

Kaine
Kelly
Kim
King
Klobuchar
Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Murray

Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schiff
Schumer
Shaheen

Smith
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

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	Hoeben	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	Lujan	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. KAINE. 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:

Depending on the day, around 67%.

I then said:

What will one-fifth of ships missing their maintenance schedule under the CR, what will that do to our quest to get to 80% readiness for ships and subs?

Admiral Kilby:

It'll certainly be a setback, we'll take a penalty there.

All of the other vice service chiefs said the same thing on behalf of the Marines and the Air Force and the Space Force and the Army: Operating under a full-year CR will hurt readiness, will hurt our national security.

This is what the Pentagon is telling us about the bill we are going to be voting on in the next day or so. But it wasn't just the military leaders who said that. The chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee, Senator SULLIVAN, said: The CR—from a readiness standpoint, I think that none of this is helpful. He described the frequent use of CRs as “a failure on the part of Congress.”

Then my friend and colleague who was the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator WICKER—here is what he said about the bill we are going to vote on in the next couple of days:

I will say this about the fact that this is the first year-long CR for the Department of Defense. . . . This is a shame on our process and it is not in keeping with what the Founders intended.

This is the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee's opinion about what a yearlong CR will do to our national security.

So why are we going to vote for it? Why are we taking it up and rushing to pass it? When our military leadership says it is a bad idea and when the chairman of the Armed Services Committee says it a bad idea, why would we contemplate it?

Well, Senator SULLIVAN sort of hinted at it when he said it is better than a shutdown. But those are not the options. This was a hearing Wednesday morning at 9:30 in the morning. The budget deadline is not until the end of the day Friday. We don't have to accept that it is either a security-damaging continuing resolution or a shutdown because we are the Senate of the United States.

There is an attitude among Senators here that because the House came up with a partisan bill and sent it to us and then decided to skip town Tuesday night, that we just have to go along. I thought the Senate was an independent branch of Congress. I thought the Senate was the greatest deliberative body in the world.

I don't think the Speaker of the House is the czar of the Senate, and when he sends us a continuing resolution 3 days before a budget deadline and then leaves town, I don't think the Senate of the United States is bound to follow his wishes. Instead, we should do our own jobs and do the right thing for the country.

If the Armed Services chair says that this hurts defense, then let's get it

right. If the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee says that the CR hurts defense, then let's get it right.

The good news is that we have an opportunity to get it right. It is not completely clear as I stand on the floor, but it looks likely that there could be a vote today or tomorrow on an alternative that I will call the getting-it-right alternative.

What is the getting-it-right alternative? We would extend the current spending level for 30 days and then finish the budget. We would decide we don't want to drive looking in the rear-view mirror; we want to drive looking in the windshield. We would get an appropriations deal that wouldn't hurt our readiness.

I am just talking about one priority. I could have other colleagues stand here and talk about how this CR hurts education priorities, health priorities, mental health priorities, transportation priorities, emergency response. We don't have to accept that, and frankly, to earn the label “U.S. Senator,” we shouldn't accept it. We should do the get-it-right alternative, and the get-it-right alternative, which has been proposed by Senator MURRAY and others, is to do a simple, 30-day extension of existing spending—no amendments, no adjustments, no anomalies, no quirks for 30 days—and then get an appropriations deal done that can pass this body and pass the House.

We can do it. We are very, very close. I am not on the Appropriations Committee, but in my discussions with appropriators, they say: We are extremely close; we can do this. We should.

So I will just urge my colleagues, as you contemplate a vote on this House CR that, in my view, does great damage to many priorities, you don't just have to go along with the House work product, especially when they show disrespect to the Senate by skipping town Tuesday night, thinking that they could jam us by doing so. You don't have to go along with the work product that even the chairman of the Armed Services Committee says hurts our national readiness. You don't have to go along with a work product when Pentagon officials who have made this their lives look at us and tell us this will hurt national security. There is a better strategy, and we should embrace it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, over the past 2 months, we have seen chaos unleashed across our country as Donald

Trump and Elon Musk take a chain saw to our Federal Government, firing thousands of Federal workers en masse with no explanation and more firings to come. I suspect that by the time they are through—if they are ever through—hundreds of thousands of Federal employees will have been fired.

Rather than making government more efficient, these indiscriminate cuts are gutting our government from the inside out, effectively eliminating crucial programs and offices.

While Republicans shamefully paint hard-working Federal workers as faceless bureaucrats, we know that our Federal workers do important work, from ensuring Social Security checks go out to providing care for veterans and so much more.

Every State has individual Federal employees doing critical work—often work that goes unseen. In Hawaii, for example, Fish and Wildlife Service employees are responsible for keeping invasive species out of our State. Once invasive species arrive in our islands, it is often impossible to eradicate them. That is why the work of these employees is so important.

Last month, the Trump administration fired Fish and Wildlife Service employees whose job was to keep one particular invasive species—the brown tree snake—out of our State. You can see, Mr. President, it is pretty ferocious. This picture depicts a brown tree snake eating a bird whole.

Native to Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea, the brown tree snake was accidentally introduced to Guam during World War II and has been wreaking havoc on that island ever since. One of the most destructive invasive species in the world, the brown tree snake is responsible for the extinction of at least a dozen animal species in Guam, including many of the island's forest-dwelling birds and native lizards.

But the snake didn't stop at birds and lizards; it also went after Guam's native bats, domestic poultry, and even pets. As its population grew, the brown tree snake began invading power facilities, causing short circuits and frequent power outages. To this day, brown tree snakes cause nearly 200 outages a year in Guam, costing \$4.5 million each year in repairs and lost productivity. To this day, brown tree snakes cause nearly 200 outages a year in Guam, costing \$4.5 million each year in what they are doing in repairs—you can imagine what kind of havoc—and lost productivity by the millions.

Despite years of various attempts to control the brown tree snake, as of 2024, Guam's population of brown tree snakes is estimated to be in the millions. Sadly, it is highly unlikely that this invasive and destructive species will ever be fully eliminated from Guam.

Thankfully, the snake does not yet exist in Hawaii or anywhere in the continental United States, but that is not by accident or chance. It is because of