

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

public's business in this great democracy of ours ought to be public.

Mr. Patel's experience and Mr. Patel's vision is why he has been endorsed by organizations representing more than 680,000 law enforcement officers and by dozens of former and current FBI agents, State attorneys general, and U.S. attorneys.

These people understand law enforcement. These people understand the rule of law, and these people who have endorsed Mr. Patel trust that he will do the right thing, and we should as well today by voting for Mr. Patel.

I want to speak now to those who have viciously opposed Mr. Patel's nomination. At the heart of their opposition is the fear that he will act like Democrats did when Democrats were in power. So these Democrats are afraid that the FBI, under Mr. Patel's leadership, will use lawfare against political opponents like the FBI used lawfare against President Trump and others.

These Democrats are afraid he will use subpoena power and coordinate with the media to target those seeking accountability just like Democrats did against Mr. Patel and, also, against my own investigative staff.

These Democrats are afraid that he will deploy the FBI to conduct investigations and engage in surveillance against those who disagree like they did with Catholic families and parents expressing concern at school board meetings.

These Democrats are afraid that he will retaliate against whistleblowers like the Biden administration did against FBI and IRS agents who blew the whistle.

After reviewing Mr. Patel's record and listening to his testimony at his hearing, I am convinced that these fears that the Democrats have are unfounded. Mr. Patel's leadership will not be business as usual in the FBI as it has been in previous administrations when the FBI, the people on the 7th floor—not the local agents—were used for political weaponization.

Mr. Patel told us at our hearing he wants to reduce FBI involvement in politics and domestic surveillance. Mr. Patel wants to end political investigations and strengthen protections for whistleblowers. Mr. Patel wants to make the FBI accountable once again, get back the reputation that the FBI has had historically for law enforcement, and he wants to hold the FBI accountable to Congress, to the President, and most importantly, to the people they serve, the American taxpayer.

My Democratic colleagues often lament that Mr. Patel won't protect the independence of the FBI, but there is a fine line between independent judgment and being unaccountable. The FBI has been unaccountable all too long.

My Democratic colleagues decry the recent firing of FBI agents and somehow want to blame Mr. Patel for those personal decisions. That isn't fair, ob-

viously, because he is not running the FBI. As my oversight has shown, many of those fired agents were behind the retaliation against multiple FBI whistleblowers. They ruined lives and careers for their own political hands. They should be held accountable, and, yes, they should have been and have been fired.

The FBI has also kept too many secrets. It has hid from the duly elected Members of Congress the origins of the lawfare against President Trump, which we all know and which I have shown in my exposure of a lot of emails, was in large part from the anti-Trump agent, Timothy Thibault.

Now based on testimony from soon-to-be Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, we know that the Biden DOJ and FBI violated process by not sharing evidence with Trump's defense team that could have helped Trump's case against the government.

If that happened—now, just think, if that happened on the Democrat side, you wouldn't hear the end of it. Yet, you can't hear a peep today from my Democratic colleagues. The government hid its investigations into those who dared to question the Democratic Party line.

But then, when it is convenient for political reasons, the FBI would leak or coordinate with the media to hide the truth and to smear people.

We need to restore transparency; we need to restore oversight; we need to restore accountability at the FBI, particularly on that top floor of the Hoover Building. Mr. Patel is exactly the man that can do that, and it is why those who benefit from the status quo have come so forcefully against him with a relentless smear campaign.

Mr. Patel is a reformer, and we need a reformer in the FBI. We need to restore the public trust, and we need to return the FBI to its core mission, which is to keep people on our streets safe.

The bottom line: It is the people doing the everyday work at the FBI, enforcing the law, solving crimes that the people on the 7th floor of the Hoover Building should be doing, instead of thinking about how we can get at our political enemies.

I will be voting to confirm Mr. Patel. I will urge my colleagues to do the same thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, as I hear the senior Senator from Iowa, it is like I am living in another world. I am not alleging that Mr. Patel has an enemies list. He is the one that has said that. I am not alleging that he would use law enforcement against Donald Trump's political enemies, he is the one that has said that.

And so I will be voting no, and I hope I am wrong.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, the price of just about everything is going up right now. Any-

one that has been to the grocery store in the past few weeks knows how hard it is to find a dozen eggs. Since the President was inaugurated, the price of eggs has gone up by 15 percent, which is the single biggest monthly increase in 10 years.

The price of coffee is up 25 percent since the start of the year, and everything from gas to housing to car insurance is getting more expensive.

But I don't want people to worry because Republicans are on it. Donald Trump knows that the main thing people elected him to do is lower prices, and, rest assured, he is working day and night to fix it. Everybody knows that the best way to lower costs for individual Americans is to cut taxes for billionaires. Everybody knows that. If eggs are 8 bucks where you are living, obviously, cut taxes for billionaires. If coffee is increasingly expensive, cut taxes for billionaires.

That is the very first thing that Republicans in the new Congress have decided to do is cut taxes for the richest people to ever exist, and they are going to do it by making regular people pay.

Now, that might sound like a partisan accusation, and, of course, on some level, it is. But if you are sitting at home listening to the chatter about one big, beautiful bill or two bills, and you are wondering what it all means, here is what they are doing. They want to cut taxes for billionaires to the tune of about \$4.5 trillion—\$4.5 trillion.

And because they already blew up the Federal deficit in 2017 and because there are some House Republicans and maybe some Senate Republicans who won't vote for a package that increases the deficit, they actually need to find some savings elsewhere.

It is very hard to find \$4.5 trillion worth of savings. So what are they doing? They are having to cut programs and services that help people on a daily basis, hundreds of billions of dollars in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act subsidies, and food assistance.

They are slashing funding for cancer research and disaster recovery and schools and national parks and VA clinics. They are laying off thousands of employees at Federal Agencies, one-third of whom are veterans.

And to be clear, this is not for the holy grail of efficiency. Food is rotting at the dock. Medicine is rotting. The National Park Service is already backed up. Normally, it takes 1 minute to get into a national park. In a lot of places—it is cold outside—it is taking 90 minutes to get into national parks. That is not efficiency.

They are laying off probationary people, but let's be clear what "probationary" means. It does mean new hires. It also means anybody who is getting a promotion. Someone who has performed well, the U.S. Government says: You are so good, we want you to do something even more important. So then you get put into this probationary category, and then you get laid off.