

by the way, but I learned that very, very young in life. Evidently my Democrat colleagues didn't learn that.

Protecting women and girls in sports is the right thing to do. Allowing elementary schoolers with undeveloped brains to get irreversible sex change procedures make absolutely no sense. It is evil and sadistic.

Teaching kids to hate each other based on what they look like, that is racist. That is exactly the direction that the Biden administration was going.

Children shouldn't be forced to watch drag shows. If you are an adult, you can do what you want in this country, but forcing this woke agenda on kids is downright wrong.

Making taxpayers pay for abortions in the military—wrong, against the law, but they did it anyway. I fought it for a year. I lost out in the end, but you know what, it was worth the fight.

Pedophilia is straight from the pit of hell. And, no, these aren't minor-attracted persons. These creeps, they are criminals, and they are sick in the head.

I thank God every day for President Trump and the return of common sense in this country.

I hope some of my Democrat colleagues will wake up to how the past 4 years of this woke ideology has poisoned our country, especially our young people. Folks, we have got a long way to go—long way to go.

Our future is in the hands of our kids. Let's give that future back to our kids. Let's educate them, put them on the right track, teach them the Constitution, teach them that we have a higher being in God—put that back in our schools. What a thought that would be.

Let's stay away—stay away—from our young kids, and let them have a chance to develop.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

(The remarks of Mr. CORNYN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1053 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HALT FENTANYL ACT

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, just last week in my home State of North Carolina, narcotics investigators from the Iredell County Sheriff's Office and the Gaston Police Department seized 5 pounds of fentanyl that was in possession of an illegal alien. It was enough to kill over a million people. That is nothing short of a weapon of mass destruction.

The reality is that is not just a public health crisis. It is a nightmare that is destroying families, shattering communities, and devastating our country.

On average, nine North Carolinians die every single day from fentanyl overdoses. Every day, fentanyl claims nearly 200 lives across our country. Just last year, this silent killer took more than 70,000 Americans.

But they are not just numbers. These are sons and daughters. These are parents and siblings. These are our friends and our neighbors. These are people who should be living full, meaningful lives but, instead, have become statistics.

Let's put this into perspective. Just 2 milligrams of fentanyl similar to 7 grains of salt is enough to kill a person. If it is a sugar packet and you pour it in your morning coffee and it were to be filled with fentanyl, it could take the lives of 500 people—the quantity equal to a sugar packet. Now, if it was a standard 4-pound bag of granulated sugar—the kind we all have in our pantries—if it were filled with fentanyl, it would wipe out 905,000 individuals.

This deadly drug is flooding our communities, and it is not by accident. When I talk to law enforcement across all 100 counties in North Carolina, I repeatedly hear the same alarming message: Every single county is a border county. North Carolina is roughly 1,000 miles from the southern border, yet the fentanyl pouring into our country knows no distance and no boundaries.

This is a direct consequence of the Biden administration's reckless open border policies that allowed the drug cartels to exploit our immigration system and to flood our communities with illegal drugs. President Trump, however, is taking necessary steps to restore our border, restore order, and dismantle the criminal networks profiting off of human suffering.

But the consequences of President Biden's open borders and lack of action to mitigate the fentanyl crisis in our country remain the deadly reality facing our communities every day. This was not just a failure of policy by the previous administration. It was a betrayal of the American people to put political agendas over our public safety.

Even in the face of these staggering losses, Democrats continue to block bipartisan efforts to dismantle the criminal networks fueling the crisis. They refuse to support measures that would cut off the supply, crack down on traffickers, and strengthen our border security.

I ask my colleagues: How many more lives are you willing to sacrifice before standing up and saying, "Enough"? We can't afford to turn a blind eye to the sobering reality and traumatic consequences of this crisis. We need to make our streets safer, and we need to do it right now.

That is why I proudly stand with my colleague Senator CASSIDY in sup-

porting the HALT Fentanyl Act, a commonsense bipartisan legislation that will give law enforcement the tools they need to close loopholes and stop criminals from evading the law by simply doing two things: first, permanently classifying fentanyl and related substances under schedule I and, second, increasing the sentences for fentanyl traffickers.

This bill has already passed the House with strong bipartisan support, and now it is time for the Senate to do the same. Let's secure our streets. Let's stop the flow of fentanyl. Let's protect the American people, and let's do it before another innocent life is lost.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Kessler nomination.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled rollcall vote begin immediately.

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

VOTE ON PULTE NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pulte nomination?

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, 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 Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 121 Ex.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Cantwell	Gillibrand
Bennet	Coons	Hassan
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Blunt	Durbin	Hickenlooper
Rochester	Fetterman	Hirono
Booker		

Kaine	Ossoff	Smith
Kelly	Padilla	Van Hollen
Kim	Peters	Warner
King	Reed	Warnock
Klobuchar	Rosen	Warren
Luján	Sanders	Welch
Markey	Schatz	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schiff	Wyden
Murphy	Schumer	
Murray	Shaheen	

NOT VOTING—1

Duckworth

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President shall be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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 executive 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. 32 Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Lindsey Graham, Dan Sullivan, Ashley B. Moody, Pete Ricketts, Bill Cassidy, Jon Husted, Mike Rounds, James Lankford, Todd Young, Joni Ernst, John R. Curtis, John Kennedy, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Ted Cruz.

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 Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 122 Ex.]

YEAS—54

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—1

Duckworth

(Mr. MORENO assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 45. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the House continuing resolution that will be before this body over the next couple of days, and I want to begin by talking about a Senate Armed Services Committee meeting that we had yesterday morning at 9:30 a.m.

So if we are all paying attention, the House acted on a continuing resolution on Tuesday night. The budget deadline is at the end of the day Friday. And it takes two Houses to do a budget, but what happened is when the House acted on their portion of it, they decided to leave town.

They thought it would just be great if they just left town before the budget was even done, and they sent us a "continuing resolution" that would be unprecedented because it would mean that the Government of the United States would have operated not under a traditional appropriations bill but, instead, under a CR for the entire year.

To those who don't do the Washington speak, what is the difference between a CR and a real appropriations budget? The way I describe it is this: If you are driving a vehicle, you want to drive by looking through the windshield, where you are going. That is what the budget does. You budget for the year ahead of you, based upon the facts on the ground, the realities in the world, the priorities that you have embraced, the challenges that you will face. That is what a budget is supposed to do.

When you operate under a continuing resolution, you are driving by looking in the rearview mirror. You are instead embracing decisions that were made a while ago and just saying: Well, we can't even reach an accord about going

forward. So let's instead just—let's do what we did last month. Let's do what we did last year because we are unable to reach an agreement.

A continuing resolution has been somewhat normal for a couple of months. If we don't reach a budget deal by September 30, it is pretty normal that we do a CR through the end of the calendar year. But in every year that I have been here, Congress has been able to, at some point, find not the backward-looking CR but the forward-looking appropriations bill and put it in place so that we are spending money based on the priorities that are important right now.

What is pending before the Senate now is not that forward-looking budget. Instead, it is this vehicle that has come over from the House that would, for the first time, have us not budgeting based on the windshield but, instead, driving by what is in the rearview mirror.

We had an Armed Services Committee hearing yesterday, and it was a hearing that was called by the Readiness Subcommittee, on which I sit. Readiness looks at this very important metric: How ready are the different branches of the American military to fight tomorrow, if we need to?

And we have this hearing every year, and we usually invite to the hearing the vice service chiefs of each of the service branches—so instead of the service chief of the Navy, the deputy, Vice Admiral Kilby. We will invite the deputies of all the branches, and they come and talk to us about how they measure readiness and where we stand. And they were all before us, yesterday, in a hearing that was chaired by Alaska Senator SULLIVAN, with the ranking member, Hawaii Senator HIRONO, and a number of others there at the hearing.

Now, remember, it had just been 12 hours before that the House had passed the continuing resolution, and so folks were aware of what was on the table in this hearing yesterday morning. And what did our military leadership say to us about the continuing resolution that we were going to be asked to vote on in the next day or so?

Well, let me just read a couple of quotes from the military leaders.

Admiral Kilby:

Consistent and predictable funding is foundational to our improvement efforts. The Navy will need to make hard choices this year if we are operating under a full-year continuing resolution.

And so I asked him this question. I am just going to read the exchange that I had with him:

Admiral Kilby, I think you testified in your open testimony that under a CR one-fifth of our ships will miss their maintenance schedule, did I hear that right?

Admiral Kilby said:

Specifically eleven ships, those maintenance availabilities are at risk.

I followed up:

OK, so we want to get to 80% ready on ships and subs, where are we now?

Admiral Kilby said: