

that others are threatening. Let's get back to our Founding document that those imperfect geniuses had some very special words at the end of the Declaration of Independence. It was one of the greatest in all of humanity, the Declaration of Interdependence, when our Founders said we must mutually pledge, pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. We need that now from all Americans.

This is a moral moment. It is not left or right, it is right or wrong. Let's get in good trouble.

(Ms. LUMMIS assumed the Chair.)

My friend, Madam President, I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

Madam President, thank you to the pages. Thank you to the Parliamentary staffs. Thank you to the clerks. Thank you to the doorkeepers. There were so many people who make this place special. I kept you up all night. I kept you up 24 hours. I just want to say thank you. Thank you, everybody.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, is the next regular order of business the confirmation of Mr. Matthew Whitaker?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Order in the Senate, please. Order in the Galleries.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, is the next regular order of business the confirmation of Mr. Matthew Whitaker to be NATO? Is that next order of business up?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that myself and the Senator from Iowa be permitted to speak each 3 minutes, and immediately upon conclusion of that, we proceed to the vote on the confirmation.

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

Mr. RISCH. I yield the floor to the Senator from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will be order in the Senate. Senators and visitors will take their conversations off of the Chamber.

The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF MATTHEW WHITAKER

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, today, I rise in support of the confirmation of Matt Whitaker to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to NATO.

Matt is not only a proud Iowan, he is a dedicated public servant, an accomplished leader, a loving father, and a very, very, dear friend.

Matt has honorably served our State and our country as the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Iowa in private practice and most recently as the former Acting Attorney General of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator yield?

Ms. ERNST. Yes, I will, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Please, Senators, take your conversations off the floor.

The Senator from Iowa may proceed. Ms. ERNST. Matt and I first crossed paths during the 2014 U.S. Senate primary in Iowa. What began as opponents in a race turned into a mutual respect and, ultimately, a strong friendship.

Since 2014, Matt has supported me in countless ways, offering wise counsel and keen insight on the issues facing our State, Nation, and our world today.

While some may just brush it off as "Iowa nice," I believe this is a clear demonstration of Matt's character. He is willing to put differences aside, strengthen relationships, and put our country over politics.

Over the last few years, during exchanges with NATO allies, a consistent theme emerged—the need for American leadership, a willingness to speak hard truths and encourage our partners to step up.

Matt's experience has prepared him for this aspect of the job. With decades of law enforcement experience and having served as Acting Attorney General, Matt has successfully collaborated across many organizations and jurisdictions.

He understands the evolving threats our Nation and our allies face from terrorism to cyber warfare to transnational crime.

His experiences navigating complex security challenges will make him an asset to NATO and a force for strengthening our alliances.

Matt Whitaker is a principled leader with a proven track record. Under President Trump's peace-through-strength approach, I have no doubt that Matt will be an effective advocate for America's interests and a champion of our national strategy.

I urge my colleagues to support his nomination. He is the right leader at the right time for this critical role.

I yield to the gentleman from Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I rise today in support of President Trump's nominee to be Ambassador to NATO, Mr. Matthew Whitaker.

First, the good news. NATO remains more than ever relevant to the security of the United States and to Europe. NATO is stronger today than it has ever, ever been.

Putin made a horrible mistake when he attacked Ukraine thinking he would split NATO. He did not split NATO. He made it stronger. Indeed, we added two additional nations to NATO, and Putin has picked up another 800 miles of border with NATO.

Now the concern: Unfortunately, some NATO members have taken the alliance and America's support of it for granted. Our European allies have let the heavy financial lifting to us, and by many of their own admissions, have not pulled their weight in defense spending.

Dramatic investment from NATO members in our collective defense is absolutely necessary.

Mr. Whitaker, as our next Ambassador to NATO, will help President Trump preserve the fidelity, commitment, and integrity of NATO. He will encourage our allies to rise to meet the challenges of an increasingly dangerous world, and he will help our allies understand that this must be a true partnership. It is a tough job.

I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Whitaker as he takes on this challenge as our next U.S. Ambassador to NATO.

Madam President, I ask the Senate execute the order of March 27 with respect to the Whitaker nomination.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew Whitaker, of Iowa, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

NOMINATION OF MATTHEW WHITAKER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, the Senate will soon vote to confirm my good friend and fellow Iowan Matt Whitaker to be the U.S. Ambassador to NATO.

I support his nomination and urge all my colleagues to vote for his confirmation. Matt is someone who is well known back in Iowa, and he has earned the respect of many here in Washington, too.

He has a long record of service to our country, from his time as Acting Attorney General in the first Trump administration to his work as chief of staff at the Department of Justice.

He has traveled around the world, meeting with leaders on important issues, including dealing with the fentanyl crisis and negotiating with Chinese officials.

During the George W. Bush administration, Matt served our State as U.S. attorney for the Southern District from 2004 to 2009, where he worked hard to keep our communities safe.

In Iowa, he is known not just for his work, but for his deep pride in his home State. He never lets you forget that he is a proud graduate of the University of Iowa, where he earned his undergraduate degree, MBA, and law degree.

In fact, he even played football for the Hawkeyes, including going to the Rose Bowl, which speaks to his work ethic and commitment to teamwork.

Matt carries that same commitment and drive in every role he takes on—whether it is on the football field, as a U.S. attorney, or in his leadership in national law enforcement. This dedication is exactly what he will bring to his work with NATO.

I am proud to support a true friend and fellow Iowan who has always shown the highest standards of service to our country. I ask my colleagues to support Matt Whitaker's confirmation.

He will serve with the same passion and energy that he brings to his love of Iowa football, and I have no doubt that he will represent the United States on the world stage with the same level of commitment.

VOTE ON WHITAKER NOMINATION

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

Mr. RISCH. 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. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 157 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—3

Hawley	Murray	Schmitt
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am here for the 35th time to call attention to the rightwing scheme to capture our courts and justice system, now out to target and persecute Trump political enemies and do Trump political favors.

We have heard a lot about weaponization of the justice system from Trump and his allies. That is for two reasons. One, it is a handy narrative for Trump and MAGA cronies to

paint him as a victim, not a convicted criminal who only dodged proper sentencing and further criminal charges because of sweeping Presidential immunity granted by a Supreme Court stacked with rightwing Justices he appointed. Two, it is a tactic. For would-be autocrats, accusations signal intentions. You accuse the other side of doing what you are plotting so that when you are caught doing it, you have set it up to look like offsetting penalties. Accusations signal intentions, and sure enough, now there is real weaponization of the justice system unfolding before our eyes.

I am going to take a minute and drill down into one episode. It begins with a climate fund, duly created and appropriated by Congress, maintained after the funds were disbursed at a private bank, and overseen by EPA.

But MAGA's dear leader claims, falsely, that climate change is a hoax. That is his catchphrase for the truest things he doesn't like. So this climate fund became a MAGA target. There is a problem, however: The Constitution limits the President's veto power over congressional spending, both with a time limit and the right of Congress to override, and the time limit to veto these funds had been over for years. The funds were properly appropriated back in August 2022 when President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act. The grants were awarded in April 2024, giving recipients legal rights to the funds. And then they were distributed to the bank as fiscal agent for the recipients, all in regular order.

Enter Trump's corrupt Justice Department through two colossal Trump suck-ups: the Acting Deputy Attorney General, Emil Bove, and Ed Martin, the interim U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia.

Martin is an activist MAGA type, a lawyer for January 6 attackers, who had criticized this fund even before he was appointed interim.

Bove and Martin cooked up asking Martin's U.S. Attorney's Office to freeze the climate fund by opening a criminal investigation so they could assert that the ongoing investigation justified the freeze. Their problem: They couldn't point to a crime. Oops.

The career criminal division chief, an experienced veteran prosecutor at the U.S. Attorney's Office, pointed out that launching a criminal investigation without evidence of a crime—what prosecutors call predication—is a violation of prosecutorial ethics and Department of Justice policy.

That warning from the career prosecutors to MAGA Martin is red flag one. But the MAGA U.S. attorney didn't listen to that warning from his career staff. Instead, he demanded that the career criminal chief resign. He forced her out. Well, that is another big red flag—red flag two.

With the criminal division chief out of the way, Martin still couldn't find one staff prosecutor in his office to pursue the matter.

Now, you remember in the Nixon Saturday Night Massacre, they had to fire all the way down to Robert Bork, who became notorious for ultimately doing the dirty deed for Nixon, but here, no Bork. No prosecutor would sign from this big Federal prosecution office. That is red flag three.

Martin then proceeded in his own name alone. That is red flag four. As a former U.S. attorney, I can assure you there is almost always a career attorney's signature on every pleading filed. And bear in mind that Martin is not some rare legal whiz. He had never spent a single day as a Federal prosecutor before he got this gig, and here he was fumbling around by his lone MAGA self.

So—no surprise—when Martin presented his request to the Federal magistrate judge, the judge denied the petition. That is red flag five, and it is a massive, flapping red flag to anyone who has served in a U.S. Attorney's Office.

Federal prosecutors never want this to happen, so they triple-check and backstop every application to ensure that they are ironclad.

In my U.S. Attorney's Office, a Federal judge shooting down one of our warrant applications would have set off internal reviews. That should be what is known in the medical field as a never event. It is a shocker, particularly with the U.S. attorney presenting the petition in person.

Even that series of disasters didn't stop this scheme. Somebody started shopping the case to other U.S. Attorney's Offices, hoping that some other office would try again in a different district.

Well, shopping a case around U.S. attorney's offices, after the matter has been shot down in court, that is red flag six.

It seems that no other U.S. attorney's office has been willing to go before any court with this hot mess, but somehow, a Federal prosecutor down in Florida—Florida—ordered Washington-based FBI agents to start questioning EPA employees about the grant program. Well, we are going to find out more about that.

But meanwhile, in a related case, a different Federal judge blew up the EPA Administrator's administrative effort under Trump's Executive orders to freeze these funds, and they defended the freeze with the same pretext that there was fraud that needed to be prevented. Well, the judge asked: Tell me about the fraud. Show me some evidence.

There was none. The judge noted in her decision that, for all the big talk, the administration could produce—her words—"no evidence to support that claim." So a second Federal judge shoots down the scheme. We are up to red flag seven.

Compounding this prosecutive fiasco, both Martin and EPA Administrator Zeldin unleashed a barrage of public comments, flooding the information