant to prevent them? Simple: Donald Trump and DOGE are doing it like they are doing so much else so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

I hope the results of these ongoing investigations into recent incidents will produce findings that Congress can implement to save lives and make the skies safer. In the meantime, we must prioritize Americans' safety and not cut vital FAA jobs.

These are the facts, plain and simple. Donald Trump may not like the facts. Donald Trump may not like the truth, but turning away from the facts will only hurt the American people and put lives in danger. That is a fact.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF KELLY LOEFFLER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote to confirm former Senator Kelly Loeffler to lead the Small Business Administration.

Small business is in Kelly Loeffler's blood. She grew up on her family's fourth-generation farm in Illinois. In addition to the farm, her dad ran a small trucking company. And, as a young woman, Kelly Loeffler worked in the soybean fields and waited tables at small restaurants in the heartland. And she was the first person in her family to graduate from college, before embarking on a successful career in business herself. As Senator Loeffler put it, she has spent her life "working in small businesses, starting them, growing them, and helping them succeed."

Helping small businesses succeed, that is the work of the Small Business Administration. As a former staffer at the SBA under President Reagan, I know how important it is that this Agency be an effective partner and champion of small business, and I know that is how Kelly Loeffler will run the SBA.

Most of us know Kelly from her time serving here in the U.S. Senate. She may have only served for 1 year, but it was a critical year for small business policy.

Of course, in 2020, the mission was helping small businesses survive. Senator Loeffler worked to help Georgia's small businesses keep their doors open and their employees on the payroll. She sought to ensure critical support was getting to small businesses in her State and around the country. And she was a leader in SBA oversight, especially in ensuring that relief meant for small businesses wasn't going to abortion providers in violation of Federal law.

It has been a challenging few years for small businesses. First, there was the pandemic; then, inflation, workforce challenges, burdensome regulations. Natural disasters have struck many parts of the country, and small businesses suffered as SBA allowed its disaster loan account to run dry.

America's entrepreneurs are one of America's greatest assets, and they have a big role to play in our future prosperity. Senator Loeffler will be their champion. She will focus the SBA to be a more effective partner to small businesses, help entrepreneurs make their dreams reality, and help our entire economy grow by helping to grow Main Street. She plans to modernize the SBA and make it more responsive to the needs of the Americans it is supposed to serve, and she has pledged to bring accountability and transparency where it is sorely needed.

Kelly Loeffler knows there is nothing small about small business. Every decision an entrepreneur makes is a big decision. It is their livelihood, their dreams, and their future that are on the line.

Kelly Loeffler understands this, and I look forward to working with her to support small businesses and to strengthen our economy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SECOND AMENDMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, President Trump issued an Executive order titled "Protecting Second Amendment Rights." This Executive order reaffirmed constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms, which, of course, is part of the Bill of Rights—the most precious of those rights and liberties that have been protected since the beginning of our country.

This Executive order directs Attorney General Pam Bondi to review and develop a plan to rescind President

Biden's overreach when it comes to firearm regulation.

The President's Executive order comes on the heels of 4 years of President Biden's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives—otherwise known as ATF—from trampling on Americans' Second Amendment rights. It started in 2021 with the Biden administration's so-called zero-tolerance policy. President Biden's ATF used this policy to revoke the licenses of firearms licensees, or FFLs, over minor bookkeeping violations.

For decades, the ATF had a history of working with the FFLs to address minor, unintentional violations and actually help correct them. Historically, they would only revoke an FFL license in more extreme situations where the FFL had engaged in major, willful violations of the law and where these violations presented a threat to public safety.

But the Biden administration violated decades of precedent by directing the ATF to engage in a zero-tolerance policy by simply pulling the plug on any licensee who made an honest mistake on their paperwork.

Any of us who pay taxes, which would be most of us, know how tedious Federal processes can be. I can't imagine anyone who would want to be investigated for tax fraud for making a simple mistake on their tax forms if it could simply be cured or rectified. But this is essentially what the Biden administration did with their zero-tolerance policy at the ATF.

The truth is, it was just a start. In April of 2022, the Biden administration decided to target law-abiding citizens who exercised their Second Amendment rights to build their own firearms with the so-called ghost gun rule. What the Biden administration failed to recognize and failed to distinguish between were criminals or people who were suffering from mental illness and the rest of the law-abiding gun owners in America.

As the National Rifle Association pointed out, the policy of allowing private individuals to make their own guns as a hobby is a longstanding tradition that goes back to the colonial era.

Again, a gun in the hands of a law-abiding citizen is no threat to public safety, but the Biden administration didn't care, paying no heed to our country's longstanding history and traditions and instead preferring to please the gun control activists by issuing regulations to end this practice—again, even for law-abiding citizens.

The ghost gun rule is currently being challenged in the courts, but the Trump administration doesn't have to wait for the Supreme Court to weigh in before rescinding this illegal and unconstitutional regulation.

The Biden administration's rogue ATF continued down this path in January of 2023 when they finalized the so-called pistol brace rule. This action reclassified pistols with a stabilizing

brace as “short-barreled rifles,” something it is not. As a consequence, pistols would be subject to much more stringent regulations and penalties simply for being used with a stabilizing brace. This happened after the ATF had already previously determined that a stabilizing brace would not render a pistol a short-barreled rifle. So there is, obviously, inconsistency in the way they have approached this issue.

All this reckless back-and-forth from the Federal Government causes needless uncertainty and confusion for law-abiding citizen gun owners, who want to follow the law but are not quite sure what the law is since they are being whipsawed back and forth. As a consequence of this reclassification, millions of law-abiding gun owners were no longer able to purchase a stabilizing brace, including people like disabled combat veterans who cannot shoot heavy pistols without a stabilizing brace.

Overnight, law-abiding Americans who had lawfully purchased a stabilizing brace for their pistols became felons. This regulation is also being challenged in court, and multiple courts have found it to be what it is: arbitrary and capricious. I hope that, under the leadership of President Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi, the ATF will act swiftly to end this disastrous and illegal regulation.

As if this weren't enough, in April of 2024, the Biden administration's ATF finalized a rule known as the “Engaged in the Business” rule. This was an attempt to rewrite a statute that was passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President of the United States; but this was an attempt to go further than what Congress and the White House had agreed upon in that statute. It was an attempt to impose a nearly universal background check on law-abiding citizens and was a direct affront to their constitutional rights. There are already background checks required by current law for anybody who purchases a firearm, but this was an attempt to go even further.

Once again, this rule presents a golden opportunity for President Trump and the Attorney General to reverse the tide of the Biden administration's unconstitutional attacks on the rights of law-abiding citizens under the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

I have long been a defender of Second Amendment rights for the 31 million people I have the honor of representing in Texas and for law-abiding citizens generally around the country. The Second Amendment is as much a part of our Constitution as the right of free speech or the freedom of the press. That is why it is included in the first 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, to the Constitution.

This is why I introduced the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act, which would allow people with concealed carry privileges to exercise those privileges in other States that allow con-

cealed carry. It doesn't change the law of the individual States. It just prevents a “gotcha” from occurring when a gun owner inadvertently crosses into another jurisdiction that doesn't have the same laws as their home jurisdiction. It would literally treat State concealed carry permits the same way we treat State-issued driver's licenses. If you have a driver's license from Montana or Texas or South Carolina and you drive to New York, you can't be arrested for the failure to have an appropriate license. Our Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act would act as a driver's license, in effect, for gun owners. If someone has a driver's license, as I said, from Texas, for example, it would allow that person to drive to another State as long as they follow that State's speed and road laws. It is the same way with this legislation.

In addition to introducing this legislation, I will very soon send a letter to the Deputy Director of the ATF, encouraging him to work with President Trump on rescinding many of these regulations in order to reverse the Biden administration's reckless attacks on the Second Amendment.

So while the last 4 years have been a lot of headache for law-abiding citizens who simply want to exercise their constitutional rights, I have no doubt that President Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi will right this ship. I look forward to working with both of them to reform and redirect the energies of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to safeguard, rather than to attack, the Second Amendment rights of American citizens.

I yield the floor.

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

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

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the world is seeing that President Trump's Cabinet picks are strong and that Republicans are confirming them and doing it very quickly. By the end of today, we will have confirmed 18 of President Trump's nominees. They are bold, and they are well-qualified. Now, this is more nominees than President Obama had confirmed by this time in 2009, and it is more than President Biden did in 2021—more than twice as many as Joe Biden did.

Americans voted for a bold, new direction. They wanted to see that here in Washington and across the country, and Senate Republicans are delivering.

Yesterday, the Senate confirmed Howard Lutnick to be the Secretary of Commerce. He is going to kick-start the golden age of American manufacturing.

We are also on track to confirm Kelly Loeffler today to be the Administrator

of the Small Business Administration. She is a former colleague of ours in the Senate, and she is a voice for Main Street America.

The Senate will soon vote, as well, to confirm Kash Patel. He is the nominee to be the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The United States is seeing increasing threats from terrorism. The previous FBI Director told the Senate a year ago “I see blinking lights everywhere.” On New Year's Day, 14 Americans were killed in a terrorist attack in New Orleans. That is why the Senate must act quickly to confirm Mr. Patel. We need to continue to act with speed and urgency.

Once confirmed, Mr. Patel will begin working to restore trust in one of America's premier law enforcement Agencies. Regrettably, today, only two in five Americans say they hold a favorable view of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. That needs to change. Kash Patel will reform and refocus the FBI to get it focused on its core mission, and that core mission is to fight crime. He is going to reshape the Bureau so it no longer is a tool for political attacks. He will rededicate the Bureau to keeping Americans safe.

He is a uniquely qualified nominee. He began his career as a public defender in Florida. He defended the constitutional rights of some of the most dangerous people in the country. He later joined the Obama Department of Justice as a counterterrorism prosecutor. He investigated and prosecuted cases that protected our Nation from very serious threats. He received several awards for excellence for bringing terrorists to justice. He saw the power of the FBI to keep Americans safe, and he also saw how the power of the FBI could be abused.

In Congress, Mr. Patel led the investigation that exposed that the FBI was spying unlawfully on President Trump's 2016 campaign. Special Counsel John Durham's investigation later backed up Mr. Patel's side of the story. Durham found “the FBI failed to uphold their mission of strict fidelity to the law.”

This abuse of power was a breach of Americans' trust in the FBI. Kash Patel is going to restore trust by returning the FBI to its core mission of investigating and fighting crime. At his confirmation hearing, he said he is going to work to cut in half the number of rapes, drug overdoses, and homicides in the country today. This is something that every law-abiding citizen in this country should welcome.

For Democrats, however, this seems to be unacceptable. They claim he wants to weaponize government. That is blatantly false. It was the Democrats who turned the FBI into a political attack dog against their political opponents. The FBI pressured social media companies to censor the Hunter Biden laptop story. It partnered with Joe Biden's Department of Justice in the targeting of concerned parents who

protested woke school board meetings. It targeted Catholics as domestic terrorists and spied on them at church. It put politics and personal gain over service to the country.

Mr. Patel will end the weaponization and restore transparency. He believes crime is bad, that two tiers of justice are unacceptable, and that equal justice under the law is good. To Democrats, that is taboo. To the rest of the country, that is common sense.

Americans want the FBI to fight crime. Kash Patel is the man to do it. If you want to defend our constitutional rights, confirm Kash Patel. If you want justice and accountability, confirm Kash Patel. If you want to keep our communities safe, we need to confirm Kash Patel. He is a man of integrity and fidelity to the rule of law. I look forward to voting to confirm him.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF KELLY LOEFFLER

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, in just a few minutes, we will be asked to decide whether the Honorable Kelly Loeffler should be confirmed as Administrator of the Small Business Administration. As chair of the Small Business Committee, I would like to strongly urge all of my colleagues to vote yes and support her nomination.

As a successful business leader, Kelly Loeffler is the perfect person to increase transparency and accountability at the SBA and prioritize the needs of small businesses.

Throughout the committee's rigorous nomination process, Senator Loeffler has been thoroughly cooperative and impressive. She passed out of the committee with a bipartisan vote of 12 to 7.

Over the course of her career, Senator Loeffler has shown how hard work, grit, and midwestern common sense can take you from Illinois soybean fields to CEO of your own company and, now, to lead a government Agency. I am confident that Senator Loeffler will ensure SBA once again works for all small businesses and ushers in a golden age for America's small businesses.

Senator Loeffler is the right person to lead the Small Business Administration. She understands the burdens facing small businesses and recognizes how Washington can often serve as a barrier and a hindrance to their success. I have no doubt that she will fight to make sure Main Street is heard.

Again, I urge all of my colleagues to support her nomination and confirm Senator Loeffler as Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously rescheduled vote begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

VOTE ON LOEFFLER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Loeffler nomination?

Ms. ERNST. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Graham	Mullin
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rosen
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Curtis	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—46

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kaine	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Shaheen
Booker	King	Slotkin
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Coons	Lujan	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Fetterman	Murray	Welch
Gallego	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—2

Moran	Sullivan
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to re-

consider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:47 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BANKS).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, soon, we will be voting on the nomination of Kash Patel to serve as Director of the FBI. I have spoken with my colleagues on this nomination within the last couple of days, but I want to spend a few more minutes urging my colleagues to vote for Mr. Patel's confirmation.

Mr. Patel's career shows that he is a man who will fight to defend the Constitution and fight to expose corruption. This is exactly the kind of experience the FBI Director needs.

For almost a decade now, Mr. Patel served as a public defender, defending the constitutional rights of some of the least popular people in America. After serving as public defender, Mr. Patel joined the Department of Justice under Democrat President Obama as a counterterrorism prosecutor in the National Security Division.

In this role, he investigated and he prosecuted many important cases, including the World Cup bombing in Uganda in 2010 for which he received the Award of Excellence.

In 2017, Representative Devin Nunes asked Mr. Patel to join the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to uncover the truth about Russiagate, and Mr. Patel did uncover the truth. Through tireless work, in regard to that investigation, Mr. Patel showed that Crossfire Hurricane was based on fraudulent, even discredited information, actually paid for by the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign.

After exposing the Russiagate scandal in Congress, Mr. Patel then went on to serve in senior national security positions in the National Security Council, then as a Deputy Director of National Intelligence and as Chief of Staff to the Acting Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Patel managed large intelligence and defense bureaucracies, identified and countered national security threats, and prosecuted and defended the accused.

He has done this while fighting for transparency and accountability in government. We all know that if things are transparent, the people connected with them are going to be more accountable, and we also know that the