

out of work, Mr. Atkins has 20/0 hindsight about his mistakes. Apparently, he thinks that the only thing we did wrong in the runup to the 2008 crash was not to remove more rules from the giant banks so they could have loaded up even faster on more risk, taken more profits, and then needed a bigger bailout.

Once he left government, Mr. Atkins moved to a long career helping billionaire scammers like Sam Bankman-Fried get even richer.

Getting Mr. Atkins confirmed instead of stopping the economic chaos—this is the priority for Republicans in Congress right now. Put another fox in charge of the henhouse while the whole farm could burn to the ground.

So that is the Republican plan: Ignore the economic chaos happening around us, confirm a guy who helped cause the last crash, and then go on vacation for 2 weeks. If the Republicans do that, it will be a month before Congress can vote to reverse the President's disastrous tariffs and demonstrate to the world that there are some limits on his ability to cause economic chaos.

The Republican approach is reckless, it is dangerous, and most of all, it is cowardly. Trillions of dollars in wealth evaporated last week. Who knows how much irreversible damage will be done to our economy in a month or in 90 days when Trump decides to put these tariffs back on, back off, back on, and back off. Does anyone want to find out? I certainly don't.

This kind of uncertainty is enormously damaging to our economy. In the meantime, all that happens is that CEOs continue to bow and scrape to Donald Trump at black-tie galas, hoping to secure loopholes for their own companies.

Congress has the tools to put a stop to this. We need to act now to stop the chaos. Senator WYDEN's and my bipartisan resolution would turn off the emergency, bogus declaration that Donald Trump is using. It would demonstrate that Congress is willing to stand up and say that Donald Trump will not have the magic wand to continue to turn tariffs on and off at whim. I urge my Republican colleagues to join us and to vote down the President's abuse of emergency authorities.

Republicans in Congress have a choice to make. They can continue to bow down to Donald Trump while he sabotages our economy, or they can stand up for the American people who elected them.

Every Democrat is ready to go. We are ready to vote to end this destructive tariff war, but we need Republicans to stand up and show some courage.

If Republicans don't step up and our economy falls off a cliff, we will know who is responsible. If Trump's tariff games of "on-again, off-again" crash our economy, we know which Republicans will be responsible. If Trump's tariff games lead to layoffs around the

country, we know which Republicans will be responsible. If Trump's tariff games force small businesses to close their doors, we know which Republicans will be responsible. If Trump's tariff games hurt our farmers, we know which Republicans will be responsible. If Trump's tariff games force retirees to have to get out and find work, we know which Republicans will be responsible.

We know who is responsible, and it is every single one of these cowards who will not take the blowtorch out of Donald Trump's hands. These Republican Senators understand that what is happening is not normal. They understand that we are in an extremely dangerous moment. They understand that if Congress does not act, Americans of every class, every race, every age, every religion, every region of the country, and every political party will suffer. This is the time for Republicans to act.

Donald Trump's friends at Mar-a-Lago may flatter him over candlelit dinners and tell him he is all powerful, but Donald Trump is not a King, and Congress is not powerless. We can act to stop him, and that is exactly what we should do.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The Senator from Massachusetts. Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Washington.

TARIFFS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come here today to urge my colleagues to vote no on the nomination of Mark Meador to be the FTC Commissioner. But before I do that, I did want to take a moment and talk about today's actions that happened when the President created a 90-day pause on the tariffs, taking the temperature down a bit.

I definitely want to thank my House colleagues Representative BACON and GOTTHEIMER for introducing legislation similar to the Trade Review Act of 2025 that we have introduced here in the Senate.

And while we have seen America on a roller coaster the last couple of days, I think it also is a reminder that we need to continue to play this oversight role. If you want to have the ability not to have the roller coaster ride we have been on, the best way to do that is to make sure that Congress continues to play a role in this very important policy. So I appreciate all my colleagues, and I appreciate my House colleagues for their leadership.

NOMINATION OF MARK MEADOR

Mr. President, I wanted to take a minute to talk about why consumers

depend on the FTC: obviously, to protect them from scams and fraud, to make sure that markets are fair and competitive; and every day the FTC stands up for the American consumer by dealing with anti-competitive problems like the grocery mergers that we saw which were a big issue in the State of Washington. Those grocery mergers would have increased grocery prices.

They are also in charge of fighting for kids online, fighting scammers to prevent people from profiting off of our veterans, our elderly. They are also in charge of taking on the PBMs, the pharmacy benefit manager middlemen, who have driven up drug prices, including the cost of insulin. And they have challenged those who are using monopolistic powers to create other monopolistic, well, price rises, and, obviously, limiting consumers on their choice.

So Congress created the FTC 100 years ago to be that body of bipartisan experts, people who can create and operate independent of the whims of a President. A Commission that can answer to us by making sure that they are independent, and this is why this nomination has become so important.

The independent bipartisan structure of the Agency ensures that all viewpoints in making a decision—not just those of the President of the United States—are heard. And it means that as these Commissioners work overtime, they gain expertise in the issues of the day before the FTC.

And 90 years ago, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the law that affirmed that the FTC Commissioners should be protected and removed only for cause.

Since that ruling, the FTC has flourished as a consumer protection watchdog, independent of the influence of the President, until now.

On March 18, 2025, President Trump illegally fired the Democratic Commissioners Rebecca Slaughter and Alvaro Bedoya from the FTC Commission, leaving the Commission with only Republican Commissioners and destroying the Agency's longstanding independence.

It is clear that this administration doesn't want the watchdog that I would like to see protecting consumers. If he wants a merger to be approved or if he wants an investigation to be dropped, then you can threaten to fire Commissioners if they vote against your will.

And if you want to investigate a company owned by a political opponent or a corporate competitor, you just have to direct the FTC to do that investigation.

So this is why we need an FTC to be above this kind of action. We need an FTC that is a group of nominees, approved by this Congress, voted on by our colleagues, and that no matter who is in the White House or who controls Congress, we have FTC members.

Mr. Meador, at his hearing, declined to defend the FTC's need to remain independent. He also declined to address the Department of Justice's reversal on its position of a decades-old

Supreme Court decision, and, most egregiously, he would not agree to follow the law if given an order by the President not to do so.

So at a time when consumer demands are high, at a time when prices are high, at a time when we need to continue to fight uncertainty and deliver predictability, I want to make sure that we have an FTC that is working to protect consumers. We need someone who will be focused on helping to protect Americans from unfair practices and stop fraudsters, not someone who thinks that these are things that can be passed on.

I hope my colleagues will join me in voting no on Mr. Meador's confirmation, and I hope that my colleagues will understand how important it is to have an independent FTC Commission.

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

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

The Senator from Texas.

H.J. RES. 20

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to call up my resolution to undo a regulation about appliances, which was imposed by the Biden-Harris administration weeks after American voters had overwhelmingly rejected that administration and its policies and which, if left in place, would increase costs and limit the options of everyday Texans and everyday Americans across our Nation.

After the election, President Trump and the new Republican Congress systematically moved in exactly the opposite direction to decrease costs and to expand the options of Americans.

Indeed, on January 20, in his Executive order on American energy, President Trump made it the policy of the United States "to safeguard the American people's freedom to choose from a variety of goods and appliances, including, but not limited to, lightbulbs, dishwashers, washing machines, gas stoves, water heaters, toilets, and shower heads, and to promote market competition and innovation within the manufacturing and appliance industries."

What refreshing common sense that was missing from the previous administration.

My resolution deals with a rule imposed by the Biden-Harris Department of Energy in December, after the election, and which deals with what they describe as the energy efficiency of non-condensing tankless gas water heaters, which millions of Americans rely upon in their homes.

The Biden-Harris administration knew that they were increasing costs on Americans. Indeed, that is what they were deliberately doing. They ac-

knowledge that because of their rule, the cost of each affected unit would increase by at least \$200—and industry experts say the true increase is double even that estimate. The administration's own numbers show that as many as 40 percent of affected customers would experience a net cost increase over the appliance's lifetime.

They didn't care, and it is worth discussing some of the reasons they didn't care about the hardship they were inflicting on hard-working American families and why it is so important today for the Senate to pass my resolution to undo their actions.

First and foremost, hypocrisy. The Biden administration believes in rules for others but not for themselves and conveniences for themselves but not for others. This was an administration that believed in shutting down businesses and banning events all across the United States because of COVID but exempting themselves and what they cared about. If you were at an antifa riot, the COVID virus could not affect you, but God help you if you wanted to go to church, clearly, everyone in the congregation was going to die of COVID that day.

The American people saw that hypocrisy play out again and again, including with appliance regulations such as gas stoves, and, indeed, the hypocrisy played out again with the water heater regulation that my resolution will overturn. Left in place, this regulation would force American consumers to either pay more for these heaters or, if they can't afford to pay more, to shift to less efficient models.

Democrats used to pitch themselves as the party of the working class, as a blue-collar party. No more. Today's Democratic Party is the party of rich coastal elites, and the blue-collar working men and women, Mr. President, that elected you, that elected me—blue-collar workers are now the base of the Republican Party.

Second, corruption. The administration used regulations, mandates, and grants to enrich their allies, including especially radical climate activists. Just to give you an example in one of these infamous "gold bar schemes," Biden's EPA funneled \$2 billion—that is billion with a "b"—into Georgia Democratic gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams' "Power Forward Communities." They said the money was going toward purchasing new home appliances for low-income families to help "the decarbonization of homes." But that funding was only available to families who worked with Power Forward Communities after the grant was issued.

Biden's very generous, taxpayer-funded gift went to Stacey Abrams' coalition in a brazen attempt to buy Georgians' votes.

And, third, power. For advocates of these regulations, limiting consumer choice is the point. It is a feature, not a bug. Their goal is to control the choices and freedoms of Americans.

I believe it should be you, the consumer, that makes those choices, not unelected bureaucrats in Washington.

Last year, I spoke on this floor about a different Department of Energy appliance regulation. That regulation was about gas furnaces. It would have required over half of American households to purchase new furnaces, which they also didn't care about. Their goal was to target the natural gas industry.

Today's vote is about protecting such fundamental issues as fairness, consumer choice, and affordability. I strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote yes, especially if you care about blue-collar workers, if you care about families struggling to make ends meet. Vote yes and vote to end this government mandate driving up the costs on Americans across this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled rollcall vote occur immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOICE ON ATKINS NOMINATION

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

Mr. PAUL. 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 Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 205 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—44

Alsobrooks	Bennet	Blunt Rochester
Baldwin	Blumenthal	Booker